PLEASE ANSWER THREE OF THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

Read through the questions carefully and decide how you wish to answer them. Take a deep breath. Relax. Good luck.

1. While the tsarist state defined itself as an empire, the USSR claimed to offer a different model of inter-ethnic relations. How well does a colonial model explain relations (political, economic, social, and cultural) between the Russian center and the mainly non-Russian peripheries of the empire and the Soviet Union from the 1600s through the 1980s? Elaborate your arguments and offer specific examples that reflect at least three different historical periods. You may wish to focus on a particular region.

2. The evolving relationship between peasants and political power is one of the enduring themes of Russian history, from the first beginnings of Rus’ to the great upheavals (collectivization, war, urbanization) of the twentieth century. Pick any two important junctions in this story (one pre-1917, one after) and discuss how historians have portrayed this dynamic, its continuities and its changes. Then compare the two literatures in question (for instance, if you chose one Muscovite and one Soviet example, how do the two literatures differ, in terms of their interests and approach, when thinking about peasants and political power?). What if any larger generalizations are possible, across the span of Russian history and historiography?

3. World War II is often treated as a great watershed in Soviet life. Most histories of “Stalinism,” on the one hand, focus on the 1930s, while many recent studies of the Soviet Union have centered on its history “post-war.” To what extent is this customary division justified? How much was the course of Soviet history transformed by World War II, and how, specifically? What, on the other hand, are the most important continuities between pre- and post-war life in the Soviet Union?

4. Imagine an undergraduate lecture on the subject of the ‘intelligentsia’ in nineteenth century Russia. How would you explain the concept, and describe its importance for late Imperial Russian life?

5. Does "Stalinism" represent the genetically determined outcome of Russian history? Or at least of post-October 1917 history? To what extent is "Stalinism" a direct descendent of "Leninism"? To what extent is Stalinism a direct descendant of Romanov political culture or of the “Mongol yoke”? Define Leninism and Stalinism, and discuss the arguments for and against the ideas that (1) Stalinism is a continuation of Leninist ideals and practices, (2) it has its roots further back in Russia’s past.