

International Relations

Past Comprehensive Exam Questions

(Note: you may see duplicate questions)

January 2008

Answer three of the following questions. Your answers will be judged by (a) how well you make a well-written and reasoned answer; and (b) how well you bring the reading of the field, via citation of authors and articles and books, to bear in your answer.

- (1) Chinese spokesmen have claimed that their country is embarked on a "peaceful rise." That is, China will emerge as a major world power in a peaceful manner, without major disruption to the international system. Some scholars think, however, that a change in the general distribution of power in the international system occasions major war, or comes about through major war. Without necessarily discussing the specifics of the Chinese case, survey the relevant international relations and foreign policy literature and speculate on whether "peaceful rise" is a theoretically plausible concept.
- (2) Some scholars suggest that economic globalization limits the autonomy of the state. Other scholars, however, suggest that the constraining effect of economic globalization on state policy-making autonomy is minimal. Critically evaluate both claims. Has globalization tightly restricted the flexibility of national economic policy making? Be sure to discuss the literature from both schools of thought and expose the assumptions of various analysts who argue one way or the other.
- (3) Ethnic conflict is a subject of major interest for IR scholars. How different is ethnic conflict from interstate conflict? Do the two forms of conflict share similar causes? If so, which? If not, how are they different? Compare and contrast these two forms of conflict using major theories found in the causes of war and conflict prevention and resolution literatures. Be specific when citing theories, arguments, authors, and when marshaling empirical evidence.
- (4) Alexander Wendt argues that "anarchy is what states make of it." How does Wendt's approach -- and social constructivism, in general -- pose a challenge to realism and liberalism in international relations theory? How are the approaches similar? On what specific conceptual grounds do they differ? Be sure to offer your opinion of the constructivist challenge. Use empirical examples from more than one substantive subfield of international relations to illustrate your argument.
- (5) A world of defensively-armed states would be a peaceful one. Discuss.

January 2009

Good answers will make cogent arguments, will use and cite scholars and scholarship liberally, and will use real world examples as needed. Very short parenthetical citations are sufficient. Try to keep each answer under 1000 words.

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

SET 1

A) A main assumption of the IPE literature on international finance is that countries lack credibility on a spectrum of economic policies. Consider at least three policies. Describe for each why the government may lack credibility, the potential cost of the lack of credibility, and what mechanisms government's use to build credibility.

B) Some observers see globalization as a recent process, occurring over the last few decades, and producing lasting changes in the structure of global politics; others view globalization more as a long-run historical process, one which ebbs and flows over time. Address the nature and effects of globalization in the following manner: (a) briefly define "globalization"; (b) discuss the impact of globalization on two of the following domestic policy areas - taxation; welfare state provisions; labor standards and working conditions; or macroeconomic management; and (c) discuss whether globalization, given your response in section (b), is "something new" or part of a longer-range historical process.

SET 2

A) In the contemporary era, rational choice-oriented approaches occupy a prominent position within political science, and, therefore, within international relations scholarship. To what extent does rational choice provide an appropriate lens through which to analyze international politics? What are the advantages of rationalist approaches, and what are the shortcomings? Your answer should make reference to specific bodies of literature and/or authors.

B) Imagine that you were forced to write a book about the role of ideas, norms, or culture (your choice, pick one) in international relations. Your task in this essay is to find a puzzle and set up a research design related to this overall question: "How do ideas, norms, or culture influence relations between states?" Specify your puzzle and tell us how you would structure a research project to resolve the puzzle. What methods would you use, how would you use them, and why?

SET 3

A) What functions do international institutions serve? After specifying what you mean by an international institution, for each function provide a concrete example and explain how and under what conditions the institution affects states' foreign economic or military policy.

B) In a bold and counterintuitive claim, political scientist Kenneth Waltz suggests that the spread of nuclear weapons is not such a bad thing: Why might this be the case? What do you think of his argument? What are the major criticisms of it? How would you test it, both in terms of method and evidence?

C) One of the central debates regarding US foreign policy in recent years has been between those who claim that US assertion of national interest in a unilateral manner is good politics and likely to be effective in achieving its goals, and those who consider US policy most effective if it

unfolds within a multilateral framework. Discuss these contending claims, highlighting normative, theoretical and empirical differences between them regarding traditional issues of international politics such as realism, power, hegemony, and alliance politics.

May 2009

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

The exam is six hours long, closed book. Do not consult any outside materials. Please limit each answer to 1000 words.

Good answers will make cogent arguments, will use and cite scholars and scholarship liberally, and will use real world examples as needed. Very short parenthetical citations are sufficient (Waltz TIP, for example). Keep track of time.

SET 1

A. Since the end of the Cold War (roughly), IR scholarship has seen the rise of theories that stress the influence of culture, ideas, and identities on world politics. In an essay critically assess this trend through answering two questions: 1) considered in comparison to the (still) reigning theories of realism and liberalism, what aspects of global politics do these new theories succeed in explaining better? (You are free to answer none.) Explain the logic behind your answer. 2) Choose a major event in world politics during the past century -- a war, an economic crisis, a system transformation, and the like -- and show whether theories of culture, etc., offer a distinct explanation, what such an explanation accounts for that the others do not, and whether you find this explanation more persuasive than its competitors.

B. For more than a decade pundits have been declaring that "the sovereign state is just about dead" (Krasner, Stephen. 2001. "Sovereignty" Foreign Policy). How has the concept of sovereignty changed over the last 300 years? To what extent, and in which areas, has national autonomy waned, and to what extent and in which areas has national autonomy waxed?

C. Economic globalization has increased dramatically during the last two decades, with trade and financial integration reaching levels as high as, or higher than, those seen before the First World War. As a result, both scholars and activists are concerned about the extent to which economic globalization reduces state autonomy and generates a "race to the bottom" in a variety of economic and social policies. What is the specific logic of the "race to the bottom" argument? How accurate, according to the scholarly literature in IPE, is the "race to the bottom" claim? What sorts of further research might be necessary to assess this claim? Be sure to cite specific articles and/or books in your response.

SET 2

A. Discuss the comparative strengths and weaknesses of Large-N and case study research. As you discuss their general comparative dis/advantages, you are encouraged to cite works which use these techniques to good and poor effect. In addition, please offer with one or two research questions which should combine both approaches to obtain maximum leverage on the question, and explain in detail why the two approaches would be complementary.

B. A core problem shared by rationalists and constructivists/ideationalists is the identification of preferences. Even more difficult is tracking the origins, evolution, and changes of preferences. How do rationalists and constructivists/ideationalists discuss and cope with preferences? What methodologies can be used to identify and track preferences, and which are most effective/most useful? In your answer, please refer to specific authors, research programs (debates, books, articles, etc), and issue-areas which explicitly confront preference formation and identification.

SET 3

A. The collective action problem is frequently assumed to prevent domestic and international actors from realizing their jointly preferred outcome. Describe the concept. Then for three different policy areas (for example: security, trade, and human rights), offer examples from the literature and provide both an overview and an evaluation of the different mechanisms recommended to overcome the collective action problem.

B. Assess the debate between offensive and defensive realism.

September 2009

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

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Good answers will make cogent arguments, will use and cite scholars and scholarship liberally, and will use real world examples as needed. Very short parenthetical citations are sufficient (Waltz TIP, for example). Keep track of time.

SET 1 (rationalism)

A) Realism has traditionally been regarded as the rationalist theory, par excellence. But the status of the rational actor assumption in the most recent articulation of the paradigm -- Kenneth Waltz's Neo- or Structural Realism -- is unclear at best. Where and how does Neorealism diverge from Realism on the rational actor assumption? How and why can Neorealism eschew the rational actor assumption? What are the major advantages and disadvantages of this move? You may disagree with the premises of some of these questions, but you must still address them and explain your views.

