

Answer *one* of the following questions.

1. From your perspective, what does “good” international relations research look like? What defines best practices in terms of creating theories of international relations and connecting theories to empirical tests?

- Is there a theory, paradigm, or approach in IR that is more useful than others for explaining international political phenomena? If so, describe it and explain why it is superior to other approaches. If not, why not?
- Is there a best approach for linking theoretical concepts and explanations to empirical operationalizations and tests? If so, what is it, and why is it the best approach? If not, why not?
- Provide detailed arguments and guidelines about best practices. Support your argument with specific examples from the IR literature that can serve to represent good and/or bad practices.

2. Explain your theoretical perspective on international relations. That is, how do you believe international relations work? Your answer:

- Should incorporate and account for key concepts in international relations, such as power, institutions, information, ideas, risk, conflict, anarchy, and cooperation;
- Can rest on all or part of existing theories or perspectives (for example, realism, neoliberal institutionalism, or constructivism). If you take this approach, justify what you include/exclude and be mindful of potential criticisms of your position;
- May blend existing theories - including mid-range theory-in unique ways. Again, justify your position if you do this.

Answer *two* of the following questions.

1. What theoretical reasons do we have to believe that international institutions can promote cooperation between states?

- In your answer, you must discuss insights from game-theoretic models of cooperation about the specific ways institutions increase the likelihood of mutual cooperation. How do institutions make cooperation more likely than it would be in their absence?
- Additionally, are features of domestic politics important to consider when theorizing about how international institutions promote cooperation? If so, how do domestic politics condition the effect of international institutions on cooperation between states?

2. The United States spends upwards of \$80 billion a year on intelligence activities. How is this money spent and, despite this large sum, why has intelligence failed periodically and sometimes with catastrophic results?

3. How do individual grievances grow into large-scale, violent, internal conflicts (civil wars)? In your answer, discuss the strategic and tactical considerations of the aggrieved in organizing resistance (problems of collective action, etc.), as well as the response of the state to the expression of grievances.

4. Assume that explicit assumptions about human decision making are necessary to construct coherent explanations of state behavior. Evaluate rational and cognitive assumptions in terms of their capacity to provide a foundation for building international relations theory and/or for conducting foreign policy analysis.

5. At times, it seems as though we know very little about international conflict management – that is, it appears that the field is fragmented and that little knowledge has accumulated. 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?

6. The bargaining model of war dominates the contemporary literature on international conflict. Discuss the advantages and limitations of this analytical framework.

- Does the model uniquely contribute to our understanding of international conflict (i.e., does it provide any insights that previous explanations for war could not)?
- Is the bargaining model able to provide a fully comprehensive account for international war? Are there aspects of conflict that it fails to explain? What, if anything, is the model missing?
- Could it be usefully modified to provide a more complete or realistic account of international conflict? If so, how?