Section I

1. To what extent is it possible to write a history of education in Egypt? Reviewing the extant literature, what approaches, themes, and topics have been developed so far, and what is lacking or remaining to be done? How does that history relate to or inform our knowledge of modern Egyptian history generally? What frame would work best?

2. The nineteenth and twentieth centuries have been described as an era of reform, Europeanization, Westernization, or modernization, but in any event as essentially a reaction or response to an external stimulus. Alternatively, some authors emphasize the indigenous roots of the reform and modernization process. What are their main arguments and can their views be reconciled?

Section II

1. An enduring concern in historical and social science scholarship on the Middle East is the role of religion and religious leaders in politics and society. Explain how those roles changed during the 19th and 20th centuries in the Ottoman Empire (including Egypt) and its successor states, and Iran. What factors account for different outcomes in different states/societies?

2. The literature on women, gender, and the family in Middle Eastern history has developed unevenly in terms of chronological “coverage,” sources used, and themes or subjects addressed. Assess the literature you have sampled that addresses this history. Is it possible at this point to construct an outline of this history during the past two to three centuries? What changes should be highlighted and how would they be explained? What gaps need to be investigated? And how could this history be integrated into “mainstream” narratives?

Section III

1. Albert Hourani suggested that we should regard Arab nationalism and Islamism, or “political Islam,” as kindred movements. Others, of course, have stressed the ideological differences and political competition between the two. What are the arguments and is it possible to reconcile them?

2. How would an encyclopedia essay or a lecture series on the political history of the 20th c. Middle East be organized best? What are the main themes and sub-themes you would use to organize your discussion, and what interpretational emphases would work best?