B) Scholarship on the causes of war may be divided into two camps. On one side are those who argue that war is a rational pursuit that states engage in for Clausewitzian purposes and *raison d'état*. On the other hand, a significant number of scholars find that war is caused mostly by miscalculation and misperception. Who are the most prominent scholars in each camp and what are their arguments? Whose arguments do you find most persuasive and why? Support your views with case study, large N, or other empirical evidence.

SET 2 (essence of IR)

A. Some years ago Notre Dame decided not to teach area-specific courses in international relations--with, of course, the exception of American foreign policy--and does not include area-specific courses on the comprehensive examination. Is the implicit assumption here that the United States is the only country that has a foreign policy that matters and the rest of the world is pretty much of a piece? Or that international relations is international relations and to understand it requires no particular historical, cultural, historical, linguistic, or other competence? Or what? Develop a rationalization for Notre Dame's curricular choice. What might explain how this came about?

B) What is the social constructivist challenge to neorealism and neoliberalism? Discuss the ways in which constructivist approaches undermine, reinforce, or depart from these approaches.

C) Does the prisoner's dilemma capture the essence of international politics?

SET 3 (issue areas)

A) Some observers, both scholars and pundits, claim that economic globalization generates a "race to the bottom," a cross-national and downward convergence in national economic and social policies. As a result of this convergence, nation-states lose much of their contemporary relevance. 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? What is the role of domestic politics and institutions in the argument? Does the argument apply more to some groups of nations than to others?

B) In what ways has the potential of multilateral institutions to facilitate cooperation in areas such as the war in Afghanistan, the effort to mitigate climate change, **or** the attempts to revive the global economy been fundamentally altered for better or worse by

a) American military supremacy since the end of the Cold War?

b) the rise of terrorist organizations or other organized non-state transnational actors? **and**

c) the change of philosophies about foreign policy among US administrations?

Note that you do not have to address all the issue areas in the first part. You do have to address all three influences on cooperation, ie a), b), and c). Your answer must be theoretically grounded. What theories of IR/FP can you bring to bear on the issue area/s you select, and on the three identified influences on cooperation?

C) There are at least two competing views on China's future role in the Asia-Pacific region. According to one interpretation, China is a cautious regional power whose leadership is mostly interested in keeping the country together and consolidating its own position. According to the opposite view, the rapid growth in China's economic and military capabilities suggests that it has expansive regional and even global ambitions. Discuss various factors/theories that can be used to account for China's future international position and outline the key differences between the competing views.

May 2010

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

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Good answers will make cogent arguments, will use and cite scholars and scholarship liberally, and will use real world examples as needed. Very short parenthetical citations are sufficient (Waltz TIP, for example). Keep track of time.

SET 1 (IPE)

A. The rapid rise of China threatens the predominant liberal free-trade model that governs most trade between states. Assess the validity of this claim. What are the components of the free-trade model? How, if at all, do China's trade patterns and strategy differ from this model? Spend a few words at the end assessing the real-world implications of your argument.

B. What lessons about the global financial system do the recent Greek/Spain/Portugal/Eurozone economic crisis and attempted bailout illustrate? What scholars and theoretical arguments do these developments support or undermine with reference to international financial issues, monetary policy, and so forth?

SET 2 (general IR 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. Define the shadow of the future, then discuss its role in economic vs. security issues.

SET 3 (security)

- A. In a bold and counterintuitive claim, political scientist Kenneth Waltz suggests that the spread of nuclear weapons is not such a bad thing: Why might this be the case? What do you think of his argument? What are the major criticisms of it? How do we test it, both in terms of method and evidence?
 - B. From definitions to their causes, what, if anything, distinguishes ethnic/internal conflict from interstate war? For the purposes of answering this question, please do not discuss possible differences in effects, prospects for settlement, and so forth. Please limit yourself to definitions and causes.
 - C. Many academic realists opposed the Iraq invasion. They argued that this opposition followed logically from their theory/theories of international relations. Some are skeptical of this. Drawing on your knowledge of realism, make the realist case against invasion and assess whether it is based on ideology or scientific theory.
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September 2010

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. What is anarchy and what effect, if any, does it have on international politics?
- B. Has globalization eroded the power of states?

Section 2: International Political Economy

- A. The impact of international institutions on state behavior and international outcomes is the subject of substantial debate. Drawing on your knowledge of the theoretical literature and the empirical record, discuss the conditions under which international institutions are most effective at managing issues that arise in the international political economy.
- B. Much of the recent literature on trade policy focuses on empirical tests of both supply-side and demand-side theories. Describe some of the main theories on both sides of the debate and how well they have held up to empirical testing.

Section 3: International Security

- A. A world of nuclear weapon-armed states is likely to be a peaceful one. Discuss.
 - B. John Mearsheimer recently argued that “China’s rise is likely to lead to an intense security competition between China and the United States, with considerable potential for war.” Do you agree? Explain your answer.
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January 2012

Instructions

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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. Are states still the most important actors in international politics? Make sure to illustrate your answer with empirical examples.
- B. Is Asia “Ripe for Rivalry”? Why or why not?

Section 2: International Political Economy

- A. Much of the recent literature on trade policy focuses on empirical tests of both supply-side and demand-side theories. Describe some of the main theories on both sides of the debate and how well they have held up to empirical testing.
- B. Will the European Union weather the current crisis? Why or why not?

Section 3: International Security

- A. Is great power war a fading phenomenon? Why or why not?
 - B. A defense dominant world is a peaceful one. Discuss.
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May 2012

Instructions

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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. What is anarchy and what implications, if any, does it have for international politics?
- B. Are we witnessing a “retreat of the state”?

Section 2: International Political Economy

- A. Explain the concept of the unholy trinity in international monetary issues. Discuss critically its relevance to the current euro crisis.
- 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. What grand strategy should the United States adopt in the coming decade?
 - B. Do you find systemic or domestic theories of war more convincing?
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September 2012

Instructions

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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. It has been thirty years since Kenneth Waltz wrote Theory of International Politics. What are his major contributions and how have subsequent scholars critiqued and amended it? Given these critiques and amendments, should it still be considered the foundational text in IR theory?
- B. What is the constructivist challenge to neorealism and neoliberalism? Discuss the ways in which constructivism undermines, reinforces, or departs from these approaches.

Section 2: International Political Economy

- A. What are the main political economy approaches for understanding the causes of free trade agreements between countries or groups of countries?
- B. Consider one major financial crisis. Use levels of analysis (individual, state and systemic) approach to provide possible explanations and evaluate their relative relevance.

Section 3: International Security

- A. In a bold and counterintuitive claim, political scientist Kenneth Waltz suggests that the spread of nuclear weapons is not such a bad thing: Why might this be the case? What do you think of his argument? What are the major criticisms of it? How would you test it, both in terms of method and evidence?
 - B. How should we understand ethnic conflicts? Are they the result of rational fears or irrational hatreds? Illustrate your answer with reference to recent cases.
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January 2013

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. 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.
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January 2014

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.

January 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.

May 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. Civil war is often considered a state of anarchy. Explore one international relations theory which you think can or has given significant insight into the causes of civil war or civil war termination.
- B. There is an extensive debate on how human rights treaties influence state behavior. Describe one theory or causal mechanism that you think best describes how such treaties have a causal impact. This can be limited to certain kinds of human rights treaties, to certain kinds of states, or to certain circumstances.

