

IR Comprehensive Examination Spring 2008

Instructions:

Ph.D. students must answer the (1) mandatory and three (3) optional questions (8 hours). M.A students must answer the (1) mandatory and two (2) optional questions (4 hours). You may answer only one question from each optional category. No notes, books, internet resources or other materials may be used during this examination. All students must take this qualifying examination in the INS computer laboratory facilities in MB 303.

Mandatory Question:

1. A significant debate has emerged within IR as to whether analysis of international relations should be conducted in terms of interests, information and strategies (e.g., rationalist approaches, such as neorealism and neoliberal institutionalism) or in terms of ideas, norms and knowledge (e.g. constructivism). James Fearon and Alexander Wendt, among others, have argued, however, that rationalist and constructivist explanations should not be understood as mutually exclusive. What are the differences between these two approaches to IR theory? Can insights from rationalism and constructivism be combined in the explanation of international phenomena, as some authors suggest? Do you agree or disagree with their arguments? Why or why not? Explain

Optional Questions

IR Theory

2. The Realist school of IR is hardly monolithic. The shift away from normative theory (e.g., Carr and Morgenthau) as well as developments in the international system such as the collapse of the Soviet bloc, the intensification of globalization, the rise of China, and the emergence of a “war on terror” have represented challenges to existing Realist theory. However, the response to these challenges has not been the abandonment of Realist theory. Instead, there has been a re-theorization resulting in a proliferation of realisms including neo-realism, offensive realism, defensive realism, structural realism, neoclassical realism and hegemonic stability theory. What are the distinctions among these various forms of Realism? In your response be certain to identify the key thinkers and texts associated with the various perspectives. What are the strengths and weaknesses of each strand of Realist theory in explaining international relations? Does the proliferation of “Realisms” indicate a weakness or strength in the Realist approach? Comment and explain.

3. One of the main contributions of Constructivism is the notion that state identity fundamentally shapes state preferences and actions. Constructivists agree that state

identities are constructed within the social environment of domestic and international politics. They disagree, however, on the mechanisms and processes by which this social construction occurs. While some emphasize the role of norm entrepreneurs, others look at processes of socialization and social learning within international organizations. Other constructivists explore instead the role of speech, argument and persuasion and processes of structural configuration. Explain these different mechanisms of social construction, identifying the main scholars and empirical research associated with each. In your view, which of these processes have been more relevant in the construction of state identities in the post 9/11 international system?

Foreign Policy Analysis

4. Analyze (apply concepts, compare, contrast and critique) the causes, consequences and policy choices of the Bush administration's response to the 9/11 attacks from two (for MA students) or three (for Ph. D. students) distinct IR theoretical perspectives. Select from the following:

- 1) Realism and its variants
- 2) Liberalism and its variants
- 3) Constructivism
- 4) *Either*: a) Marxism and its variants,
b) Feminism, or
c) Post-structuralism

5. The enlargement of the European Union undertaken in 2004 raised once more the issue of the nature of EU "foreign policy". What scholars and practitioners have characterized as "the power of induction" or "soft power" constitutes the fundamental pillar upon which the EU bases its continental influence and world wide projection. What do these two terms actually mean? How does the EU actually conduct its "foreign policy" within the EU and beyond its European borders?

International Law and Organizations

6. Does the new UN doctrine of "Responsibility to Protect," enunciated at the General Assembly Summit in September 2005 (*World Summit Outcome*), establish the legal basis for humanitarian intervention? How was this doctrine developed? Under what circumstances might it apply to other conflicts presently occurring in the world? Explain. How do the Realist, Liberal and Constructivists analyze arguments for humanitarian intervention?

7. President Bush's *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America* (September 2002) is seen as his underlying strategic justification for the Iraq war, launched by the U.S. and the U.K. the following year without Security Council approval. Its doctrine was described by Secretary General Kofi Annan as threatening

to “set precedents that resulted in a proliferation of the unilateral and lawless use of force.” (UNGA 23 September 2003). How did the *European Security Strategy*, (“*A Secure Europe in a Better World*” December 2003) attempt to deal with the U.S. doctrine? To what extent has it caused a split in the transatlantic alliance?

