Instructions: Answer one question from each of the following sections, for a total of three answers. Good Luck!!

Section I

You are teaching at a small liberal arts college and you have the opportunity to teach an upper-division seminar on the topic of “Global Environmental History.” Explain how you would approach this class. What key readings would you assign? How would you structure the class, chronologically and thematically? What would be the assignments, and why? As you develop your answer, explain how this class would handle the difficulty of simultaneously introducing a field of history along with what for many students will be a new mode of thought, new methods, new questions, etc.

How has the field of Environmental history expanded out from its regional genesis in North America or out of the methodological and interpretive debates first engendered by the Annales School in Europe? What other geographic, thematic, or temporal spaces have proven to be fertile ground for historians?

Section II

Histories of natural disaster have been told in multiple forms, not all of which fall under the purview of Environmental history. The connections between the history of a natural disaster or of significant climatic change, for example, and the field of Environmental history may appear self-evident, but actually require the work of an historian to contextualize. How can interpretive frameworks and insights developed in the field of Environmental history illuminate our understanding of natural disasters in history? How do histories of disaster and environmental history intersect?

There is a growing body of scholarship that attends to questions about the formation of Environmental history “from below.” What are the main sites of historical inquiry and the methodological strategies used for centering histories “from below?” How have they addressed questions of power and environmental justice?

Section III

Where does African Environmental history sit within the larger historiographical debates that animate Environmental History? Have historians of Africa engaged bigger debates in the field? How so? What are the interpretive or analytical sites of difference within African Environmental History?
Questions about empire, climate, and commodities are but a few topics addressed by environmental historians that easily elide the political and social borders that define other fields of history. How do these studies contribute to the development of a “Global Environmental history” field? What are the benefits and/or drawbacks to thinking about the environment as “global” temporally, geographically, methodologically, and in terms of scale?