

**International Relations/Foreign Policy
Comprehensive Examination**

12 November 2012

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 9:00 am in Merrick Rooms 304/305a/305b and will conclude by 5:00 pm. Do not put your name on the examination, but do include your student ID at the top of the first page.

A. Mandatory IR Theory

1. Is the United States a declining world power? How would you measure such a decline? How would a decline in U.S. influence reshape relations among the major global powers as well as North-South relations? Frame your answer within the context of the major theoretical perspectives current in the field of International Relations and use concrete empirical evidence in your analysis.

Optional Questions

B. IR Theory (more specific theory questions)

2. In speaking of the factors that lead to international war, Elihu Root, former U.S. Secretary of War and former Secretary of State and recipient of a Nobel Peace Prize in 1912, said: “To deal with the true causes of war one must begin by recognizing as of prime relevancy to the solution of the problem the familiar fact that civilization is a partial, incomplete, and, to a great extent, superficial modification of barbarism.” In what contemporary school of International Relations theory does Root’s comment seem to place him? What are the implications for an understanding of the international system and for a major state’s foreign policy strategy of both Root’s comment?
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 19th and the United States in the 20th 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.

C. Security & Conflict

4. The concept of security has undergone significant evolution in the post-Cold War era. Compare and contrast the conceptualization of the notion of security dominant during the Cold War with those that have surfaced in the relevant International Relations literature since the end of the Cold War. What are the principal factors that led to the present efforts at reconceptualization common among scholars dealing with contemporary security issues? What analytic benefits or advantages do you perceive in these efforts at reconceptualization? What conceptual costs or dangers can you identify in such efforts? On balance, how would you characterize the current “state-of-the-debate” over security studies in the field of International Relations?
5. Analysts who focus on ethnicity and nationalism as factors that have an impact on both international and domestic conflicts have often based their arguments on very different conceptions of ethnicity, nationality and nationalism. Write an essay in which you outline the central issues in the debates among analysts of these topics. Which are the major “schools” in these debates and their key underlying assumptions and orientations? How do those assumptions and orientations relate, if at all, to the major theoretical divisions within the broader field of International Relations?

D. Foreign Policy Analysis

6. The post-Cold War period has seen a significant increase in the use of economic sanctions. How “effective” have these instruments of economic statecraft been? Under what conditions are economic sanctions more likely to work? In your answer, discuss contending theoretical perspectives and empirical research on this topic. Provide empirical evidence in support of your arguments.

E. International Law/ Institutions/ Global Governance

7. The UN doctrine of the “Responsibility to Protect,” established in the World Summit Outcome of 2005, was implemented in UNSC Resolution 1973 in 2011 (backed by the Arab League) to authorize the use of force against Libya under Article 42 of the Charter. Yet, Russian and Chinese vetoes of two UNSC resolutions this year (which also were backed by the Arab League) have left the UN at an impasse in even bloodier conflict in Syria. Efforts by Kofi Annan and subsequently Lakhdar Brahimi as special envoys of the UN and Arab League have so far failed. Citing UN precedent and practice, outline possibilities for UN action to end the violence in Syria and also to avoid its spread into neighboring Middle East countries.

8. In violation of the UN Charter, international and U.S. domestic law, the Obama Administration has conducted widespread covert warfare by the assassination of thousands of people by drone aircraft in Pakistan and other countries, killing innocent civilians as well as those suspected by the U.S. to be militants. Even U.S. citizens abroad have been targeted for assassination. Other major powers in the world could cite this as precedent for similar operations of their own. Can the U.S. use of drone assassinations be justified as legitimate? Or, should a UN convention be introduced to end or at least to express opposition to the practice, much as has been done with the Ottawa Convention on Landmines (1997)?

F. IPE/ International Development

9. The speed and intensity of globalization processes in recent decades have caused a wellspring of backlash. First, broadly describe the scope and variety of contemporary, non-state political actors in the global arena: Who are they, what are they against and what do they advocate? Second, what impact/efficacy/outcomes have transnational movements and activist networks achieved. 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 also take care to anchor your assessment in the pertinent theoretical and methodological approaches.

G. Regional Studies: Latin America/Europe

10. David R. Mares (*Latin America and the Illusion of Peace*) warns of signs of potential militarized conflict all around Latin America, adding that “The resurgence of populism and nationalism threaten the latest wave of democracy and the foundations of economic growth.” Are the new instruments of conflict resolution beyond the OAS, such as UNASUR, ALBA, and the new Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC, 2011) just largely designed to avoid US hegemony or can they become successful regional alternatives to the OAS in conflict resolution?
11. Jacques Delors, former president of the EU Commission, reportedly said that the European Union is a UPO (Unidentified Political Object). This comment reflects, in essence, the perplexity of scholars, practitioners and theorists when dealing with a definition of the EU and its place in the realm of inter-state cooperation and conflict. With this central idea in mind and drawing upon appropriate perspectives from IR theory (and integration theory as a separate theoretical perspective), comment on the causes and possible solutions of the current EU/Eurozone crisis.