

INTERNATIONAL POLITICS COMPREHENSIVE EXAM, May 20, 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. Are states still the most important actors in world politics? Does the answer differ in security versus economic affairs? Explain the implications of your answer for international relations theory
2. Theories of international relations and the interaction between states often focus on system-level variables. To what extent have such theories appropriately integrated domestic-level variables? Which ones do you find most useful, and why?
3. Scholars often lament the disconnect between theories of security and theories of international political economy. Discuss at least two areas of international relations where you think this disconnect has been usefully (if not fully) bridged and two areas where you think further work across the subfields is needed.
4. How does game theory help us to understand cooperation and competition under anarchy? Identify some insights that game theory has provided that were unknown before its application. Does game theory provide different insights into Security and IPE? If yes, why? What are some of the limits of game theoretic analysis?

Section II – International Security

5. The democratic peace is often said to be as close to a law as we have in the social sciences. Evaluate the evidence and explanations for the democratic peace. Explain whether you think the peace is real or illusory, and the implications for international relations theory.
6. Alliances are an enduring feature of international politics. Under what conditions do alliances make war more or less likely? Discuss the implications of your answer for at least one contemporary alliance involving a great power.

7. Over the next 20 years, is the United States more likely to become involved in a war with Russia or with China? Although your answer can draw up current events, it should be based primarily on international relations theory.
8. Much was known about the causes of war before the development of the rationalist theories of war. Review the earlier theories; then discuss the rationalist theories and what they add to the earlier arguments.

Section III – International Political Economy

9. Work in international political economy has often tended to assume that actors – whether states or non-state actors - are driven by the standard imperative of wealth maximization. What happens to standard theories when we make different assumptions about actor motivations? In a short essay take *one or two* specific topics in international economy and look at how or whether different assumptions about motivations lead to different conclusions about outcomes.
10. Does change in international economic ideas lead to change in international economic regimes or vice versa? Discuss the major changes in economic regimes since World War II (Ruggie's embedded multilateralism, its collapse, and, if you think there has been change, the recent economic crisis) whether these changes have been associated with changes in ideas, and in which direction the causal relationship goes (from regimes to ideas, or from ideas to regimes).
11. What is the place of power in the international economy? In a short essay, discuss the ways in which major approaches to IPE have dealt with or ignored questions of power, and briefly outline which account seems most convincing.
12. The literature on international political economy tends often to focus on relations and agreements between advanced industrial economies in North America and Europe. Are the ideas of this literature applicable to other relationships (e.g. the relationship between these economies and less developed economies in Africa and Asia, or the relationships among these economies)? In a short essay, discuss whether we need one, or many, theories of international economic relations and agreements, drawing on the relevant literature.