

IR/FP Comprehensive Examination

Fall 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 l.yaffe@umiami.edu (& yourself) and print one hard copy to be given to Ruth Reitan.

Do NOT put your name anywhere on the examination, but rather include your **STUDENT ID** or **SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER ON THE TOP OF 1st 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. "The West won the world not by the superiority of its ideas or values or religion but rather by its superiority in applying organized violence. Westerners often forget this fact, non-Westerners never do." Samuel Huntington, quoted in *Postcolonialism*, Robert J. C. Young).

Carefully analyze and critically engage with the above statement by Huntington. From what theoretical tradition is he reading history? Would you, or other theoretical traditions, agree or disagree with this statement. What sorts of actions may this reading of history justify? Perpetuate? Obfuscate? Cite appropriate authors, scholarly works, and theoretical traditions in your essay.

3. In the title of her seminal 1988 essay, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak queries "Can the Subaltern Speak?" (published in the edited volume 'Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture'). What was her answer? How does she make the argument for or against the possibility of the 'subaltern' speaking? Who or what is 'the subaltern'? Are YOU subaltern? And yet, are you speaking? What does she mean to be able to speak, from the perspective of social theory? What does this have to do with

agency, free subjectivity, and the like? What is her--and what is your--preferred theory of language? What is the ontological status of speech (or language, or discourse?) In what ways is Spivak's argument Marxist? Feminist? Post-Colonial? Critical? Post-structural? Are there tensions among these? Does she convince you in the way she uses and values each in making her answer? Do you agree with her analysis? Feel very free to re-arrange these questions as you go about crafting your essay, but strive to address all of them.

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 IR 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 IR?

5. Human Security, Securitization, and US Foreign policy: In summer 2012 the US State Department created a new Office of Global Health Diplomacy based upon the idea that "[t]he United States invests in global health as an expression of American compassion, to strengthen fragile states by promoting social and economic progress, to protect America's security, and as a tool of public diplomacy." Some scholars argue that global health issues should remain focused on improving humanitarian and social and economic objectives and steer away from the intent to securitize health problems as a strategy of US foreign policy. Other scholars propose that in an era of rapid globalization a new public health security and diplomacy approach is necessary to effectively respond to international challenges and protect US security in the 21st century

Your task for this essay is to: (1) Take a stand on the debate and consider the topics of health security and health diplomacy in US foreign policy today, (2) Draw on at least one global public health example, such as HIV/AIDS; influenza (bird [H5N1] or pig [H1N1]; Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS); Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS); a food borne illness related to global trade, or the re-emergence of cholera, dengue or malaria in the Americas to further support your answer.

(US) Foreign Policy

6. Compare and contrast the previous presidency's "Bush Doctrine" with what you would describe as an emerging "Obama Doctrine" in foreign policy, as outlined in the President's recent speech at the UN General Assembly, major initiatives abroad, and recent statements by his National Security Advisor Susan Rice. Feel free to cite scholarly literature and policy debates in analyzing both doctrines. In your educated opinion, which of these approaches is more effective in meeting the threats to US security, and also advancing the US's core interests?

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; its marking some American citizens overseas for extra-judicial killing without being convicted of crime; and intercepting the electronic communications (e.g. cell phone conversations) of foreign government officials.

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 the aftermath of the Second World War the establishment of the Bretton Woods institutions has prompted considerable theoretical debate among scholars. Several theoretical approaches to explain the creation, maintenance and transformation of the post-war international economic regime have been proposed. Discuss these competing theoretical perspectives, citing the relevant literature and authors. Which approach or combination of approaches best explain(s) the evolution of global economic governance since 1971? How useful are these approaches in accounting for recent developments in international economic regimes, including the stalemate in multilateral trade negotiations in the WTO and the recent expansion of the G-7?

Latin American Studies

9. 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 Terror? What consequences has the U.S.-conduct of the War on Terror 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 2011, is the U.S. government winning or losing the anti-drug fight in Latin America? Why? What impacts has U.S. policy had on economic welfare and democratic politics in the region? Identify the authors and theoretical approaches that best illuminate these issues.

European Studies

10. Former European Union Commission president Jacques Delors once labeled the EU as "an Un-Identified Political Object (UPO)". Seriously, what is the EU anyway? First, offer an interpretation of the nature of the EU, using selective theoretical frameworks, conceptual analytical tool and a dose of common sense. Second, take into consideration today's circumstances as well as historical background. And finally, in what ways does the complex institutional nature of the EU stem from and/or exacerbate the many challenges it now faces, such as enlargement, uncontrolled immigration, sluggish and uneven economic growth, banking crises, an aging population and strains on the welfare state, high unemployment (especially among youth), uncertain security frameworks, or the rebirth of old historical demons (racism, xenophobia, discrimination)?