**May 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. Traditional realists equate power with latent and actual material capabilities. Recent scholarship, however, questions the utility of these concepts in international politics. States that are materially weaker normally survive in great power politics, and often get what they want at the expense of great powers.  Specify two or more alternative accounts of power, explaining how they explain the power of the materially weak.  What arguments might traditional realists who focus on material power use to engage or dispute these accounts? Critically assess these arguments.

2. One of the most important debates that have divided paradigmatic thinkers in international relations is the ‘logics of action’ debate. Describe the logic of consequences, as well as two or more alternative logics of action. Why is this debate important for paradigmatic debates? In responding to this question, explain the type of agent produced by each logic of action, and the types of theories that are discounted by each type (e.g., the logic of appropriateness may discount rational calculation, undermining rational choice theory). In addition, take a position on whether the ‘logics of action’ debate needs to be sorted out theoretically or empirically.

3. Early game theoretic work in international relations theory typically took a simple one-shot game (such as Prisoner’s Dilemma or Chicken) and sought to identify international strategic situations that seemed analogous to the game. More recent work has tended to focus instead on more complex games that are indefinitely iterated. Draw on the literature to explain why this change took place, and to explore the relative advantages and disadvantages of the two approaches.

4. What are the respective roles of power and efficiency considerations in shaping international institutions? Scholars in both security and international political economy disagree over these roles in ways that have shaped their understanding of how institutions influence (or do not influence) international outcomes. Draw on the scholarly literature across the different approaches to IR to set out the different accounts of power and efficiency in international institutions. Take care to examine both how different accounts have responded to each other, and to assess the relative worth of these different understandings.

5. Until quite recently, the dominant approaches in international political economy have developed in dialogue with international security. How has this shaped the factors that these approaches pay attention to, and the factors that they tend to neglect? Have recent moves by some scholars of international political economy to pay less attention to international security and more attention to comparative politics been a good or bad thing for IPE scholarship? Draw on relevant readings from the IPE literature over the last four decades to answer these questions.

6. The security dilemma plays a central role in generating competition between states. What is the security dilemma and why is it necessary to generate competition between security seeking states? Discuss the relationship between the security dilemma and the spiral model. Then explain how, under certain conditions, states can pursue policies that can moderate these spirals, thereby helping states avoid dangerous competition.

7. States often rely on deterrence to protect their interests from adversaries. Describe the basic factors that determine whether an adversary will be deterred. Then compare conventional and nuclear deterrence, focusing on key differences; referring back to the first part of this question, explain these differences in terms of the basic factors in an adversary’s deterrent calculation. Finally, discuss why successful nuclear deterrence can be easier to accomplish than conventional deterrence, but also why it can be harder.

8. 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? As part of your answer, describe three different contributions of the foreign policy decision-making literature and assess their ability to travel beyond the United States.