Russian History (Major Field)

PLEASE ANSWER THREE OF THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

Relax. Breathe. 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. Considering “Russian social thought” (as Andrzej Walicki called it) from the Decembrists to Lenin, select two or three persistent themes or problems and examine their history (continuities and differences) across this century. You may select key figures in different periods to exemplify positions, rather than attempt to be comprehensive (and thus superficial).

3. If we place "civil society" and "dictatorship" at opposite ends of a spectrum of political participation, where do scholars place (1) late imperial Russia (1899-1914) and (2) Stalin-era USSR (1928-1953)? In other words, what is the relationship of the individual to the state in each of these periods?

4. Every political regime seeks to legitimize its authority through ideology, public rituals, and various forms of communication and persuasion. What were the forms and, most important, the ideological content of how state power was legitimated (and its purposes defined) during the regimes of Catherine II, Nicholas I, and V. I. Lenin.

5. The “cultural revolution” after 1917 had many dimensions. One of the most ambitious, perhaps, was transforming the position of women, and with them, the family. What was the situation of “women and family” prior to the revolution, and how did the revolutionaries expect this to change? How did “difference” (ethnic, class, religious, urban-rural) affect their programs, failures, and successes?