

**Columbia University Department of Political Science**  
**Written Qualifying Examination in International Relations**  
**January 2022**

**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**

1a. Is reputation worth fighting for?

2a. Evaluate the efficacy of the strategies of “bluster” and of “peaceful rise” in relations between great powers. Discuss one or more historical examples and their contemporary relevance. In instances in which states adopted strategies that turned out to be counterproductive, explain why they were adopted.

**World Politics B**

1b. Psychological theories of international relations have often been inductively developed from experiments and applied to international subject matter through historical case studies. Deductive structure has come from amalgamating them with rationalist or systemic theory. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of this approach.

2b. Does terrorism work? Carefully define each term.

3b. In what ways does China comply with, and in what ways does it violate, its

obligations under international law? Please discuss with respect to a particular domain of international law, such as (but not limited to) human rights, arms control, or trade.

4b. Do international institutions screen or constrain? Discuss with reference to issues in both international security and economic relations.

5b. "Liberal, Marxist, and realist accounts of U.S. foreign policy assume different motives, but actual initiatives over time have been more or less the same as what each would predict." Discuss.

6b. "Humanitarian interventions would never happen without some motivation in national interest on the part of the intervener." Discuss.

### **International Security**

1is. Which historical period or geographic region provides the best lessons for causing and maintaining inter-state peace?

2is. Why was offense-defense theory so much more prominent in the 1980s and '90s than since?

### **International Political Economy**

1ipe. Do international organizations tasked with solving problems that are inherently multilateral such as climate change require a different design than IOs tasked with solving bilateral issues such as the hold-up problem, or can one size fit all?

2ipe. "Over the past decades we have seen a dramatic increase in the number of Bilateral Investment Treaties signed. While BITs have proliferated, most initiatives aimed at regulating foreign investment at the multilateral level have failed." Discuss the causes and consequences of the proliferation of bilateral agreements, and the absence of a multilateral regime.