Answer one question from each pair. You should select questions that will enable you to discuss a broad range of scholarship without much overlap in your answers. You should also select questions that will enable you to demonstrate some chronological reach. This means that you should touch on both nineteenth and twentieth century developments in the exam as a whole.

**Pair I**

1) In what sense did the Reconstruction period represent a revolutionary change in government power, citizenship, race relations, and economic conditions and structures? To what degree did federal policy shape these changes? How does a consideration of gender shape historical understandings of Reconstruction? What are the recent contributions and challenges to the periodization, scale and focus of the Reconstruction era?

2) Nationalism has often been defined in terms of the identity between one unitary nation-state and its citizen-subjects. With the complexities of U.S. national development in mind, construct an argument that complicates this simplistic definition of the “nation” and argue when (e.g., in 1783, after the Civil War, after 1898, after World War II, etc.) you think the United States came the closest to achieving “true” nationhood.

**Pair II**

1) How have borderlands scholarship and attentiveness to settler colonialism affected understandings of antebellum American slavery and especially its gendered dynamics?

2) How would you periodize the history of U.S. consumerism since 1865 and how would that periodization fit with or diverge from the major turning points in U.S. labor history in this period?

**Pair III**

1) How can the United States be thought of as an “empire”? In particular, examine the idea of “informal empire.” Why has the concept of informal empire been productive for historians of American foreign relations in understanding the twentieth and twentieth centuries? How do, or how might, historians today critique the limitations of informal empire?

2) To what extent have the transnational turn and attention to empire reshaped older understandings of public policy in the Progressive Era, stretching back to Robert Wiebe’s *The Search for Order*? Has recent scholarship just broadened geographies or has it led to a fundamental reconsideration of what progressive politics entailed?