

January 2013

### Comprehensive Examination: International Relations

**Major Field Exam:** Answer FOUR questions; you have EIGHT hours to do so.

**Minor Field Exam:** Answer THREE questions; you have SIX hours to do so.

All answers will be given equal weight. Be sure to refer to the relevant literature in your answers and watch the time.

1. What is the difference between a coordination and collaboration problem? According to liberal institutionalists, what are some ways that institutions or regimes solve each specific type of problem? Can power play a role in determining how these problems are resolved? If so, how?
2. Some liberals (for example, Andrew Moravcsik's "Taking Preferences Seriously") suggest that all liberal theories need to be rooted in individuals' or private groups' preferences, arguing that it provides the only theoretically coherent account of changes in state foreign policy and historical change. What are likely neo-institutionalist, realist, and constructivist responses to the claim that understanding the international system requires starting with individuals' preferences?
3. The democratic peace is widely believed to have a strong empirical basis, but there is far less agreement on the causal mechanisms that create peace between democracies. Review the key contending mechanisms thought to promote peace between democracies, and discuss how they complement or challenge other strands of IR theory.
4. Neo-liberal institutionalists and constructivists have different understandings of the origins, forms and consequences of institutions. What are the theoretical disagreements that underlie this divergence? And how do they affect the possibility of substantive debate between these two traditions? In a short essay, explain the deeper theoretical debates that lie behind these schools' characterizations of institutions, and assess whether there is any common ground on which these approaches could meet.
5. The last three decades have seen the crumbling of previously formidable barriers to trade and monetary flows across national borders. What explanations do scholars offer for this expansion in cross border economic transactions? What are the key points of agreement and disagreement between the different available explanations? In a short essay, draw upon the relevant scholarly work to lay out the different approaches to explanation, describing their underlying assumptions, and assessing their respective plausibility in light of criticisms and the empirical evidence.
6. Is the study of foreign policy decision-making doomed to be the study of idiosyncratic policymaking in different states, or are there generalizations we can make across states?

7. Power plays a central role in most theories of international politics. Some of these theories hold that power is the only variable necessary for assessing a state's options for, and ability to, achieve security. In contrast, others hold that power is insufficient and argue that including additional variables is essential. Begin by presenting some of the basic power-only arguments. Then lay out some of the key arguments that move beyond power. Assess their relative strengths.

8. The credibility of a state's threat is a key factor influencing its ability to deter and compel. Explain what credibility is and why it matters. Then discuss the factors that influence a state's ability to make its threats credible and the tactics it can use to increase the credibility of its threats.