Preliminary Examination                                                                                         April 2011

Europe including Russia (Minor Field)

PLEASE ANSWER THREE QUESTIONS, ONE FROM EACH SECTION:

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

1. Historical Consciousness

A. In your judgment, why has the concept and category of memory become such an urgent and omnipresent concern of historians today? What are the major bodies of scholarly work produced by historians on the topic? What are the possibilities and the limitations of studying the subject historically?

B. Discuss how the category of revolution interacted with the idea of history in the minds of nineteenth-century (and, if you like, early twentieth-century) Europeans.

2. Consumption and Consumer Society

A. Adam Smith wrote in *The Wealth of Nations*, “Consumption is the sole end and purpose of all production.” Assuming that authoritarian regimes can choose whether and how to apply this principle, discuss the role played by consumption in the relationship between authoritarian regimes of twentieth century Europe (including Russia) and their subjects.

B. Theorists of consumption, including Thorstein Veblen and Mary Douglas, argue that commodities possess both a “use value” and a “sign value,” and the latter is a key component of signaling distinction, including class but also gender and national identities. Considering the broad frame of Europe in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, can we speak of “consumer choices”? How was the act of consumption used to consolidate social identities? How was consumption utilized to signal political positions and claims for resources?

3. European History including Russia

A. Discuss how the historiographies of the French and Russian revolutions embellished and revised each other in the years after 1917 and also in the years after 1989.

B. The relationship of authoritarian societies and their subjects has been analyzed in terms of “total control,” “collaboration,” “resistance.” Considering the three authoritarian regimes in Italy, Germany, and the USSR in the twentieth century, discuss the key historiographical approaches to this relationship.