INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION
WINTER 2015

Instructions

Please answer one question from each section. The examination will last six hours; you should spend approximately two hours on each question you answer. This is a closed book and closed note examination. Please limit each answer to 1,000 words. A good answer will make a cogent argument, make ample use of appropriate scholarship, and use empirical evidence / examples as needed. Short parenthetical citations are sufficient (example: Waltz TIP, Keohane, AH).

Section 1: International Relations Theory

A. Why do liberal international relations theorists think that relations among states might be relatively pacific despite the absence of world government? Do you find their arguments persuasive?
B. Can China rise peacefully? Why or why not?

Section 2: International Political Economy

A. A main assumption of the literature on international finance is that countries lack credibility on a spectrum of economic policies. For three policies, describe why the government may lack credibility, the potential cost of the lack of credibility, and what mechanisms governments use to build credibility.
B. Discuss the conditions under which international institutions are most effective at managing issues that arise in the international political economy.

Section 3: International Security

A. Select one of the competing theories of national security affairs (realism, culture, bureaucratic politics, etc). Describe it: What is its overarching logic, what are its specific predictions (outcomes), and what are its testable propositions (causal mechanisms)? Apply the theory to a substantive national security issue either current or historical. Why would it be appropriate? What insights would it provide us?
B. Joseph Nye recently wrote an article arguing that cyber warfare constitutes a Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA) and proposing that we assess its potential impact by comparison and contrast with the Nuclear Revolution. What is Nye’s specific argument? How would you assess it? What, if anything, can we glean from the Nuclear Revolution (or any other RMA) to help us understand what effect, if any, cyber warfare will have on the international security environment? Be sure to both define “RMA” and outline the details of the Nuclear Revolution.
Instructions:

Answer one (1) question from each set of questions.

The exam is **closed book and closed note**, and lasts six hours (unless you have made prior arrangements). Do not consult any outside materials. Please limit each answer to **1000 words**. **Keep track of time.**

Good answers will make cogent arguments, will use and cite scholars and scholarship liberally, will grapple with contending paradigms, theories, and explanations, and will use real world examples as needed. Very short parenthetical citations are sufficient (Waltz TIP, for example).

1. **IR Theory**

A. The essence of liberalism is that anarchy can be mitigated or overcome. There are a number of approaches (schools of thought, bodies of theory, theories, etc.) in international relations that offer some hope for such progress. Assess two of these approaches. How do they offer a theory of progress? What empirical support is there for each approach? How persuasive is the approach in the face of realist critiques? The more specifically you can name authors, schools of thought, and offer empirical support, the better.

B. Which level of analysis explains the most about great powers' foreign policies and international relations? For example, structuralists claim to predict outcomes, without reference to processes. What outcomes are they referring to and are they right? Are these outcomes (if any) important? What interactions exist between levels? In your answer, please cite specific authors, arguments, and historical facts and trends.

2. **IPE**

A. The Euro illustrates hazards and opportunities created by a common currency. Explain.

B. Does globalization inevitably lead to a ‘race to the bottom,’ defined as a cross-national and downward convergence in national economic and social policies ranging from wages to environmental regulations. Drawing on theoretical as well as empirical evidence, assess the validity of these claims. For instance, what causal mechanisms underlie the "race to the bottom" argument?
3. Security

A. What does it mean to say that war is “rational”? Are there different ways of considering it so? What are the alternatives to a rationalist theory of war? How could otherwise rational actors go to war when it is not in their interest to do so?

B. Discuss the concept of “asymmetric conflict:” What does it mean? What are the various factors that might be out of balance between two belligerents and how might they affect the outcome of conflict between them? Discuss asymmetric conflict at the nuclear, conventional, and irregular levels of warfare.
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Section 1: International Relations Theory

A. What can International Relations theory tell us about the implications of the increasing economic importance of countries such as Brazil, China, and India for the global system?

B. Compare and contrast definitions of the state in at least two of the traditional International Relations perspectives (i.e. Realism, Liberalism, World Systems Theory, and Constructivism). Do international terrorist organizations such as Al Qaeda require rethinking the assumptions, causal logic, or predictions of these theories?

Section 2: International Political Economy

A. Explain the nature of the “exorbitant privilege” that the US has been claimed to possess due to the dominance of the dollar as the major international currency. Is the possession of this privilege good for the US?

B. Critically examine the society-centered approach to the determination of trade policy based on the Heckscher-Ohlin-Stolper-Samuelson theory.

Section 3: International Security

A. In Wired for War, Peter Singer claims that the development of new weapons is occurring at an ever faster rate (akin to Moore’s Law whereby computing power doubles every 18 months). Please use theories about the Causes of War to assess the impact of this development. Do these theories predict more or less war?

B. At times, China seems to pride itself on its foreign policy of "peaceful rise" or "peaceful development." However, China has also been more assertive of late regarding the South China Sea, and it often increases its defense budget by double digit percentages. How can International Relations/Foreign Policy theorists explain each of these facets as well as the apparent contradiction?
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION
January 2013

Instructions

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Section 1: International Relations Theory

A. For some theorists, the behavior of states is determined primarily by their internal characteristics. By contrast, other theorists argue that state behavior is shaped primarily by their position in the international system, and especially by their relative power. Which view do you think is most accurate?

B. Does the prisoner’s dilemma capture the essence of international politics? Are other "games" just as important?

Section 2: International Political Economy

A. Briefly describe the hegemonic stability theory. Critically examine its relevance to some major questions of International Political Economy.

B. What is the role of domestic democratic politics in the study of International Political Economy (IPE)? Comparing across issue areas, across time, or both, discuss when models of domestic politics are central to IPE discussions and when they are peripheral.

Section 3: International Security

A. The term “coalition of the willing” emerged after the Cold War, and has been applied to conflicts including the Iraq War and the intervention in Libya. Does the term present challenges to traditional theories of alliance formation? Explain how traditional theories of alliance formation explain these coalitions and if new theory/ies are needed.

B. Taking into consideration issues from deterrence to causes and effects of war, explain if and how cyber war is similar to traditional war using armies.