Global/Gender Preliminary Examination

Spring 2009

Answer one question from each section. You must do a total of three (3) questions. 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 I

A. World Systems theory has been an influential theoretical frame in studying global history. Explain the basic premises of this theory with reference to the work of Immanuel Wallerstein. Discuss how he draws from Marx, Braudel, and Dependency Theory. World Systems theory has been criticized both for its rigid economic determinism and its Eurocentric historiography. Discuss these critiques with references to theorists who have advanced them.

B. Why is the body an important archive for practitioners of world history? What do analyses of embodiment and corporality add to our understandings of global processes? What differences do genealogies of the body in world historical context make to the project of world history more generally?

Section II

A. How does gender re-orient world history as a scholarly field, a scalar exercise and a pedagogical practice? What are the stakes of using gender as a positioning device for materializing global exchanges, connections and encounters – as well as the limits thereof? Why shouldn’t we just “add women and stir” to get a global gender field?

B. Chandra Mohanty argues that the very conception of “women” as a category of analysis, proposes a homogenous group whose historical action is a priori identifiable. How does such a critique change the way one understands “gender and history” in a global context? How does the discussion of “womanhood” (and the essentialism it might promote) and the social space it generates help us to advance competing narratives of global history?
Section III

A. Is it possible to teach a global history survey class and without falling into Eurocentrism? Does the idea of history inherently promote a Eurocentric view? What type of texts and other possible material can you use in teaching such a class in order to avoid the pitfalls of “presentism”?

B. You have been invited to develop and teach a fifteen-week survey course in World History covering the period 1500 to the present. While your department chair has given you a great deal of flexibility in terms of how to structure the course, she would like to see histories of women and gender fully incorporated into the survey's approach and into as many of its central themes as possible. In a carefully constructed course proposal, identify the three major pedagogical goals for the course and then go on to discuss the central themes that will be addressed over the weeks. Discuss three or four key readings that you will require of your undergraduate students and explain their significance to the intellectual architecture of the course.