Indigenous Exam Questions

Answer one question from each of the following groups:

Group I

a) Within the fields of indigenous history/indigenous studies, scholars frequently discuss the notion of resistance, with many scholars putting forward their own definitions and ideas about what “resistance” entails. Within these varying definitions and examples, it is possible to depict certain trends and particular methodologies that scholars employ when discussing what indigenous resistance looks like. Discuss, then, the role that resistance has played within the literature of indigenous history/indigenous studies. How have various scholars defined indigenous resistance, and how has this definition changed over time within the academic literature? Moreover, discuss the importance of historical context when and the role that it plays in the production/understanding of indigenous resistance.

b) Recently, scholars of indigenous studies have discussed the concept of transnationality, and whether or not this particular methodology is useful or applicable to the study of indigenous history and/or contemporary indigenous studies. Some scholars, such as Chadwick Allen, have coined terms such as “transindigenous” as a means to provide a distinctly indigenous transnational methodology. Whether or not scholars believe transnationality to be a productive point of inquiry of methodological approach, the concept of the nation factors greatly within these discussions. How, then, have scholars defined “indigenous nationalism,” and in what ways do these nationalist models benefit from transnational methodologies? Furthermore, discuss the potential drawbacks to transnational ideologies and offer insight as to why the “transnational turn” may not be a useful approach within indigenous history/studies.

Group II

c) This past June, the plenary session at NAISA focused on the importance of gender and sexuality, and why these conversations are not only relevant, but a necessity. Moreover, the conversation surrounding indigenous gender, feminism, and sexuality is two-fold: not only do indigenous feminist works and theory intervene within broader indigenous studies scholarship, these works also intervene within the analyses of United States feminism and gender theory. First, discuss how indigenous queer and feminist histories and theories shape the fields of indigenous history/studies. Second, discuss the interaction between indigenous feminist scholarship and that of US women and gender studies.

d) Describe how you would organize a graduate seminar on federal Indian education policy and the Indian boarding school experience. What themes and authors would you emphasize? Explain why you would emphasize certain authors and their work over others. How would you apportion time in the syllabus for different topics?
e) One important strand within indigenous history and indigenous critical studies centers on examining how indigenous people and communities navigate modernity—creating opportunities for survival and transformation of colonial institutions. How do indigenous theories of sovereignty, law, and nation intersect with engagements of indigenous modernities? As part of your answer, discuss the importance of self-determination and sovereignty to formulating methodology and historical practice.

f) An emergent focus of indigenous studies and research has centered on sports as an institution that is simultaneously colonialist, and shaped by indigenous cultural practice and history. Discuss how sports programs have functioned as part of educational policy, and then consider how indigenous studies has started to engage sports studies. As part of your answer, identify some of the strands of inquiry defining this field. You should also consider how scholars working in indigenous studies have discussed embodiment, physicality, and the role of body within sports and within histories of trauma and survival.