Section 2: International Political Economy

- A. For more than a decade pundits have been declaring that “the sovereign state is just about dead” (Krasner, 2001). How has the concept of sovereignty changed over the last 300 years? With specific reference to IPE literature and topics, to what extent and in which areas has national autonomy waned and to what extent and in which areas has national autonomy waxed?
- B. International relations is often considered the study of conflict. However, IPE frequently focuses on the gains from cooperation. Describe how different IR theories conceive of cooperation, focusing on their assumptions in particular. Then, with respect to the 2008 Global Economic crisis or subsequent Euro Crisis, discuss the benefits, conditions, and challenges of international cooperation in light of these assumptions.

Section 3: International Security

- A. Assess the proposition that the domestic character of the regime in a particular state is crucial for understanding its strategic behavior: what particular aspects of the regime might matter and how? What is the argument that domestic factors are not that important? Which argument do you buy? How might such domestic factors affect U.S. national security policy toward various regimes? Illustrate with reference to a contemporary case.
- B. In a bold and counterintuitive claim, political scientist Kenneth Waltz suggests that the spread of nuclear weapons is not such a bad thing: Why might this be the case? What do you think of his argument? What are the major criticisms of it? What do you think should be American policy on the proliferation of nuclear weapons?

September 2015

Instructions

Please answer **one** question from each section. The examination will last six hours (or 7.5 for ESL); 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. Please explain how the explanatory power of structural realism is undermined and/or reinforced by globalization. Begin by defining structural realism and globalization.

B. Geoffrey Blainey's classic work "The Causes of War" says: "War and peace appear to share the same framework of causes ... The same set of factors should appear in explanations of the outbreak of war [and the] outbreak of peace" (1973: 293). This book is often cited as the precursor to the bargaining theory of international war. Can you use the bargaining theory of war to produce a theory of interstate conflict resolution.

C. The large-N quantitative study of human rights often, e.g., Hathaway, finds in general that that signing of international human rights treaties is not significantly correlated with human rights performance. There might be various reasons why this is so. For example, international treaties might only influence certain kinds of countries. Explore theories of domestic politics (which includes variables like regime type) that might explain this result. If you wish you can also explore methodological and/or research design reasons for this large-N result.

Section 2: International Political Economy

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

2. Greece has a high level of foreign debt, which it is having great difficulty repaying, and a high level of unemployment. Most observers relate these problems to Greece's membership of the Euro zone. Drawing on your knowledge of International Political Economy, examine what possible reasons Greece had in joining the Euro zone, and how doing so may explain its current problems. (No specific knowledge of the Greek case is required for answering this question).

Section 3: International Security

A. Please explain the causes of a war of your choice using two or three causes of war. What are the counterarguments to your argument? What evidence would you seek if this were an in-depth study?

B. Assess the argument that internal conflict is often caused by the emergence of anarchy (Posen 93). Spend most of your time making arguments about why you agree and/or disagree. Conclude by explaining how well Posen's theory applies (or doesn't) to transnational organizations such as IS/ISIL, Boko Haram, and the like.

January 2016

Instructions

Please answer **one** question from each section. The examination will last six hours (or 7.5 for ESL); 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. Social constructivists often provide several mechanisms by which international norms influence state behavior. Use an example from the social constructivist literature on security, such as international norms about nuclear weapons, chemical-biological weapons, land-mines, etc. to discuss the key mechanisms by which international norms influence state behavior.
- B. Liberal institutionalism is a key framework for exploring international institutions. Give what you think is a good liberal institutionalist explanation for why human rights treaties influence behavior. Define liberal institutionalism. Explain why the theory is liberal institutionalist and why it does a good job on human rights.
- C. Assess the democratic peace theory. According to scholars, what are its strengths and weaknesses? What is your view?

Section 2: International Political Economy

- A. Recent turbulence in financial markets around the world has been widely attributed to the slowdown of economic growth in China. Use your knowledge of the international political economy literature (no specific knowledge of the Chinese economy is needed) to explain the broad contours what is going on and the likely future consequences of these events in terms of both economic and political factors.
- B. What are the main determinants of who are the winners and losers of trade liberalization within a country? What are the likely effects of this on trade policy pursued by that country?
- C. Using your knowledge of the IPE literature, please assess the following excerpt from President Obama's State of the Union speech:
"Today, technology doesn't just replace jobs on the assembly line, but any job where work can be automated. Companies in a global economy can locate anywhere, and they face tougher competition. As a result, workers have less leverage for a raise. Companies have less loyalty to their communities. And more and more wealth and income is concentrated at the very top."
What parts, if any, do you agree with and why?

Section 3: International Security

- A. Use realism to construct two *contending* interpretations of the rise of China and the future of great power politics.
 - B. Security studies has many strands, but core elements include balancing vs. bandwagoning, offense/defense theory, perceptions and misperceptions, credibility, effects of anarchy, and causes of war. Assess the rise and status of ISIS and international reactions to ISIS using these theories.
 - C. Scholarship on the causes of war may be divided into two camps. On one side are those who argue that war is a rational pursuit that states engage in for Clausewitzian purposes and *raison d'etat*. On the other hand, a significant number of scholars find that war is caused mostly by miscalculation and misperception. Who are the most prominent scholars in each camp and what are their arguments? Whose arguments do you find most persuasive and why? Support your views with case study, large N, or other empirical evidence.
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May 2016

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).

Section 1: IR Theory:

- A) Realism has traditionally been regarded as the rationalist theory, par excellence. But the status of the rational actor assumption in the most recent articulation of the paradigm -- Kenneth Waltz's Neo- or Structural Realism -- is unclear at best. Where and how does Neorealism diverge from Realism on the rational actor assumption? How and why can Neorealism eschew the rational actor assumption? What are the major advantages and disadvantages of this move? You may disagree with the premises of some of these questions, but you must still address them and explain your views.
- B) Do social constructivists offer a fundamentally new way of looking at international politics, as they claim, or are they really positivists who simply think that ideas matter?
- C) Does the prisoner's dilemma capture the essence of international politics?

Section 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?

Section 3: International Security

- A) Scholarship on the causes of war may be divided into two camps. On one side are those who argue that war is a rational pursuit that states engage in for Clausewitzian purposes and *raison d'état*. On the other hand, a significant number of scholars find that war is caused mostly by miscalculation and misperception. Who are the most prominent scholars in each camp and what are their arguments? Whose arguments do you find most persuasive and why? Support your views with case study, large N, or other empirical evidence.
- B) Assuming China's rise continues, will this rise lead to conflict with the U.S.?

Section 4: Tailored Question from Global Politics and Human Rights (applies to both students):

- A) To what extent, and how, have international normative and legal changes in the past century created or reconciled tension between state sovereignty and human rights? If you believe that there is tension between state sovereignty and human rights doctrine currently, do you think this tension can be

reconciled, and why? If you believe that there is not tension between state sovereignty and human rights doctrine currently, under what conditions (if any) do you think such tension could emerge in future, and why?

September 2016

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).

Note that only xxxx has to answer a Specialty Course Question. Allot time accordingly.

1. IR Theory

- A. Civil war is often considered a state of anarchy. Explore how international relations theories developed in the context in interstate relations can or have given significant insight into the causes of civil war or civil war termination.
- B. Does the prisoner's dilemma capture the essence of international politics?
- C. Assess the strengths and weaknesses of Kenneth Waltz's Theory of International Politics. What are the most important amendments made by subsequent scholars?

2. IPE

- A. Using IPE theories and concepts, discuss the causes and consequences of Brexit.
- B. Some observers see globalization as a recent process, occurring over the last few decades, and producing lasting changes in the structure of global politics; others view globalization more as a long-run historical process, one which ebbs and flows over time. Address the nature and effects of globalization in the following manner: (a) briefly define "globalization"; (b) discuss the impact of globalization on two of the following domestic policy areas - taxation; welfare state provisions; labor standards and working conditions; or macroeconomic management; and (c) discuss whether globalization, given your response in section (b), is "something new" or part of a longer-range historical process.

