**Comprehensive Exam in International Relations May 2014**

Major comprehensive exam candidates should answer one question from *each* of the three sections (international political economy, security, and general), as well as one further question from a section of their choosing. Minor comprehensive exam candidates should just answer one question from each of the three sections.

**Section I - International Political Economy**

1. How do domestic political actors, institutions, and ideas influence the direction and pace of global economic liberalization? Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of scholarly approaches to political economy that emphasize economic structure, societal preferences, institutions, and norms and ideas.

2. What are the political consequences of the extraordinary growth of trade and financial flows over the last three decades?

3. What are the most important interrelationships between the international economy and domestic politics? Are these relationships different in developed and developing countries?

**Section II - International Security**

4. For realists, material power is the key explanatory factor in international politics. As Thucydides put it, the strong do what they will, and the weak suffer what they must. But just as Athens was unable to persuade the people of Melos to surrender without a fight during the Peloponnesian War, recent scholarship in security affairs has identified a variety of phenomena where being materially powerful does not appear to convey any definite advantage. Discuss at least two such findings and the theoretical arguments underlying them. What are the implications for realism, and for our understanding of international politics more broadly?

5. In a recent article, William Wohlforth bemoans the influence of Kenneth Waltz’s Theory of International Politics on the field of international relations and argues that the field would have been better served had Robert Gilpin’s book War and Change in World Politics been the more influential work. Do you agree or disagree? Lay out the central tenets and key findings of each theory. Which, if either, do you think provides the more persuasive view of international politics? Why?

6. Of the 69 armed conflicts identified by the Uppsala Conflict Data Program in 2011 and 2012, the last two years for which data are available, only two of them—one each year—involved conflicts between states. Neither of these conflicts (Cambodia vs. Thailand in 2011, Sudan vs. South Sudan in 2012) rose to the level of war (defined as incurring 1,000 total battle deaths). Indeed, according to the Correlates of War Data, since the end of the Cold War internal wars have outnumbered wars between states more than six to one. What accounts for the decline of interstate war, both over time and relative to civil war?

**Section III - General**

7. Some scholars have argued that the development of US international relations theory has been shaped by America's role and policy needs in the international system. In recent years, the US has seen new challenges to its economic and political power. How should international relations theory deal with these challenges? In your answer, draw on the relevant literature to describe both the relationship between IR theory and US power, and the ways in which IR theory might respond as US power changes.

8. International relations scholars in security and international political economy have very different understandings of the role and value of institutions. To what extent do these different understandings depend on real differences between security and economic interactions? Is it possible for a single theory of institutions to span both of these sets of activities and others? In your answer, draw on the literatures on both security and IPE, as well as other relevant literature as necessary.

9. Constructivist scholars have devoted much time and energy to establishing that norms can have consequences. The question of *when* norms have consequences is much more contested. Do norms play a central or peripheral role in explaining major aspects of world politics? Is it possible to determine systematically when norms are more or less likely to count? In your answer, draw on the work of *both* scholars arguing for the importance of norms and those arguing that norms are not important.