

**International Relations Comprehensive Exam
Fall 2015**

Morning Exam

Please answer one of the following:

1. Design the outline for an international relations pre-seminar syllabus (a graduate course). What topics would you cover? Which works are essential readings for the course? Which readings would you omit? Be sure to justify the topics and the works included/excluded.

2. IR scholars have traditionally justified separating international and domestic politics by asserting that international politics take place in an anarchic setting, while domestic politics take place in a hierarchical or ordered setting.
 - a. Are there good reasons to doubt either part of this assertion? That is, is there reason to doubt that international politics are clearly anarchic, or that domestic politics are clearly not?
 - b. Should the two fields be treated completely separate? Can insights from one inform the other? Why or why not?

3. Most theoretical approaches to international relations incorporate incomplete information into their explanations in some way. Explain the various ways that major grand- and mid-range theoretical approaches in international relations address and account for incomplete information? For each, is the treatment of incomplete information a strength or weakness of the theoretical approach?

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Afternoon Exam

Please answer any two of the following:

1. Some experts maintain that international conflict and cooperation are two sides of the same coin. That is, international conflict occurs when states fight and cooperation occurs when they don't. Do you agree with this position? Why or why not?

Note: This answer should draw off of *all* of your graduate seminars, and does *not* require that you took an international conflict class. Think about international organizations/law, human rights, conflict/conflict management, pre-seminars, etc.

2. At times, it seems as though we know very little about international conflict management – that is, the field appears fragmented and to fail at knowledge accumulation. Is this true? Use examples to highlight your position. If the statement is true, how might the field move forward? If the statement is not true, how might the field work to eradicate the perception of its failures?
3. How do individual grievances grow into large-scale, violent conflict (i.e., civil war)? In your answer, be sure to discuss the strategic and tactical considerations of the aggrieved, problems of collective action, etc. Include also a discussion of the state's response to grievances, and how this may contribute to or help prevent violent conflict.
4. Decisions affecting American foreign policy are based on many influences, including past history, the personalities of the decision-makers, institutional SOPs, and available information. In this question, you are asked to explore the informational dimension, especially the role played by U.S. intelligence agencies in providing data and insights that illuminate events and conditions abroad. Please explain the purpose and methods of the Intelligence Community, paying special attention to why they sometimes fail to accurately inform those in policy positions about international developments. Comment as well on the relative importance of intelligence, in contrast to other forms of information that presidents and their aides may rely on as they address foreign policy. In answering this question, demonstrate your understanding of the scholarly literature on this subject, citing the key works that have been published on intelligence and more generally the significance of information in decision-making.
5. What evidence is there to suggest that international institutions have an independent effect on government behavior? What are the difficulties in identifying the effects of international institutions on state behavior? Discuss how these difficulties can be addressed and cite relevant studies. On balance, does the evidence weigh in favor of or against claims that institutions are important determinants of behavior in IR? Cite relevant studies for at least two policy areas (e.g., security, trade, finance, environmental policy, human rights, humanitarian law, etc.).
6. How do domestic preferences, policies, institutions, and politics affect interstate relations? Is it possible to build a purely *domestic* theory of international relations? Why or why not?