Globalization: Emerging Transnational Issues and Actors

8. The speed and intensity of globalization processes in recent decades have caused a wellspring of backlash -- reformist, radical, ‘left’, ‘right’, secular, religious, violent, and non-violent. First, broadly describe the breadth of contemporary, non-state political actors in the global arena: Who are they, what are they against, who are they targeting, what are they advocating, and how do they go about achieving their goals? Second, what impact/efficacy/ outcomes have transnational activist networks, or movements, produced, in specific, domestic milieus as well as on global norms, practices, institutions, and governance. In answering this question, give detailed examples and evidence from at least two transnational social movements -- reformist or radical, left or right, secular or religious. You should identify the most influential authors and theoretical perspectives and utilize the relevant social movement concepts and methodologies in your assessment.

9. The academic debates on the impacts of globalization on public health consider how the increased transnational flows of people, goods, services, ideas and values can promote greater connectedness while generating both benefits and negative externalities detrimental to the health, safety, and security of people through out the world. According to some scholars, we can improve our understanding of the direct and indirect impacts of globalization on public health by analyzing the human interaction across a wider range of spheres that consider the political, economic, socio-cultural, technological, and ecological components as well as the spatial, temporal, and cognitive dimensions. Your tasks are: 1) explore the linkages between globalization and health; 2) briefly discuss the role of at least one global health actor (e.g., World Trade Organization, World Bank, World Health Organization, etc.) and how they influence policy or issues related to globalization and health.

Security

10. Democratic regimes in many regions of the world have been beset by the rise and spread of a variety of phenomena associated with the negative aspects of globalization, such as transnational organized crime. Taking care to cite the relevant literature and to conceptualize the relationship between global or transnational processes and domestic political and institutional orders, your task is to identify the most important scholars in international relations, comparative politics (and related fields and disciplines) and to explain the principal factors that have contributed to the rise of organized crime and related illicit activities in these societies. What have been the principal impacts of the “dark side of globalization” on the processes of state capacity, democratic consolidation,

and the quality of citizenship in these countries? Do the corrosive effects of powerful transnational organized criminal networks render democratic consolidation and democratic deepening impossible? Why or why not?

11. In the current academic literature on security studies, there is extensive debate about how to best define and conceptualize the notion of "national security." Develop an essay in which you review the principal positions or "schools of thought" characterizing this on-going scholarly discussion and the major authors who have contributed to it. In your view, which is the most useful school or approach (or combination of approaches)? Why? What, if anything, does the concept of "securitization" add to the security debate?

International Political Economy (IPE)

12. "Embedded liberalism" refers to the social and political compromise associated with the Bretton Woods institutions and system of multilateral governance. This regime is depicted as a virtuous combination of an international economy resting on trade openness, fixed exchange rates (dominated by the US dollar), and capital controls, on the one hand, with the liberal and/or social democratic politics and anti-cyclical fiscal and monetary policies of the Keynesian welfare state, on the other. After an unprecedented "golden age of capitalism," why did the Bretton Woods regime begin to unravel in the 1960s and come to an end in the 1970s? Focusing on the post-1971 "non-system" and the subsequent acceleration of economic internationalization, describe the most critical differences shaping contemporary world politics and the global economy in terms of trends in trade, production, finance, the role of the nation-state, and the vitality and inclusiveness of democratic politics. Identify the main authors and evaluate the relative merits of the concepts advanced in the relevant realist, rationalist, and constructivist literatures in IR and related fields that help explain the rise and fall of "embedded liberalism."

13. Since its inception, IPE has been centrally concerned with the interaction between domestic politics and the international political economy. One group of scholars working on these issues examines the domestic-level determinants of the foreign economic policies of states. Three main domestic-level explanatory factors have been used to explain national trade, monetary and investment policy choices: interest group pressure, political institutions, and ideas. Explain the main differences between interest-based, institutional and ideational explanations of foreign economic policy. Are these explanations mutually exclusive? If not, in what ways can they be fruitfully combined? Discuss using specific examples.