

IR/FP Comprehensive Examination

Spring 2013

Instructions: Ph.D. students must answer the mandatory and three (3) optional questions (in 8 hours). M.A. students must answer the mandatory and two (2) optional questions (in 4 hours). Note — you may answer only one (1) question from any optional group. Be sure to provide the corresponding number to the questions you answer. The exam will begin promptly at 9 am in Merrick Rooms 304/305a/305b. When finished, ask Chris Hanson to re-hook up your computer's internet, and send a copy to Steve Ralph (& yourself).

Do NOT put your name anywhere on the examination, but rather include your STUDENT ID or SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER ON THE TOP OF THE FIRST PAGE.

Mandatory IR Theory

1. What is the most serious threat facing the United States? What would you recommend to the US government that it do about it? In crafting your answer, survey the main threats, and explain your rationale for selecting the most grave. Cite key authors or commentators, in academia, government, or the media, who corroborate your rank order of threats. Using concepts and assumptions from 2-3 different theories (i.e. constructivism, neo-Marxism, feminism, realism, Foucauldian bio-politics, post-colonial theory, neoliberal institutionalism), assist the US government in perceiving the threat in distinct ways. Then, craft a menu of policy responses or options, stemming from your theoretical analysis. Finally, recommend to the government which of these approaches, or some combination, you deem most helpful in perceiving and addressing the threat--and give good reasons why you are suggesting this route.

Optional Questions

IR Theory

2. You are expected to teach an upper-level undergraduate course on international relations theory. How would you organize the course and which books/articles would you assign as required reading? In other words, what would be the underlying theoretical assumptions upon which the course would be based; what would be the major topics covered in the course; why would they be included; and how would they be related to one another? Of the scores of relevant publications that you might assign for student reading, which four to six key items would you select – and why?

3. When the nation-state dies, what will replace it?

Security & Conflict

4. Analysts who focus on ethnicity and nationalism as factors that impact on the incidence of international and domestic conflict have, over the years, based their arguments on different conceptions of ethnicity and nationality – its nature, its origins, the degree to which it is “portable” across state borders, etc. Write an essay in which you outline the central issues in the debates among analysts of these topics. What are the key assumptions and orientations that underlie their writings? How do those assumptions and orientations relate to the major divisions within the broader field of International Relations? What difference does it make, in concrete terms, whether one begin one’s research with one or the other of those orientations? In your answer be sure to relate your discussion to the works of individual analysts.

5. Discuss the evolution of the concept of security in the post-Cold War era. Citing the relevant literature, which are the major approaches to the concept of security among scholars today? How do these alternative approaches compare and contrast with each other? Which are the major advantages and disadvantages of each approach you identify? In your view, do 'realists' still dominate scholarly debates over security? Why or why not? Explain.

(US) Foreign Policy

6. What happened to the U.S.-led “War on Drugs” in Latin America after the terrorist events of 9/11/01? What, if any, relationship does Washington posit between the War on Drugs and the War on Terrorism? What consequences has the U.S.-conduct of the War on Terrorism since 9/11 had on the flows of illicit drugs from the Andean region and Mexico into the United States? In your view, as of year-end 2003, is the U.S. government winning or losing the anti-drug fight in Latin America? What impacts has US policy had on economic welfare and democratic politics in the region? Identify the authors and theoretical approaches that best illuminate these issues.

Int'l Law/ Institutions/ Global Governance

7. Many criticized the Bush Administration’s apparent disregard for international law -- questioning, for example, the legality of its invasion of Iraq; its establishment of the prison in Guantanamo Bay; and its use of water boarding and other methods of “enhanced interrogation” on detainees. Now the Obama administration is getting similar criticism-- questioning, for example, the legality of its use of drones overseas to kill those it deems terrorists; the legality of the raid that killed Osama bin Laden; and its marking some American citizens overseas for extra-judicial killing without being convicted of anything.

First, write an essay discussing the legality of two of the government policies/actions

identified above—one from the Bush administration, the other from the Obama administration.

Second, discuss why—if you think that it is the case—the United States is so reluctant to join international human rights treaties.

IPE/ Int'l Development

8. In *Alternatives to Economic Globalization*, Cavanagh and Mander (2004: 309) averred: "The **global trade and finance system** and its primary rule-making institutions - the Bretton Woods institutions - have come to a crossroads. Decisions made in the next few years will have important effects on which direction the system will take." In your educated opinion:

A) Which direction do you think the international economic system is likely headed? How and why? Briefly describe the system or situation today--taking note of the ongoing financial and economic crisis beginning in 2007--and give a brief historical background of how it developed.

B) In light of ongoing crisis and broader, more structural shifts in geopolitical-economic power redistribution witnessed in recent decades and years, which institutions are likely to be strengthened over the coming years, which ones challenged, weakened or decommissioned, and what, if any new institutional regimes could be created--based on which economic and political theories or principles, and practices? In your answer cite appropriate scholarly IR literature

Latin American Studies

9. Most observers of Latin America-US relations agree that US influence in Latin America has declined markedly over the last decade. This seems to be of no great concern to the U.S., however, because of its preoccupations elsewhere and the lack of an existential security threat from the hemisphere. Meanwhile, Latin America has increasingly established transnational and global relationships beyond the Americas. One set of relations in particular, those with China, in the areas of trade, investment and banking, have raised concerns reminiscent of those that fueled the rise of dependency theory of Prebisch and his colleagues in the 1960's.

Has the 'Washington consensus' been replaced by a 'Beijing consensus?' Or are we in a period of flux, reminiscent of the days of the Non-Aligned Movement? Does this matter to US interests in the hemisphere or globally? If you were advising South American governments on these matters, what sort of new 'consensus' would you advocate?

European Studies

10. Select one major challenge confronting the European Union today. Justify your choice in terms of impact on the economic, institutional, political, social, or security dimensions of Europe (and spill-over or contagion effects on the rest of the world, if applicable). Apply conceptual and/or analytical frameworks proposed by general International Relations or specific European Integration theories.