Choose at least one question from each section below (three questions in all) and write responses supporting a clear analysis with ample and well-chosen evidence.

SECTION ONE:

1. Historian Jack P. Greene argues that sociocultural development in early modern colonial societies involved the inheritance of old world forms and the Anglicization of society on the one hand, but also social simplification and creolization on the other. Describe the development of one major region in colonial British America in ways that makes sense of this core tension between European source cultures and American experiences.

2. Over the past four decades, historians have broadly revised our understanding of the history of slavery. Assess the most important characterizations and conclusions that have created this new perspective on the origins and evolution of racial slavery in colonial British America. How can the next generation of historians generate new knowledge about the history of slavery in the shadow of this revisionist historiography?

3. Why did the American Revolution take place? Assess the key arguments and debates that historians have engaged in to answer this question. Point the way forward to new approaches that might help us ask and answer this question effectively in the future.

SECTION TWO

1. Historians have debated whether the American Revolution was “radical” – and, if it was, in what sense it was. Review the historiography on this question and supply your own judgment on that historiography and the question it addresses.

2. How did the American Revolution affect the status and condition of white women, African Americans, and Native Americans? In the case of each group, did independence from the British Empire bring improvement, decline, or some complex combination of both? Discuss both the historiography of this question and present your own opinion.

3. During both the revolution and the creation of the federal constitution, the northern and southern colonies (and later states) managed to work together despite differences. In 1819-20, Thomas Jefferson judged the Union to be on the brink of destruction. What changes had taken place in U. S. society that produced so dramatic a deterioration of
inter-sectional relations by 1820? And why did Jefferson’s worst fears not materialize in that year?

SECTION THREE:

1. Historians have long periodized or divided the U.S. narrative by reference to revolutions—the American Revolution for independent citizenship, the Reconstruction-era extension of equal protection and enfranchisement, the New Deal revolution in social welfare liberalism. Yet the history of counter-revolutionary impulses seems undeniable, particularly the history of disenfranchisement and anti-statist conservatives. To what extent is the modern rightward turn a reaction against our liberal tradition and to what extent would you simply characterize conservatives as a staple, even static foundation, of American political culture?

2. Historians of U.S. politics have too often treated the south as the great exception—because of race relations—while paying too little attention to the impact of African American presence and mobilizations in the rest of the nation. Drawing on your reading of modern political history, how would you describe and evaluate the impact of race versus other dynamics (of class or region) on electoral politics and social policy-making. (Note that race is defined broadly here to include ethnicity and whiteness).