3. Security

- A. Briefly define traditional theories of alliance formation, bandwagoning, balancing, and the like. Then discuss how well these theories apply to intrastate conflict as well as hybrid conflicts involving states, substates, and transnational actors.
- B. What will be the main threats the US will face in twenty years? How should the US respond to those threats? Your answer should be supported by relevant theories.

4. Specialty Course Question for xxxx only. You took two of these courses, but only answer 1 (ONE) of the following questions:

- A. Does international human rights law's current focus on individual accountability improve or decrease long-term respect for human rights? Why/why not?
- B. The International Criminal Court incorporates principles from civil as well as common legal traditions. Provide a brief overview of the "legal-hybrid" nature of this international adjudicator, contrasting it with at least one more international tribunal.
- C. The civil and common legal traditions rest on a fundamentally divergent legal logic from the Islamic legal tradition. Elaborate on these differences focusing in particular on the relationship between law and religion. Does this relationship shape Islamic law states' views of international law and international courts?

January 2017

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. Does constructivism deserve an equal place with realism and liberalism? Why?
- B. What is the role/s of rationality in IR theory?
- C. Are institutions a fundamental cause of peace?

2. IPE

- A. Define economic nationalism and assess its pros and cons.
- B. Describe what can happen in a 'trade war.' What are the economic and political effects?

3. Security

- A. How well do traditional IR security theories such as deterrence, the security dilemma, balancing, and so forth apply to conflict and competition in the cyber realm?
- B. The study of grand strategy is clearly relevant to foreign policy and national security studies. How is it relevant to international relations? Specifically, where does it fit within in extant theories? What would be a theory of grand strategy? Is grand strategy best thought of as a dependent or an independent variable?
- C. Explain the motivations for, causes, and consequences of NATO expansion in theoretical terms.

4. Specialty Course Question

- A. xxxxx:
 - 1. (Indep reading): Define honor. How can one tell or measure whether it is influencing politics? With what IR theories and concepts does honor compete or overlap?
- B. xxxxx (pick one)
 - 1. (Comp. Law): How does the study of comparative law, with its focus on domestic legal traditions,

contribute to our understanding of states' international behavior? Elaborate on this issue in the context of international adjudication and other methods of peaceful resolution of disputes.

2. (Global politics and HR): Under what conditions are transnational advocacy networks and international non-governmental organizations most likely to achieve policy change?

C. XXXXX

1. (Global politics and HR): Under what conditions are transnational advocacy networks and international non-governmental organizations most likely to achieve policy change?

May 2017

Instructions

Please answer **one** question from each section. The examination will last **eight** 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 (e.g. Waltz, TIP; Keohane, AH).

Section 1: International Relations Theory

- A. China's rise as a major power has important implications for global politics. Use any two broad approaches to international relations theory, allowing for possible differences within each approach, to examine the implications of this rise for global politics and the role of the United States in it.
- B. There is a general consensus that as an empirical fact international war has been on the decline since 1989. Give what you consider the best realist explanation for this decline. Give what you consider the best liberal explanation for this decline.

Section 2: International Political Economy

- A. How does the international political economy literature help in understanding the (apparently) anti-liberal results of the recent UK referendum and US election? (Note: this question is not about specific issues in the Brexit vote and US election, but about ways in which IPE can be used to understand some aspects of them).
- B. Has the increase in the importance of transnational corporations and the growth of global international financial flows significantly diminished the role of the state in the global political economy?

Section 3: International Security

- A. What is a "rationalist" theory of national security? What are its strengths and potential advantages? What is its overarching logic, what are its specific predictions (outcomes), and what are its testable propositions (causal mechanisms)? In addition to describing those identified in the readings, come up with one or two of your own. What are its main weaknesses? Of the various alternative approaches to theorizing about national security affairs, which do you find most compelling and why? Illustrate your argument briefly by applying rationalism and an alternative to a common issue or case.
- B. What is a military revolution? What distinguishes one from evolutionary change? What are some historical examples? What does the literature of military innovation teach us about when and under what conditions military organizations can embrace them? What are the arguments for and against developments in the cybersphere constituting one? Where do you come down on this and why?

Section 4: Realism

- A. It has been almost forty years since Kenneth Waltz authored his *Theory of International Politics*. What are his major contributions and how have subsequent realists critiqued and amended it? Given these

critiques and amendments does it still deserve to be considered the foundational realist text in international relations theory?

- B. Does defensive or offensive realism offer a superior explanation for great power politics in the modern period?

September 16, 2017 – no exam questions

January 2018 – no exam questions

May 2018

Instructions:

Please answer one question from each section (including one from one subsection of section 4) for a total of four. The examination will last eight 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 (e.g. Waltz, TIP; Keohane, AH).

Section 1: International Relations Theory

- A. What is anarchy and what implications, if any, does it have for international politics?
- B. It has been almost forty years since Kenneth N. Waltz wrote *Theory of International Politics*. What are his major contributions to IR theory and how have subsequent scholars critiqued and amended his work? Given these critiques and amendments, does *Theory* still deserve to be considered the foundational text in IR theory?

Section 2: International Political Economy

- A. Does globalization inevitably lead to a 'race to the bottom,' understood as a cross-national and downward convergence in national policies? In addressing this question, discuss the mechanisms underpinning the 'race to the bottom' argument and evaluate their applicability to ONE of the following policy areas: macroeconomic policy, 'social' policy, or industrial policy.
- B. Do explanations that emphasize the domestic distributive consequences of international trade, FDI, and immigration provide a convincing explanation for recent political phenomena, such as Trumpism and Brexit?

Section 3: International Security

- A. What is a "military revolution/revolution in military affairs" (MR/RMA)? How do we know one when it happens? Did nuclear weapons bring about MR/RMA? If so, how? If not, why not? Do cyber weapons and conflict in cyber-space have the potential to bring about an MR/RMA? If so, how?
- B. The security dilemma only exists when there is uncertainty. Discuss. Based on this discussion, what factors or conditions exacerbate or mitigate the security dilemma? Cite authors and give examples as relevant.

Section 4: Special Field Questions

International Law and Use of Force:

- A. Much of the international law relevant to the use of force today is found in documents agreed after the Second World War, in particular, the 1945 United Nations Charter and the 1949 Geneva Conventions. This fact has been used to argue that law is either non-existent or inadequate respecting one of the foremost international security concerns of the present, the use of terrorism by non-state actor armed groups. In such a situation, states may use military means deemed necessary to end and prevent the security challenge posed by such groups. Analyze these statements, including underlying assumptions, for accuracies and inaccuracies.
- B. Civil war is regularly cited as the most serious use of force problem today. Is it true that international law does not regulate civil war?

International Reconciliation:

- A. To what extent is the promotion of reconciliation in political contexts fostered by the principles and practical approaches that dominate the international community (international law, the United Nations, etc.)? To what degree and in what ways do these principles and approaches fail to advance reconciliation? What alternative resources for reconciliation are available, considered in terms of both principles and practices? Illustrate your answer through at least two cases of countries and/or conflicts.
- B. Is reconciliation an appropriate goal following political conflict? Why or why not? In answering the question, you should explain what reconciliation is, how might it be justified in international relations, and why it is or isn't compatible with realpolitik. You should draw on the works of at least three thinkers. Examples are encouraged.

International Intervention:

- A. What motivates states to intervene in ongoing civil wars. Do the conditions that generate interventions influence the likely outcome of the effort?
- B. What is the role of expectations of an intervention in the calculus of civil war onset. Describe where the literature is strong and where it is weak and how you would extend it.

