

**COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION
IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
August 2015**

Instructions

This examination consists of four sections: World Politics A (WPA) consists of general international relations questions; World Politics B (WPB) consists of somewhat narrower or more specific questions; the last two sections consist of questions on international security (IS) and international political economy (IPE).

Majors in IR must write three essays: one from WPA, one from either the IS or IPE section, and one from any other section (that is, you may not write more than one essay in any one section).

Minors in IR must write two essays: one from WPA, and one from any other section. You are advised to demonstrate breadth as well as depth of knowledge in your set of essays. You should therefore avoid writing essays with answers that overlap substantially with respect to either theoretical arguments or substantive examples.

World Politics A. *All IR majors and all IR minors must write one essay from this section.*

1. If you were teaching a graduate field seminar in IR, how would you structure it to organize the material? What are the advantages and drawbacks of your preferred scheme?
2. In late 1949 Secretary of State Dean Acheson said: "As the free world [sic] becomes stronger, it will be progressively easier to get agreements." Evaluate the validity of this claim as a general theory of IR.
3. "The failure of interdependence to prevent World War I indicates that it is not likely to prevent a future war between China and the US." Discuss, with reference to relevant theories and evidence.

World Politics B. *This section is optional for both majors and minors.*

4. "Bureaucracies are central to the making of foreign policy, but we have no powerful and well-supported theories of how they explain state behavior." Discuss.
5. "Signaling of intentions rarely is effective--indeed the very fact that a state has to signal what it will do means that it knows that others have reason to think that it will act otherwise." Discuss.

6. The Just War tradition holds that the jus ad bellum and jus in bello should be semi-independent judgments -- that is, that states can fight just wars unjustly and unjust wars justly. What are the best arguments for or against this proposition?

7. "Outside options" play an important role in international bargaining. How do they influence negotiations among governments? Discuss the literature and provide real examples.

8. "Civil wars and terrorism have generally been studied separately, but many theories of terrorism are more properly understood as theories of political violence more generally, including insurgency." What insights if any, can the study of terrorism bring to our understanding of civil war, and vice versa? (Be sure to define your terms in answering this question.)

9. International borders are legal institutions as much as political ones. Please interrogate this statement and discuss how your response adds theoretically to at least two broad themes or issues in international politics.

10. Discuss the usefulness of nationalism and transnationalism as concepts for understanding the politicization of religion in contemporary international politics.

International Political Economy *All IR majors must write one essay from this section OR from the IS section. This section is optional for IR minors.*

11. Commitment problems pervade international relations in areas including trade, finance, aid, and others. Please explain how commitment problems can impact two areas of international relations and why this can lead to inefficient policies. How and when can institutions help to solve these problems?

12. Does international trade liberalization cause a "race to the bottom" or a "race to the top" in environmental policy? Summarize the arguments on both sides of the debate and evaluate the empirical evidence.

International Security *All IR majors must write one essay from this section OR from the IPE section. This section is optional for IR minors.*

13. "There is only one important philosopher of the nature and logic of war: Clausewitz. Yet liberal international relations theorists either ignore him or misunderstand him." Discuss.

14. "The US is now safe to an unprecedented degree, and one consequence is that our traditional theories do not help explain what it will or should do." Discuss.