Fall 2010 U.S. in the world prelim

General instructions:
You should answer one question from each pair. Since coverage matters in an exam of this nature, you should try to pick questions that will enable you to discuss as wide a range of scholarship as possible.

**Pair 1:**
Examine how race has been an important focus in the historiography of U.S. foreign relations in the twentieth century. In what ways does a focus on race, racism, and racial formations provide perspectives that a purely political perspective could elide? Explore some of the ways in which recent studies of race have put forward counter-intuitive arguments about race and its impact on U.S. foreign relations.

Examining the literature of 1898, compare and contrast how a traditional international relations model would approach the relationship between “culture” and “politics” and how social history and cultural history approaches have done so. What are the explanatory strengths of each approach? Explore the weaknesses.

**Pair 2:**
Should Latin America really be seen as “empire’s workshop”? Why or why not? Be sure to consider different historians’ perspectives on this question when formulating your answer.

How have historians assessed President Wilson’s legacies for U.S. foreign relations through the Truman administration? In answering this question, you should consider the following questions as well: how relevant are the terms “realism” and “idealism” for understanding U.S. foreign relations debates in this time period? How exceptional was Wilson’s thinking on international relations?

**Pair 3:**
Thinking especially from the vantage point of “transnational” subjects (whether they are hegemonic elites or subalterns), how would you assess the changes to historical thinking augured by transnationalism? Discuss and explain the fundamental questions that it raises. What contributions has it made to our understanding of these questions? Finally, argue whether or not it has reached its fullest potential as a new thematic in the field.

How have transnational and world history approaches affected our understanding of the Cold War, if at all? What new issues have these approaches brought to the fore and how have they altered older understandings of power and politics and the relations between domestic and foreign affairs during this time period? And finally, what are some of the limitations or shortcomings to recent scholarship written in these veins?