Ph.D. Preliminary Examination
Field: Latin American History
April 2015

Respond to One Question in Each Section

Section I:

a) Discuss the evolution of labor systems in Spanish America through the colonial period, up to circa 1810. What drove this evolution? In framing your answer, draw on evidence from at least two mainland regions.

b) How has the discussion of race and ethnicity in the historiography on colonial Latin America changed over the past 50 years? Cite and discuss at least six key studies (in total) about Meso-America and South America. What was the impact of US “critical race studies” on the debates in Latin American colonialist historiography? What were specific conceptual/methodological contributions by colonialist Latin Americanist historians (especially from the region itself) to the broader debates on the history of race and ethnicity, and how have they stood the test of time?

Section II:

a) How is the history of Guatemala reflective of major themes in the broader history of Latin America? Are there critical ways in which its history is different? Cite at least three examples of parallels or discontinuities in your response.

b) Writing at the turn of the twenty-first century, one historian commented on the dramatic increase of scholarship about gender in Latin America the last thirty years and suggested that that increase made the field difficult to survey. “[I] will leave to a future historian,” the scholar wrote, “the task of evaluating whether gender analysis has moved ‘from the margins to center’ in the ways historians have integrated it, or at least mentioned it, in studies that do not specifically focus on gender or women.” In your view, is gender now at the “center”? Please answer this question by providing an overview of literature on the national period, with attention to works explicitly and primarily dedicated to gender and those focused more fully on other topics.

Section III:

a) Brazil and Mexico underwent significant industrialization and diversification of their economies in the twentieth century. Yet one of the two countries had a social revolution and the other did not. Did the revolution in Mexico have a notable effect on its economic development in a way that the absence of a revolution in Brazil did not?

b) Liberalism was exactly the right ideology to guide nineteenth century Latin America politically and economically.” Discuss this claim with reference to any three countries.