Minor Preliminary Examination in Modern European History

The total time available for this examination is five hours. Choose one question from each of the three sections. Be sure to discuss specific scholars and scholarly works where appropriate. A passing answer should include a discussion of the relevant history and historiography.

Category I: Answer one of the following

A: Why were modern states, in different contexts, concerned with sculpting a better, purer society? Discuss the techniques the regimes employed to gather knowledge about subjects and terrains with the stated goal of total transformation.

B: In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the borderland regions between the Baltic and the Black Sea were the sites of extraordinary violence. What role did ethnic divisions play in the intensification of violence in small towns and cities in the East European borderlands?

Category II: Answer one of the following

A: Discuss G. Eley and David Blackbourn, *The Peculiarities of German History*, on the writing of modern German history. What older notions of a “peculiar” German historical destiny did it replace, and what new conceptions have it and other works offered? To what extent does the critique of the Sonderweg not hold up?

B: At the end of World War II, the Nazi genocide of the Jews war largely subsumed under the category of war crimes and political resistance to dictatorship and foreign occupation. Over the last couple of decades, however, the Holocaust has come to be seen as one of the most important events in the twentieth century. This shift can be seen both in the historiography of the Third Reich and in the growing interest in genocide. What are the historiographical and methodological (as opposed to overtly political) reasons for this transformation in scholarly interest?

Category III: Answer one of the following

A: You are teaching a course on the twentieth century as revolution. Design a syllabus for upper-division seminar course that explores this theme in political, cultural, social, and intellectual terms.

B: Trace the main currents of conservative thought in continental western Europe over the course of the long nineteenth century, from 1789 to 1914. Be sure to attempt basic definitions.