Global Indigeneity Exam Questions

Answer four (4) of the following seven questions. Use your time carefully so that you can respond adequately to all four of the questions you select.

1. What is global indigeneity? Explain your definition of this term, paying particular attention to the distinctions drawn in the following quotation from Chadwick Allen’s new book, Trans-Indigenous: Methodologies for Global Native Literary Studies. (Keep in mind that his use of “literature” might open further to include “experiences” and/or “histories”): “Many Indigenous intellectuals ... are understandably wary of global comparative frameworks for Indigenous studies ... [they] wonder how a single scholar or even a small group of scholars can possibly know enough to bring together multiple indigenous literatures emanating from multiple distinct literatures...” (Intro, p.13.) As you define the term, you should situate yourself within relevant scholarly discussions of the term.

2. Consider indigenous experiences in North America from the time of first contact to 1850. What were the principal features of the global processes of colonization? What were some of the multiple forces shaping those processes? Finally, what are the principal features of indigenous societies in 1850 that emerge in response to these colonial processes?

3. How useful is the term “nation” when used to describe indigenous societies across the globe in the 19th century? Was there a transnational move towards nationhood during this time period? Are there other possible frameworks through which to describe indigenous political structures and how might these alternatives prove useful? Explain your answer with specific reference to indigenous societies in North America and the Pacific. (You may use a generous definition of “19th century” as you compose your answer.)

4. On the surface, one might argue that a global indigenous revolt occurred in Anglophone settler nations in the decade following 1969. Is that true, or were there deeper differences between and among these communities that make such an assertion of a transnational process faulty? What might some of those differences arise from? What are some of the possible pitfalls that might emerge from Brenden Hokowhitu’s observation in his essay “Indigenous Existentialism,” that “Indigenous scholars are often left in the unenviable position of finding common ground (that is, ‘Indigenous studies’) within the ontological violence of colonialism” (Cultural Studies Review 2009, 102).

5. Robert Williams and Charles Wilkinson represent the Ying and Yang of contemporary federal Indian law. Williams charges that the legal recognition of indigenous peoples has largely been a sham, constrained as it has been by the powerful legacy of racism. Wilkinson, on the other hand, views the progress made in recent years as transformative. Viewed globally, what are the principle limitations legal recognition has imposed on indigenous people in North America and the Pacific?

6. Viewed globally, to what extent does the modern resurgence in indigenous cultural expressions constitute an affirmation of Native sovereignties? How does your view of this arena align with other scholars who have discussed recent cultural innovations in the global indigenous
world? How has sovereignty traveled and how has it emerged as a critical term within Global Indigenous Studies?

7. Recent scholarship in Indigenous studies has refocused critical attention on gender, normativity, desire, and subjectivity as a necessary site of engagement. How does this recent body of work activate the categories of gender, sexuality, and erotics? And how might such work alter our understanding of indigenous resistance to settler colonialism over the past 300 years?