September 2018

Section 1: International Relations Theory

- A. Assume that we are entering into a new age of multipolarity with the US, China, and Russia being the three main poles. How do nuclear weapons affect multipolar relations? Compare this assessment to Cold War bipolarity and recent unipolarity.
- B. Social constructivism stresses the importance of international norms. When Russia annexed Crimea, it violated a core international norm about the use of violence and another about territorial integrity. What aspects of this case would a social constructivist stress in arguing that international norms had an impact or will continue to have an impact in the future on (1) Russia in general, (2) Putin in

particular, and (3) the current and eventual status of Crimea?

Section 2: International Political Economy

- A. Realist, liberal-institutionalist and constructivist paradigms propose different explanations for the international trade system and international trade policies. Discuss the strengths and weaknesses of each approach and the extent to which they can account for international trade outcomes.
- B. Recent IPE literature focuses on the role of individual attitudes towards trade, FDI, and immigration. Discuss the strengths and weaknesses of this approach and the extent to which it can account for policy outcomes in these three areas.

Section 3: International Security

- A. Harvard government Professor and long-term policy in-and-outer Joseph Nye recently wrote an article arguing cyber warfare constitutes a Revolution in Military Affairs 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 yourself? What, if anything, can we glean from the Nuclear Revolution (or any other Revolution in Military Affairs) to help us understand what effect, if any, cyber will have on the international security environment? Be sure to define both "Revolution in Military Affairs" and outline the details of the Nuclear Revolution.
- B. What is military effectiveness? How do we measure it? What are the major competing theories of what makes some militaries more effective than others? Which of them do you find most persuasive and why? Illustrate your argument with historical or contemporary relevance.

Section 4: Realism

- A. Does defensive or offensive realism offer a superior explanation for great power politics in the modern period? Explain your answer.
- B. Legro and Moravcsik in their *International Security* article provide a conceptualization or definition of realism. Basically they give the following list of characteristics that they think constitutes realist thought. Which three of these would be the *least* controversial when you think about the varieties of realism in security studies. Which two would be the *most* controversial or less likely to be present in some varieties of realism? Justify your choices.

This list is basically in the order given by Legro and Moravcsik:

- (1) rational
- (2) unitary political units
- (3) anarchy
- (4) state preferences are fixed
- (5) state preferences are uniformly conflictual
- (6) international structure
- (7) the primacy of material capabilities

Please answer one question from each section for a total of four. The examination will last ten hours, including the accommodation for ESL; you should divide your time approximately equally among the questions that 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 uses empirical evidence / examples as needed. Short parenthetical citations are sufficient (e.g. Waltz, TIP; Keohane, AH).

Section 1: International Relations Theory

- A. Realists argue that international cooperation is difficult to achieve and, when achieved, does not significantly influence state behavior. In contrast, liberals believe that cooperation is both easier to come by and more influential. Make an argument about how much global governance and compliance exists in current international politics. Be sure to specify how well your argument applies to economic and security issues and to great powers and smaller states. Provide convincing theoretical and empirical support for your argument. In supporting your arguments, be as specific as possible: cite authors, explain why a specific event supports your argument, and so forth.
- B. A core problem shared by rationalists and constructivists/ideationalists is the identification of preferences. Even more difficult is tracking the origins, evolution, and changes of preferences. How do rationalists and constructivists/ideationalists discuss and cope with preferences? What methodologies can be used to identify and track preferences? In your answer, please refer to specific authors, research programs (debates, books, articles, etc.), and issue-areas that explicitly confront preference formation and identification. You may also discuss authors/programs/areas that confront preferences implicitly, and you may criticize those who *should* have confronted these issues more explicitly.

Section 2: International Political Economy

- A. Does globalization inevitably lead to a “race to the bottom,” understood as a cross-national and downward convergence in national policies? In addressing this question, discuss how domestic political and economic characteristics contribute to the resilience of macroeconomic and “social” policy autonomy in the face of globalization pressures.
- B. Is increased exposure to international trade, finance, and immigration responsible for the growth of populist movements in the United States and Europe? To address this question, discuss the strengths and weaknesses of recent IPE literature on Trumpism and Brexit.

Section 3: International Security

- A. What are the core propositions of Offense-Defense Balance (ODB) Theory, and what does it seek to explain? What are the varieties of offense-defense theory and how do they differ? What are the major critiques of offense-defense theory? Which of them do you find most compelling? Is the theory fixable? If so, how, if not, why not?
- B. Historian Paul Kennedy famously argued that the side with the greater economic resources has always won (and, he seemed to think, will always win) great power wars. Scholars in political science have studied several intermediate steps between latent economic power and military outcomes. Assess arguments about the challenges of military acquisition, the possibility that innovation might overcome a larger economy’s sunk investments in military technology, and the chance that military genius, training, or techniques of force employment might allow a smaller economic power to win a war. Do your conclusions about these intermediate variables undermine Kennedy’s argument?

Section 4: Realism

- A. It has been almost forty years since Kenneth Waltz authored his *Theory of International Politics*. What are his major contributions, and how have subsequent realists critiqued and amended it? Given these critiques and amendments, does *TIP* still deserve to be considered the foundational realist text in international relations theory?
 - B. According to realism, what does the future hold for Asia?
-

September 2019

Instructions:

This is a closed book/note examination, taken over a period of eight hours (10 hours for ESL students). It consists of four sets of questions. The first three sets of questions are: international relations theory, international security, and international political economy. The fourth set of questions is based on the candidate's fourth graduate IR class (e.g. international law, international organizations). Candidates are required to provide the Director of Graduate Studies and Field Chair with the details of their fourth course one month before taking the examination.

Candidates are required to answer **one question** from each set. No answer should exceed 1,000 words.

Good answers will answer the question directly, make cogent arguments, use and cite scholars and scholarship appropriately, and use empirical examples as needed. Poor answers fail to address the question, are poorly written, contain little in the way of original argument, miss obvious literatures or authors required to demonstrate mastery of the subject, or are incomplete. Very short parenthetical citations (e.g. Keohane, AH) are sufficient.

Section 1: International Relations Theory

1. What theory makes the most compelling core assumption about human nature?
2. What is the central difference between realism and liberalism?

Section 2: International Political Economy

1. Does a country's regime type affect its engagement with the global economy? In addressing this question discuss how domestic political regimes can potentially affect trade and inward foreign direct investments, and assess whether the literature provides sufficient evidence for the relationship between regime type and these variables.
2. Is trade with China responsible for the recent growth of populist movements in the United States and Europe? In addressing this question discuss the literature on how rising trade exposure affects political preferences and the evidence available for the political effects of trade with China.

Section 3: International Security

1. What is "grand strategy?" What are the various grand strategy options in the academic and policy debates about contemporary U.S. grand strategy? Assess the key theoretical assumptions underlying each option and present an argument for which one the United States should choose. (Note that satisfactory arguments can be made for any option while unsatisfactory ones can accord with the readers' presumed preferences.)
2. Many international security scholars believe that conquest is now less likely than in the past, whether because of changes in military technology, changes in the structure of the global economy, changes in international norms, or for some other reason. Yet at the same time, we also hear in policy circles that we are entering a new era of great power competition. Are we going back to the future or back to business as usual in national security affairs? Please make your argument with reference to theories of how changes in various aspects of international politics affect the role of military force in the international system.

Section 4: Special Field Questions

A. Climate and Conflict

1. Does climate change cause armed conflict?
2. If you wanted to study the causal effect of climate change on armed conflict, what research design would yield the most convincing evidence?

B. International Law

1. International law contains detailed rules concerning peaceful resolution of disputes, ranging from bilateral negotiations to adjudication. What are the factors that influence states' choices of the various methods of dispute settlement? What are the effects of international adjudicators on states' behavior in the context of a dispute?
2. International law constitutes a unique legal system that differs theoretically and practically from domestic legal systems. Elaborate on three legal theories that conceptualize the structure, function, and characteristics of international law. Be sure to refer to the main thoughts of these theories' key thinkers.

