

**International Relations and Foreign Policy  
Comprehensive Examination  
11 November 2014**

**DO NOT PUT YOUR NAME OR STUDENT NUMBER ON YOUR EXAM**

**Instructions: Ph.D. students have eight (8) hours to complete the exam and must answer the mandatory and three (3) optional questions. M.A. students have four (4) hours and must answer the mandatory and two (2) optional questions. Note: you may answer only one question from any optional group. The exam will begin promptly at 9 am at the Sociology Computer Lab (Merrick Building Room 207). You must email your exam to Dr. Yaffe ([l.yaffe@umiami.edu](mailto:l.yaffe@umiami.edu)) immediately upon completion.**

**MANDATORY:**

1. The problem of warfare, especially among great powers, lies at the heart of much of the theorizing about world politics. Some theorists attribute war to the (1) anarchical structure of the international system, a structure that allegedly makes great-power rivalry inescapable, even though it is not the result of anyone's master plan. Other theorists claim that war is not the result of circumstances beyond the control of those involved. Rather, it occurs as the result of (2) the rational choices of decision makers who are jockeying for position in the hierarchy of nations (3) the gendered structuring of knowledge/power and practice (4) the ability to construct a hegemonic bloc and the resulting international bloc rivalries. Using historical evidence, and relating your discussion explicitly to the relevant theoretical literature, write an essay that assesses the strengths and weaknesses of three of these contending explanations of war.

**OPTIONAL** (Select no more than one question from each sub-section)

**IR Theory**

2. The “security dilemma” faced by all sovereign states lies at the heart of realist analysis of both “national” and “international” security. What is the security dilemma from the realist perspective? Explain. For realists, does it matter that a state seeks either “absolute” or “relative” security gains? Why or why not? What basic strategies do realists posit are available to deal with a state’s core security dilemma? How do constructivists conceptualize the so-called security dilemma? What difference, if any, do the various constructivist approaches make when state governing elites actually confront strategic security decisions in practice? Do liberalism and its variants share the same perspective as realists on the

fundamental security dilemma confronted by all independent states? Do their strategic recommendations for dealing with a state's basic security dilemma differ in any significant way? If so, how?

OR

3. Hegemonic stability theory, first espoused by Charles Kindleberger in the 1970s and further elaborated by realist theorists such as Kenneth Waltz, Robert Gilpin and Stephen Krasner, focuses on the role of leading states – for example, Great Britain in the 19<sup>th</sup> and the United States in the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries – and on how changes in the distribution of capabilities among states affect the world economy. What is the role of the hegemon in the system and why is the hegemon willing to take on responsibilities and why are other states willing to accept its dominant position in the system? In explaining and evaluating the validity of the theory you should ground your answer in a review of the relevant International Relations literature on the subject.

### **Foreign Policy Analysis and International Security**

4. Which international relations theory or theories is/are most useful for analyzing the actions and policies of the George W. Bush Administration (2001-2009)? To what extent are those, or other, IR theories useful in interpreting the foreign policy orientation of the Obama Administration (2009-2014)? Be sure to make reference to appropriate authors and texts in your answer.

OR

5. In her memoirs as Secretary of State Hillary Clinton *Hard Choices* argues that: “For decades, the guiding doctrine of Chinese foreign policy was Deng Xiaoping’s counsel” which essentially advised: “Coolly observe, calmly deal with things, hold your position, hide your capacities, bide your time, accomplish things where possible.” Hillary Clinton further states that “Deng, who ruled China after the death of Chairman Mao Zedong, believed that China was not yet strong enough to assert itself on the world stage.” Deng Xiaoping, who ruled from 1978 to 1989 and remained the country's "preeminent leader" until circa 1994, has been credited with placing China on the path of deep economic reform and sustained growth as he laid the foundations for what some observers call the rise of China. Would you say that Deng Xiaoping’s council still guides China’s foreign policy? Applicable concepts and theoretical frameworks, historical insights, and examples, are expected to be employed as you elaborate your answer.

### **Ethnic Conflict and Nationalism**

6. Analysts who focus on ethnicity and nationalism as factors that impact the incidence of international and domestic conflict have, over the years, based their arguments on different conceptions of ethnicity and nationalism – their nature, their origins, the degree to which they are “portable” across state borders, etc. Write an essay in which you outline the central issues in the scholarly debates among analysts on these topics. What are the key assumptions and orientations that underlie the major schools of thought in these debates? How do these

core assumptions and orientations relate to the major divisions within the broader field of International Relations? What difference does it make, in practical terms, whether research departs from one or the other of those orientations? In your answer be sure to relate your discussion to the works of individual analysts.

### **IPE/ Globalization/ Global Civil Society**

7. Discuss the following two statements on sustainability by two economists, both Nobel Prize recipients:
- “...the notion of sustainability is about our obligations to the future.” Robert Solow (1991)
  - “The need for greenhouse gas abatement cannot logically be separated from the developing world’s need for immediate economic improvement.” Tom Schelling (1997)
- In your answer explain the concept and the relevance of ‘discounting’.

OR

8. Choose one or two thematic **transnational social movements** (feminism, peace, agriculture, climate change, etc.). Being specific and citing scholarly sources and knowledge about this movement/s throughout your answer: A) Discuss movement actors' diagnostic and prognostic framing of the problems and solutions. Describe the sorts of policy, institutional and structural changes, be it at the local, national, and/or global level, they are advocating; B) Describe this movement's affinities and alliances with other movements in the current cycle of contention; C) Suggest future campaign goals and strategies, including alliance formation, that activists involved in these issues could pursue, at the local, national, and/or global level.

### **International Organizations & Regional Integration**

9. What is the European Union (EU)? Decades after the Schuman Declaration the political nature of the EU is still the topic of debate. Outline at least three main theories of EU integration, name a selection of their main authors, and interpret the relevance of these scholarly interpretations based on historical trends and recent developments.

OR

10. What is the current state of inter-American and intra-Latin American integration? Over the past several decades numerous integration initiatives have been undertaken, many of which seem to be at cross purposes with one another. Discuss the current state of regional integration in the Western Hemisphere, especially in Latin America, and the prospects for the medium-term future.

## **Humanitarian Crises/Global Health**

11. The current Ebola outbreak has placed many countries on high alert, with new actions and restrictive policies to protect national borders from the deadly virus. Since HIV/AIDS, post-9/11 anthrax attacks, SARS, influenzas, cholera, dengue, MERS, chikungunya, and now Ebola, the prevention and control of the spread of infectious diseases has become important to US foreign policy interests. Whether the issue is the unintentional spread of a cross border disease, the intentional act to weaponize a biological agent, or human error in vaccine development, the role of evidence-based research to improve global health governance remains a priority.

Your task is to write an essay that considers the key issues under debate in the academic literature in the field of international relations and global health policy. Use current examples to further support your work.

## **International Law**

12. The principles of state sovereignty versus those committed to safeguarding human rights clash increasingly in debates and practice concerning notions of security, humanitarian intervention, and threats to international peace. Discuss how this debate plays out with regard to one or more of the following: (A) recent Russian foreign policy, (B) the rise of ISIS (ISIL or the Islamic State), or (C) a conflict or intervention of your choosing. In your answer, discuss what human rights are at stake, and utilize at least two International Relations theories (realism, liberalism, constructivism, feminism, Marxism, post-structuralism).