

**COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION
IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
January 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. "The great conflicts of the 20th century--World War I, World War II, the Cold War--were fought not for power but for ideas." Discuss.

2. What theories would lead you to expect high conflict if not war between the US and the PRC in the coming years; what theories predict peace?

3. Nearly 200 years ago, Alexis de Tocqueville argued that: "foreign politics demand scarcely any of those qualities which are peculiar to a democratic regime; they require, on the contrary, the perfect use of almost all those in which it is deficient." Now most scholars believe quite the opposite. Who is right?

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

4. If cheap talk has no impact, why is it that diplomats talk so much, both in public and in private?

5. Why do many international organizations use the unanimity rule for voting? How does this rule influence bargaining within the organization?

6. The "agent-structure debate" in IR discussed the relationship between the character of the international system and the nature of its units. From that standpoint, discuss whether nationalism structures international anarchy, or anarchy shapes nationalism, or whether some underlying taproot nourishes both. Discuss in historical perspective, feeling free to contest any of the question's implicit assumptions about nationalism, anarchy, or causation.

7. What, in your view, are the most important causes of terrorism? How might we test their relevance empirically? In your response be sure to define what you mean by terrorism, and to specify the level(s) of analysis (e.g., individuals, groups, countries, etc.) you are considering.

8. "The United Nations has been called the League's "second chance." What lessons did the diplomats at the San Francisco Conference incorporate into the design of collective

security in UN Charter in an effort to have the UN avoid what they saw as the mistakes of the League of Nations?

9. Under what conditions and how can law serve as focal point for international political interactions? Are international interactions in which law and compliance are in the foreground different from others? Why or why not? Please use specific examples in your answer.

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.*

10. What are the determinants of individual preferences over trade policy? Summarize and discuss the most important theories and the empirical evidence.

11. Describe variation in responses to financial crises across countries. Which theories could account for this observed variation and how could these theories be tested?

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

12. Some believe that there is only one serious and enduring philosopher of war: Clausewitz. Has any later theorist of international conflict illuminated something fundamental that he did not? If so, what might Clausewitz cite to claim that his

formulations somehow anticipated the point? If not, what accounts for the poverty of philosophical progress on the subject of war since the 19th century?

13. Is the lore of nuclear strategy developed in the 20th century enlightening or misleading for understanding the functions of nuclear weapons in the 21st century?