C. The State

1. Evaluate the effort to “bring the state back in” for International Relations. Choose one IR topic to weigh the payoffs and problems of incorporating the state.
2. IR scholars have debated the benefits and costs of unpacking the black box of the state. Discuss your take on this debate based on the literature on “the state.”

January 2020

Instructions:

This is a closed book/note examination, taken over a period of eight hours (10 hours for ESL students). It consists of four sets of questions. The first three sets of questions are: international relations theory, international security, and international political economy. The fourth set of questions is based on the candidate's fourth graduate IR class (e.g. international law, international organizations). Candidates are required to provide the Director of Graduate Studies and Field Chair with the details of their fourth course one month before taking the examination.

Candidates are required to answer **one question** from each set. No answer should exceed 1,000 words.

Good answers will answer the question directly, make cogent arguments, use and cite scholars and scholarship appropriately, and use empirical examples as needed. Poor answers fail to address the question, are poorly written, contain little in the way of original argument, miss obvious literatures or authors required to demonstrate mastery of the subject, or are incomplete. Very short parenthetical citations (e.g. Keohane, AH) are sufficient.

Section 1: International Relations Theory

1. Do states learn or simply repeat themselves? How does your answer bear on various theories of international relations?
2. "When it comes to international cooperation, realists are pessimists and constructivists are optimists." To what extent do you agree with this statement?

Section 2: International Political Economy

1. To what extent does globalization constrain the choices of governments in monetary, industrial and 'social' policy? To address this question, focus on (at least) two of these three issue areas, discuss the potential mechanisms through which globalization affects government choices, and evaluate the available evidence for either convergence or divergence in government policies.
2. Since the end of World War II, the US has pursued liberal trade policies at home and especially since the 1970s has been an advocate of trade liberalization around the world. However, recently there has been a shift in US policy towards trade protectionism. Describe and evaluate different economic and cultural explanations of this shift.

Section 3: International Security

1. What is a revolution in military affairs? What made the nuclear revolution a successful revolution in military affairs? Is the cyber revolution likely to usher in another revolution in military affairs? If so, how? If not, why not?
2. Few Americans are satisfied with the outcomes of recent interventions in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Libya. Are proposals to learn from those interventions and do better next time credible? Or should the experiences ratchet down our expectations about the potential benefits of intervention? Use classic theories of international security along with empirical examples to make your case.

Section 4: Special Field Questions

A. Climate and Conflict

1. Discuss two mechanisms through which climate change may cause local or regional violent conflict. Provide an actual example that shows the effect of each mechanism that you have in mind, and consider how well in each case you can distinguish climate change as a cause of the conflict from other factors.
2. A recent review of the effects of climate change (Lambin 2012) states that “changes in the natural environment do not contribute significantly to the most extreme forms of insecurity. The influence of the environment on the threats of armed conflicts is often exaggerated by people as respectable as the secretary-general of the United Nations.” Do you agree? Assess the theoretical arguments for and against the kind of high-profile links between climate change and armed conflict that tend to capture the attention of politicians. Carefully explain the precise pathways, point out flaws in the logic, and explain why you think that the logic is either convincing or not.

B. Politics of Reconciliation

1. Is reconciliation an appropriate goal following political conflict? Why or why not? In answering the question, you should explain what reconciliation is, how might it be justified, and why it is or isn't compatible with realpolitik. You should draw on the works of at least three thinkers. Examples encouraged.
2. Considering transitional justice as it has developed over the past generation around the world, what major paradigms for thinking about the justice of facing the past and of political transitions more generally have arisen? Describe their core tenets and the arguments that their proponents present on their behalf. Then, explain which paradigm you find most persuasive and why

C. Religion and Global Politics

1. Modern international law constitutes a secular legal system. Using historical examples, elaborate on the role that religion, religion-based doctrines, and religion-based legal systems have played in the development of international law and the global order. Identify 2 areas of international law/global order that have been impacted most by a religion-based system of norms. Does the contention between religious norms and secularism play an important role in the modern global order?
2. Sociologist Peter Berger wrote in 1968 that by “the 21st century, religious believers are likely to be found only in small sects, huddled together to resist a worldwide secular culture.” In 1998, though, he reconsidered, arguing that “the assumption that we live in a secularized world is false. The world today . . . is as furiously religious as it ever was, and in some places more so than ever. This means that a whole body of literature by historians and social scientists loosely labeled ‘secularization theory’ is essentially mistaken.” Why did Berger change his mind? Did the world change during these 30 years? Or did social scientists simply learn to see it differently? Has a religious resurgence actually taken place? Or had religion ever faded from the scene, globally speaking? Or, might it be that there is still evidence for secularization despite all of the strong claims of resurgence? Write an essay developing a thesis about secularization, first making a claim about the reality of secularization in the world over the past 50 years up through today, and second, making a claim about which social scientists have best captured this reality and why.

June 2020

Instructions:

In light of COVID-19, this is an open book/note examination, taken over a period of ten hours (12 hours for ESL students). It consists of four sets of questions. The first three sets of questions are: international relations theory, international security, and international political economy. The fourth set of questions is based on the candidate's fourth graduate IR class. Candidates are required to provide the Director of Graduate Studies and Field Chair with the details of their fourth course one month before taking the examination.

*Candidates are required to answer **one question** from each set. No answer should exceed 1,000 words.*

Good answers will answer the question directly, make cogent arguments, use and cite scholars and scholarship appropriately, and use empirical examples as needed. Poor answers fail to address the question, are poorly written, contain little in the way of original argument, miss obvious literatures or authors required to demonstrate mastery of the subject, or are incomplete. Very short parenthetical citations (e.g. Keohane, AH) are sufficient.

Section 1: International Relations Theory

1. Why are wars more likely to happen sometimes than others?
2. Why have international schemes for political integration fallen on hard times?

Section 2: International Political Economy

1. To what extent can the existing IPE literature account for anti-globalization, populist movements in the United States and other high-income countries (Trumpism, Brexit, etc.)? In addressing this question, compare explanations that emphasize economic grievances against explanations that emphasize cultural resentment or other non-economic variables.
2. Does globalization make the 'developmental state' obsolete? In addressing this question, discuss the effect that foreign trade and financial flows as well as international rules and institutions have on the capacity of developing countries to pursue industrial upgrading.

Section 3: International Security

1. Did the development of nuclear weapons constitute a military revolution? If so, how should the "nuclear revolution" inform our thinking about nuclear proliferation? Are current technological and political trends reversing the nuclear revolution? What are we learning about the end of military revolutions?
2. How similar are domestic and international conflicts? Are the theories and models developed for one area of conflict applicable to another? What do they help us better understand? What are their limits?

Section 4: Special Field Questions – Realism

1. What are the key differences between classical realism and neorealism? Focus your answer on one twentieth century exemplar of each kind of theory.
2. Does structural-defensive or structural-offensive realism offer a superior explanation for great power politics in the modern period?

September 2020

Instructions:

This is an open book/note examination (September 2020 only), taken over a period of eight hours (10 hours for ESL students). It consists of four sets of questions. The first three sets of questions are: international relations theory, international security, and international political economy. The fourth set of questions is based on the candidate's fourth graduate IR class. Candidates are required to provide the Director of Graduate Studies and Field Chair with the details of their fourth course one month before taking the examination.

