

**International Relations
Comprehensive Examination
Spring 2010**

Instructions: Ph.D. students must answer the mandatory and three (3) optional questions (8 hours). M.A. students must answer the mandatory and two (2) optional questions (4 hours). Note — you may answer only one question from any optional group. Be sure to provide the corresponding number to the questions you answer.

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. In recent years Waltzian neorealism has become divided into two main subcategories: offensive realism, and defensive realism. What common assumptions do offensive realism and defensive realism share in common? Where do they diverge in terms of: their respective causal logics, their respective appraisals of the security dilemma, and their respective prescriptions for great powers' grand strategies? In your view, does offensive realism or defensive realism provide a more powerful explanation for both the international political outcomes in the realm of security and the international strategies pursued by great powers? Or is it indicative, as John Vasquez argues, leading to a degenerative research program? Why or why not?

or

3. 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? 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? 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?

Foreign Policy Analysis and International Security

4. Over the last several decades, Barry Buzan, Ole Waever and Jaap de Wilde have contributed the concept of "securitization" to IR scholarly debates over the meaning of the term security. What does the term "securitization" actually signify? How does an issue become "securitized"? What practical difference does it make whether an issue is securitized or not? How do Buzan and his colleagues suggest that we go about studying securitization? What indicators would convince you that an issue has been effectively securitized? Can an issue be "de-securitized"? If so, how? How would you propose to study a case of "de-securitization"? What indicators would persuade you that an issue has been effectively de-securitized?

Ethnic Conflict and Nationalism

5. 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 writers 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.

International Political Economy

6. The 1980s and 1990s saw the spread of economic and political liberalization throughout much of the developing world. Free-market oriented economic reforms, including macroeconomic stabilization, liberalization of foreign economic policies and deregulation, took root throughout Latin America, Southeast Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa, and many of the countries of the former communist bloc. Many of these countries also underwent democratization at roughly the same time. At least four causal mechanisms have been emphasized by scholars studying this "diffusion" of economic and political liberalism to the developing world: coercion, competition, learning and emulation. Identify the most important scholarly contributions to this debate and explain the differences among each of these mechanisms, as well as their divergent theoretical roots. Select one or two countries in the

developing world that have recently undergone political and economic liberalization. Which of these mechanisms have been more relevant in explaining liberal reforms in these countries?

International Organizations & Regional Integration

7. The Treaty of Lisbon, ratified by all European Union (EU) states as a substitute for the failed "constitution", includes several institutional and conceptual reforms for the functioning of the EU. Select at least three innovations, briefly trace their background in the history of the EU, and make a succinct assessment of the future implementation of the changes or modifications. Add a commentary that demonstrates which of the standard theories of regional integration best fits this new stage of EU history.

Humanitarian Crises

8. Some scholars propose that humanitarian crises in the late 20th and the 21st century are a function of the post Cold War period and are more likely linked to the social disintegration of societies and the rise of ethnic and religious conflict as an outcome of the "new world disorder." Other scholars propose that such humanitarian crises are more closely associated to population growth, globalization, environmental deterioration and the increasing gap in health inequities and economic development. Select one perspective and defend your position. Give examples to support your answer. Relate your discussion to the central issues under debate in the theoretical literature in the field of international relations.

International Law

9. Modern International Human Rights Law does what was unthinkable a few decades ago: it empowers individuals to bring legal actions against their own governments before judicial bodies that decide whether those governments have violated international law. This development has buried the traditional view that what a government does to or for its own nationals in its own territory is strictly its own business."

(A): Is the modern "human rights revolution" more modest than the quotation implies? If you think so, explain your disagreement with the view summarized in the quotation. If you think not, defend the view summarized in the quotation.

(B): How can one seriously argue that international human rights are universal and legally binding on all states given (i) the variety of cultural, political, and legal traditions in the world; (ii) the widespread flouting of individual rights by many governments; and (iii) the wide range of rights and duties contained in the many human rights instruments that make up Modern International Human Rights Law?

or

10. States occasionally have engaged in military action using humanitarian intervention as a justification. Although the UN Charter permits the use of force only in self-defense or with Security Council authorization, the World Summit Outcome of 2005 formally adopted the doctrine of “Responsibility to Protect,” (R2P) which was then cited with approval in Security Council Resolution 1674 (2006). Does this establish R2P as an element of international law which authorizes humanitarian intervention? What are the principal barriers to the effective implementation of R2P or any doctrine of humanitarian intervention? Pick an instance of humanitarian intervention--e.g. Bosnia, Somalia, Rwanda, Haiti, Kosovo--and discuss how the Realists, Liberals and Constructivists would analyze arguments for humanitarian intervention in that case, making sure to cite relevant authors and works.