

PhD Program in History
Fall 2022, First Exam in Latin American History

Please choose **two** questions, one from **Part I** and one from **Part II**, and prepare your answers in essay format. The essays should make clear and persuasive arguments, supported with appropriate historiographical evidence from the course material. Please provide precise examples from this semester's literature; citations are not necessary and can be informal for any work on the syllabus, unless you are quoting verbatim.

You have eight hours to complete both essays, which are weighted equally. Please submit your essays to Marilyn Weber (mweber@gc.cuny.edu)

Part I

A) In an essay, describe Latin America's nation-making period. When did it begin and end, and what is your reasoning in designating these dates? What were the central social, political, and economic concerns of Latin America's elites during this era? To what extent were these concerns shared or challenged by non-elites, including people of indigenous and African descent? Include attention to regional variation where appropriate.

B) How have historiographical approaches to the question of causality in Latin American history changed over the past 30-35 years? In other words, how have historians of Latin America conceptualized the principal causes of historical change over these years? To what extent do historians point to structural factors or to human agency as centrally important in spurring change? Which structural factors, and which individuals or groups of individuals, do these historians deem most important in causing change?

Part II

A) Using specific examples to support your argument, write an essay that explores the relationship between land, labor, settlement, production, and politics in Latin America from the end of the colonial period to the late twentieth century. In your answer you might consider the significance of struggles over the control, use and occupation of land, and the role notions of the 'frontier' and/or 'borders' played in the projection or assertion of power by particular political leaders, states, economic interest groups and ethnic/racial communities.

B) Discuss liberalism "in theory and practice" as it played out in different Latin American societies from the late 18th through the 20th century. Was liberalism a set of aspirational ideals, philosophical principles, concrete economic and social policies, or the basis of specific political movements or parties? In what ways did liberalism shape questions of political participation, rights, land tenure, and the economy? If relevant in the specific cases you use to support your argument, please identify and discuss contradictions or tensions present in societies where the dominant systems of production, labor, and political access were exclusionary or unfree. Be sure to illustrate your argument with reference to the experience of specific countries/regions and time periods.