*Candidates are required to answer **one question** from each set. No answer should exceed 1,000 words.*

Good answers will answer the question directly, make cogent arguments, use and cite scholars and scholarship appropriately, and use empirical examples as needed. Poor answers fail to address the question, are poorly written, contain little in the way of original argument, miss obvious literatures or authors required to demonstrate mastery of the subject, or are incomplete. Very short parenthetical citations (e.g. Keohane, AH) are sufficient.

IR Theory

1. Is the liberal challenge to realism convincing?
2. Do you find structural or domestic theories of international politics more convincing?

International Security

1. Is East Asia ripe for rivalry or primed for peace? Why? What should the United States do to defend its interests there?
2. Have we seen the end of MAD? What's the case that we have? Do you buy it?

IPE

1. Some theories of IPE suggest that hegemonic powers are likely to adopt trade liberalization policies and spread trade liberalization globally. To what extent can they account for the present trade war between the US and China? To build your argument, explain the logic of structural explanations for trade, and discuss the main strengths and weaknesses of this approach, as well as the differences within structural explanations. Please note that you do not need to discuss empirical details of the US-China trade war; you should focus on the theoretical explanations for the phenomenon.
2. What explains the UK's Leave Decision? Some scholars emphasize economic factors, while others emphasize cultural factors. To build your argument, discuss the strengths and weaknesses of both economic and cultural explanations for Brexit, and the degree to which they are complementary or rival explanations. Please note that you do not need to discuss empirical details of Brexit; you should focus on the theoretical explanations for the phenomenon.

The State

1. Why are some states better than others at coping with the geopolitical and geoeconomic challenges presented by COVID-19?
2. Discuss if and how geography matters in shaping state capacity and state institutions.

International institutions, norms, organizations, and law: promoting peace, democracy, and human rights

1. There is an important literature on the role and impact of regional organizations on democratization and democratic stability. A variety of mechanisms have been proposed by various authors. Which are the most important mechanisms by which these regional organizations can have an impact? Why? Are there features of some regional organizations that make them more effective in this than others? Can you think of specific examples that illustrate your argument?
2. International courts constitute an important third-party binding method of peaceful resolution. What is the role of international courts beyond exercising adjudication in particular cases? Do states bargain in the shadow of the courts? Elaborate on the patterns of peaceful resolution in territorial disputes focusing on the general trends in adjudication.

January 2021

Instructions:

For students entering the program in AY2019 and after: This is an open book/note examination (January 2021 only), taken over a period of nine hours (12 hours for ESL students). It consists of three questions, one each on international relations theory, international security, and international political economy (three hours per question, or four hours each for ESL students). Each answer will be limited to 2,000 words. Students will submit their answers anonymously using ID numbers that will allow the DGS to tie students to their exam answers without revealing the students' names to the faculty grading the exam until after grading is complete.

For all students: Good answers will answer the question directly, make cogent arguments, use and cite scholars and scholarship appropriately, and use empirical examples as needed. Poor answers fail to address the question, are poorly written, contain little in the way of original argument, miss obvious literatures or authors required to demonstrate mastery of the subject, or are incomplete. Very short parenthetical citations (e.g. Keohane, AH) are sufficient

IR Theory

1. Will international law be more, less, or equally salient during the next hegemonic transition? Which IR theory best explains the role that international law plays in the global order?
2. If history is written by the winners, who writes international relations theory?

International Security

1. Restraint as a plausible grand strategic option (among others) seems to have emerged at about the same time as the Cold War ended in the 1990s. Could it be that the cessation of that previous period of great power competition made it seem more reasonable? If, as many believe, we are moving into another period of great power competition, would that, in your view, make restraint a less viable grand strategy for the United States in the coming years? If so, why? Which grand strategy would be better in such a world?

2. Is conventional deterrence easier, harder, or equally difficult compared to nuclear deterrence?

International Political Economy

1. Some theories of IPE suggest that hegemonic powers are likely to adopt trade liberalization policies and spread them globally. To what extent can these theories account for the present trade war between the US and China? To build your argument, explain the logic of structural explanations for trade, and discuss their main strengths and weaknesses. Please note that you do not need to discuss empirical details of the US-China trade war; you should focus on the theoretical explanations for the phenomenon.
2. To what extent do ideational explanations for trade liberalization challenge rationalist explanations based on the objective, material interests of individuals and groups? To build your argument, explain the main differences between ideational and rationalist accounts, and discuss their respective strengths and weaknesses.

May 2021

Instructions:

For students entering the program in AY2019 and after:

This is an open book/note examination (Until further notice - see recent COVID guidelines for details), taken over a period of 9 (+2) hours (12 +2 hours for ESL students). It consists of three questions, one each on international relations theory, international security, and international political economy (three hours per question, or four hours each for ESL students). Each answer will be limited to 2,000 words. Students will submit their answers anonymously using ID numbers that will allow the DGS to tie students to their exam answers without revealing the students' names to the faculty grading the exam until after grading is complete. Students must earn a passing grade on all three questions on the exam in order to pass. A student who fails one or more sections can make a second attempt to pass the exam, retaking those sections of the exam that s/he failed at a future comprehensive exam date.

For all students: Good answers will answer the question directly, make cogent arguments, use and cite scholars and scholarship appropriately, and use empirical examples as needed. Poor answers fail to address the question, are poorly written, contain little in the way of original argument, miss obvious literatures or authors required to demonstrate mastery of the subject, or are incomplete. Very short parenthetical citations (e.g. Keohane, AH) are sufficient

IR Theory

1. What role does the security dilemma play in international relations theory?
2. Can ontological security displace physical security as a framework for international relations theorizing?

International Security

1. What is the security dilemma? Under what conditions is it exacerbated or ameliorated? With what effect for security competition and war? Provide a brief illustration of how security dilemma dynamic's might affect contemporary great power politics.
2. What is grand strategy? What are the main grand strategies available to the United States? Be specific about the assumptions and theoretical logics underpinning each. Which option should the contemporary United States choose and why?

International Political Economy

1. Which tends to move more across national borders: capital (FDI, portfolio investment, and bank loans) or labor? To build your argument, discuss alternative IPE explanations for the mobility of capital and labor.
2. To account for international trade and financial outcomes, the IPE field has rightly abandoned the study of the distribution of power in the international system." Do you agree with this statement? To build your argument, discuss the benefits and weaknesses of domestic (such as firm, sector, individual and/or institutional) explanations versus structural explanations.

Saturday, January 22, 2022

Instructions:

This is an open book/note examination (during COVID), taken over a period of nine hours (12 hours for ESL students). During COVID, students have an additional 2 hours to complete their exam. It consists of **three** questions, one each on international relations theory, international security, and international political economy (three hours per question, or four hours each for ESL students). Each answer will be limited to **2,000** words. Students will submit their answers anonymously using ID numbers that will allow the DGS to tie students to their exam answers without revealing the students' names to the faculty grading the exam until after grading is complete.

Good answers will answer the question directly, make cogent arguments, use and cite scholars and scholarship appropriately, and use empirical examples as needed. Poor answers fail to address the question, are poorly written, contain little in the way of original argument, miss obvious literatures or authors required to demonstrate mastery of the subject, or are incomplete. Very short parenthetical citations (e.g. Keohane, AH) are sufficient.

International Security: [Answer **one** of the following two questions]

1. What is a military revolution? Illustrate with an historical example. Does Cyber constitute a potential military revolution? If so, how? If not, why not? In your answer, be sure to note which theories about causes of war, deterrence, or O/D balance help you make your case?
2. Discuss the international relations theoretical foundations of what you think are the two most important alternative U.S. grand strategic options in the XXIst Century. Which of their core theoretical propositions do you find more compelling and why? How would they lead someone to adopt a particular grand strategy?

