**INTERNATIONAL POLITICS COMPREHENSIVE EXAM, January 22, 2016**

Majors answer four questions. Non-majors answer three.

Major comprehensive exam candidates should answer one question from *each* of the three sections (international political economy, security, and general), as well as one additional question from a section of their choosing. Minor comprehensive exam candidates should answer one question from each of the three sections. Majors have 8 hours; minors have 6 to complete the exam.

**Section I – General**

1. Discuss the similarities and differences in the roles that institutions play in international security versus international political economy. Are institutions equally useful in both realms, or significantly more important in one realm than in the other? Explain.

2. Structural theories “black box” states and emphasize the impact of international anarchy on states’ economic and security policies. Discuss key strengths and weaknesses of this approach.

3. Realism and institutionalism, in contrast to constructivism, are often characterized as material theories. Why is this characterization partially correct? More importantly, explore at some length what it overlooks.

4. Much work in international relations asks whether international organizations are faithful agents of states. What different things do rationalist and constructivist accounts have to say about how international organizations exercise their responsibilities to states, and why do their accounts differ so much?

**Section II – International Security**

5. Will China’s rise lead to war with the United States? Describe the theories/arguments that offer opposing predictions. Briefly explain why you judge one set of arguments to be stronger than the others.

6. Is the possession of nuclear weapons a stabilizing force in international politics? What factors/variables influence the answer?

7. There is still no consensus about why some states are much better at fighting wars than others. Some scholars believe material factors are key, others emphasize the importance of non-material factors. Present the arguments offered by these contending perspectives. Is one set of arguments stronger than the other?

8. Can interstate war and civil war effectively be analyzed through the same theoretical lens? If so, which one and how? If not, why not?

**Section III – International Political Economy**

9. International political economy has shifted from an approach that focused on anarchy to an approach that focuses on interest groups and aggregating institutions within the state. What underlying shifts of ideas have driven this change, what are its benefits, and has anything been lost?

10. The US dollar plays an inordinate role in the international economy. Why is this so, what are its consequences, and how does this strengthen (if it does strengthen) US bargaining power?

11. Some recent scholarship has sought to challenge traditional understandings of international political economy by focusing on the role of networks in the global economy. What does an emphasis on networks bring into focus, and what does it leave unexamined?

12. Much original work in international political economy focused on the question of hegemony and collective goods. Why has the study of hegemony fallen out of fashion, and does it deserve to be revived given the history of the recent economic crisis?