Modern US History
Spring 2014 Written Prelim

SECTION ONE

Please answer at least one question from this section with responses featuring both argument and evidence. For the full exam you will write on three questions.

1) In the history of the United States over the course of the 19th century, in what ways does emancipation represent a fundamental rupture with the prior history of chattel slavery? In what ways (if any) does it represent a continuation of fundamental social structures? Speak to questions of oppression and resistance on the terrain of race, class, and gender.

2) What is the role of 1898 in the history of American empire? How had empire developed prior to that year, and what, if anything, changed about the imperial trajectory of the United States afterward?

3) What was been the relationship between capitalism and white supremacy in the 19th century United States? How did it change during this period? Couch your answer in terms of three key economic categories: production, reproduction, and consumption.

SECTION TWO

1. In the 1960s, the historians Gilbert Oskofsky and Allan Spear pioneered the study of black urbanization through documenting patterns of segregation, employment discrimination, urban blight, and institution building in turn-of-the century Chicago and New York, putting the Great Migration on the historiographical map. What have been the major advancements in the field of urban studies since the so-called ghetto synthesis?

2. In what has become one of the most accessed articles in the Journal of American History, Jacqueline Dowd Hall introduced the concept of the Long Civil Rights Movement. To what extent and in what ways has the broadening, extending, and diversifying of the study of the civil rights movement expanded our understanding and
to what extent has the new scholarship possibly obscured or distorted the meaning of the black southern mobilization against second-class citizenship itself?

3. In the 1970s, black lesbian feminists such as Audre Lorde and Barbara Smith decried the absence of theoretical frameworks for understanding the experience of black women, inaugurating scholarly inquiry into the meaning and operation of the intersection. Since then, on the one hand, the concept of the intersection was incorporated in Women’s Studies programs and curriculum, and, on the other hand, there it has remained, arguably irrelevant to urban history, race relations, and civil rights scholarship. How might this concern with multiple sites of mobilization and the simultaneity of oppression be addressed and advanced in historical scholarship? In your answer, discuss historiographical examples of the intersection and develop a plan for research in primary sources that would permit you to explore the dynamics historical intersections.