International Political Economy: [Answer **one** of the following two questions]

1. Many scholars of international political economy focus mainly on domestic distributive consequences in explaining contemporary trade protectionism. How helpful are these approaches for understanding recent changes in trade policies of China and the US as compared to approaches that emphasize the distribution of global power? To address this question, (i) discuss the theoretical strengths and weaknesses of each approach, and (ii) the extent to which they can explain the trade policies of China and the US.
2. Does the global economy need a lender of last resort? If so, which states or institutions should play that role? Explain why developed states have domestic lenders of last resort, the positive and negative consequences of lenders of last resort, and why it is harder to have an international lender of last resort than a domestic one. To make your response concrete, discuss the role of a lender of last resort (or lack thereof) in a significant international financial crisis.

International Relations Theory: [Answer **one** of the following two questions]

1. Have nuclear weapons made the world more or less anarchic?
2. Why do revolutions tend to be internationally contagious?

Tuesday, May 17, 2022

Instructions:

This is an open book/note examination (during COVID), taken over a period of nine hours (12 hours for ESL students). During COVID, students have an additional 2 hours to complete their exam. It consists of **three** questions, one each on international relations theory, international security, and international political economy (three hours per question, or four hours each for ESL students). Each answer will be limited to **2,000** words. Students will submit their answers anonymously using ID numbers that will allow the DGS to tie students to their exam answers without revealing the students' names to the faculty grading the exam until after grading is complete.

Good answers will answer the question directly, make cogent arguments, use and cite scholars and scholarship appropriately, and use empirical examples as needed. Poor answers fail to address the question, are poorly written, contain little in the way of original argument, miss obvious literatures or authors required to demonstrate mastery of the subject, or are incomplete. Very short parenthetical citations (e.g. Keohane, AH) are sufficient.

International Relations Theory: [Answer **one** of the following two questions]

1. Does the security dilemma capture the essence of international politics?
2. What are the main factors that drive international order?

International Security: [Answer **one** of the following two questions]

1. It is not too early to begin to assess the causes of the Ukraine war. Please explain what you think caused the war, basing your answer on the causes of war literature.
2. What is grand strategy and why should we care about it? What are the ideal-type grand strategies available to the contemporary United States and which one has it embraced in recent years? What is the theory of international relations that undergirds it?

International Political Economy: [Answer **one** of the following two questions]

1. Does globalization lead to convergence in national macroeconomic and/or social policies among developing countries? In addressing this question, discuss (i) the different mechanisms through which global economic forces can potentially shape domestic policy decisions and (ii) the extent to which domestic political and economic characteristics contribute to policy autonomy in the face of globalization pressures. Note that you may choose in your answer to focus on either macroeconomic or social policy, or you may choose to compare the two policy areas.
2. There are a number of journalistic theories circulating about the decline of the WTO: 1) its leading supporters, notably the United States, have turned protectionist, fundamentally weakening the organization; 2) it has not had a successful conclusion of a new negotiating round in many years, and trade experts have said that progress toward free trade is "like riding a bicycle — you have to keep moving forward or you become unstable;" 3) tensions are increasing among major trading states (especially the United States and China), and international organizations cannot control these underlying geopolitical forces. Connect these folk theories to the scholarly IPE literature and assess whether any of them is convincing. Is the WTO really becoming irrelevant, and if so, why?

Tuesday, May 23, 2023

Instructions:

*This is a open book/note examination (during COVID), taken over a period of nine hours (12 hours for ESL students). During COVID, students have an additional 2 hours to complete their exam. It consists of **three** questions, one each on international relations theory, international security, and international political economy (three hours per question, or four hours each for ESL students). Each answer will be limited to **2,000** words. Students will submit their answers anonymously using ID numbers that will allow the DGS to tie students to their exam answers without revealing the students' names to the faculty grading the exam until after grading is complete.*

Good answers will answer the question directly, make cogent arguments, use and cite scholars and scholarship appropriately, and use empirical examples as needed. Poor answers fail to address the question, are poorly written, contain little in the way of original argument, miss obvious literatures or authors required to demonstrate mastery of the subject, or are incomplete. Very short parenthetical citations (e.g. Keohane, AH) are sufficient.

I. IR Theory:

1. Robert Jervis famously argued that cooperation was possible under the security dilemma. Do you agree? Explain your answer.
2. Is constructivism a liberal or realist approach to IR Theory?

II. IPE

1. Nobel-prize-winning economist Robert Lucas, who is often credited as one of the founders of “new classical” macroeconomics, argued in a paper published at the end of the last century that by the end of the 21st century all countries would become “rich.” He based this argument on international resource flows (especially capital flows), on international technology transfers, and on lower-income countries learning about good policies and institutions from high-income countries. Evaluate the potential and challenges for each of these three international mechanisms of development from a political-economy perspective.
2. Several prominent scholars have argued that the 2008 financial crisis shook Chinese leaders' faith in the U.S.-led international economic order — a view perhaps shared by Chinese leaders themselves that led them to revise their expectations about China's role in the international economy. Assess the United States' ability to meet the requirements of hegemonic stability theory for preserving international economic stability, in particular reflecting on U.S. actions in the 2008 crisis. On balance, did U.S. weakness (in policy and/or general economic conditions) contribute more to the crisis, or did U.S. leadership contribute more to stabilizing the economy in the crisis' wake?

III. IS:

1. Using the ideal types in the contemporary U.S. grand strategy debate, where would you situate the Athenian leader Pericles' grand strategy among them in his First Speech in Bk. I of Thucydides' History? Does it fit squarely among these ideal-types or would we need to add another to them? What was Thucydides' assessment of this grand strategy? Do

you share it? What does this case tell us about the strengths and weaknesses of that particular grand strategy today, perhaps for the United States?

2. Is the nuclear revolution robust, or is it readily reversible by great powers' strategic decisions and investments?

International Relations Comprehensive Exam

Saturday, September 30, 2023

Instructions:

This is a open book/note examination (during COVID, grandfathered in for now), taken over a period of nine hours (12 hours for ESL students). It consists of three questions, one each on international relations theory, international security, and international political economy (three hours per question, or four hours each for ESL students). Each answer will be limited to 2,000 words. Students will submit their answers anonymously using ID numbers that will allow the DGS to tie students to their exam answers without revealing the students' names to the faculty grading the exam until after grading is complete.

Good answers will answer the question directly, make cogent arguments, use and cite scholars and scholarship appropriately, and use empirical examples as needed. Poor answers fail to address the question, are poorly written, contain little in the way of original argument, miss obvious literatures or authors required to demonstrate mastery of the subject, or are incomplete. Very short parenthetical citations (e.g. Keohane, AH) are sufficient.

1. IR Theory

- A. The small number of works considered by consensus to be foundational in IR theory has included different titles at different times. Why?
- B. Do power transitions affect the probability of war?

2. International Political Economy

- A. The COVID-19 pandemic and the combination of wartime disruption and economic sanctions in the wake of Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine each disrupted global supply chains. What can national governments and private firms do to respond to such disruptions? To answer this question, discuss the tradeoffs governments and firms face in trying to protect themselves from potential supply-chain disruptions through industrial policy and market responses.
- B. To explain the recent turn towards trade protectionism in the United States, some scholars emphasize the changes in the distribution of international power while others point to the uneven domestic distributive consequences of trade. Which of these two explanations do you think best accounts for the protectionist turn in American trade policies? To address this question, briefly explain the general logic and specific mechanisms underlying each type of explanation, and provide a clear argument in favor of one explanation over the other.

3. International Security

- A. Is the Offense / Defense balance a useful concept?
- B. In Bk. I, sec. 24, of *On War*, Carl von Clausewitz famously says that war is "continuation of political intercourse, carried on by other means." What does he mean by this? What are the implications of if for: the nature of war and the relationship between civilian political leaders and senior military officers?