**Literature Survey in Latin American History II**

Spring 2022

Please respond to a total of two questions from the options below—selecting one question from PART I and one question from PART II. Answer with cogent and well-organized analytical essays, using specific historical examples and historiographical interpretations to make your own original argument. You may use parenthetical citations for any text on the syllabus; use full citations for outside material. You will have eight (8) hours to complete the exam. Please email your responses as an attachment to [mweber@gc.cuny.edu](mailto:mweber@gc.cuny.edu).

**PART I (Choose 1):**

1. Woodrow Borah’s *New Spain’s Century of Depression* was published in 1951. There is probably no other work in Latin American historiography which has generated so much debate and historical research and writing by scholars. This was well into the 1980s and even beyond.  
   Borah developed an analytical framework to explain the 17th-century downturn in silver production which revolved around Indigenous demographic collapse. However, New Spain, even if there was an actual ‘depression’ was only one part of a very complex series of multiple economic systems in Latin America and the Caribbean which were very different from Central Mexico (contemporary). These varied geographically and over time.  
   Discuss economic structures throughout this vast region, and how they changed over time. Be certain to include Brazil in your consideration.
2. How has colonial Latin American historiography changed since the publication of Charles Gibson’s *The Aztecs Under Spanish Rule: A History of the Indians of the Valley of Mexico, 1519-1810* (Stanford, 1961)? What were some of the major contributions of Gibson’s work? What was the focus on the next couple of generations of scholarship in colonial Latin America studies? What ideas about state, society and economy emerge from Gibson and the subsequent studies? What themes did they overlook? What have been recent correctives? What are your critiques of the revisionists’? In crafting a response, offer a general overview of colonial Latin American history but then spell out some of the main areas of change.

**PART II (Choose 1):**

1. How have space, territory, administrative units (like viceroyalties) or concepts like ‘core’ figured in the histories of Latin America? What and where have been stressed as ‘core’ areas? What, in turn, has been obscured? What form and focus have revisionism assumed? In crafting an answer, please draw on specific texts.
2. Related to the complexity of Latin American and Caribbean economic systems was the evolution of labor systems and structures which served export economic activities as well as those directed toward internal markets which have not received the same ‘coverage’ as the external sector.  
   Discuss how labor systems evolved and were transformed in the core areas of Spanish colonization – Meso America/the Andes – and in Brazil.