Answer one question from each group. Be sure to cite appropriate Japanese and English-language scholarship in your responses.

1. A. How did “status” (*mibun*) function in early-modern Japan as normative system—and in operation; what is “status” in the context of early modern Japan? Provide a definition, and trace the development of the concept of status in the historiography since 1970. What are some of the differing definitions of status currently in use, and what sort of evidence do these scholars base their definitions on? What are the different approaches they take to the study of status?

   B. What does the Akō Incident reveal about Edo-era Japan at its midpoint?

2. A. The general view of gender relations in premodern Japanese history is generally conceptualized as a slow downward slope, from the high point of powerful female emperors in the Nara period down to the warrior-dominated Edo period, considered the nadir for women’s rights. To what degree is this concept reflected in the history of Japanese Buddhism? Using recent scholarship on women in Japanese Buddhism, provide evidence that either supports or refutes this general view.

   B. What was “religion” in Tokugawa Japan, and how did it relate to social practice?

3. A. Defend or refute the following assertion, citing specific works: There was no “nation” in early-modern Japan.

   B. Defend or refute the following statement, citing specific works in early-modern history: The “protoindustrialization” analysis of Tokugawa history is fundamentally incompatible with the “modernization school” analysis.