Modern US (post-1830)

Please answer at least one question from each section, and three questions in all, with essays that are clearly argued and well-supported by evidence.

SECTION ONE

1. The nature of slavery in the antebellum American South has been the focus of a long and lively scholarly debate. Was it profitable? Was it capitalistic? Was it paternalistic? Did it encourage or discourage resistance among those held in bondage? Trace the main lines of that debate, identify some of the main participants and their views, and then give and defend your own view of the subject.

2. The source(s) of "sectional conflict" and then of the U. S.'s Civil War itself has been the subject of sharp debate since the war began and even before that. Trace the main lines of that debate, identify some of the main participants and their views, and then give and defend your own view of the subject.

3. The Lincoln administration embarked upon the Civil War with a narrowly-framed goal. By 1865 (and especially by 1869), however, the Republican party’s program had gone far beyond that modest aim. And then, over the following decade, that same party retreated substantially from its most ambitious plans for transforming the South and the Union. First, account for the narrowness of the original aim. Then explain the reason for the broadening of the Republicans’ goals between 1861 and 1869. Finally, give your explanation for the defeat of/retreat from the project of Reconstruction during the 1870s.

SECTION TWO

1. Who were the Progressives? What was Progressivism and how did it either continue or depart from populism? What did it accomplish? Who were the main beneficiaries and constituencies of Progressive reforms?

2. What explains the four decades of dominance of the New Deal coalition? What social and electoral forces did it bring together and around what ideas and programs? Why did it ultimately collapse?

3. What twentieth century political mobilization or historical event best explains the contours of the modern American nation-state? The Wilson/Progressive Era? The New Deal? World War II and/or the Cold War?