February 2015

Preliminary Examination in Eastern Europe

Instructions: Please answer one question from each of the following sections (for a total of 3 essay answers). Be sure each essay has a clear line of argument, addresses as many dimensions of the question as possible, and offers relevant, persuasive evidence from specific secondary sources wherever appropriate. Good luck!

Section One

1. What are the main methodological premises for the new approaches in East European studies in the last decades? Which are these approaches and in what ways have they changed East European (English language) historiography?

2. What are the chief models of development characteristic of Eastern European modernity in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries? Who are their chief exponents, ideologically and in practice? In what ways can they be characterized as alternative modernities?

Section Two

1. Several empires had decisive influence in the Balkans during the pre-modern and modern period. Discuss the significance of imperial legacies (Habsburg, Ottoman, Romanov) on the social, political and cultural profile of the region. Please go into more specific detail for at least one of these legacies.

2. How and by whom has Eastern European nationalism been theorized? Describe briefly and critically the intellectual genealogy of this typology. What is the assessment of Eastern European nationalism within the larger European framework? Please mention briefly the major theoretical exponents and give appropriate historiographical examples.

Section Three

1. Outline the main characteristics of political life in the Balkans (Yugoslavia, Greece, Romania, Bulgaria and Albania) until 1945. What are the main points of similarity and difference? What explains traditions of extreme right or left wing politics, and how (if at all) did these shape behavior during the war and the immediate postwar arrangements?

2. Evaluate the role of the Great Powers in shaping the fate of East European societies after the Second World War. To what extent were these countries pawns of outside interests and was there any room for maneuverability? To what extent did they preserve their own agency? What is the historiographical verdict on these issues?