

IR Comp Spring 2018

Morning Questions

*Please answer **one** of the following questions.*

1. For many years, the 'isms' dominated IR theory. Now, many contend that the 'isms' are dead or dying. Please briefly summarize your view of the current status of the 'isms' in IR. How helpful are the 'isms' to the field moving forward? What are the costs and benefits with continuing to teach the 'isms' to undergraduates and beginning graduate students? Do you plan to teach the 'isms'? Why or why not?
2. Is anarchy the most important concept in international relations? Why or why not? Explain your answer by referencing various arguments and theories within the field.

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Afternoon Questions

Please answer *two* of the following questions.

1. Many contend that non-state actors have grown in their numbers and influence in the last twenty years. How have non-state actors been incorporated into IR theory? Are the growth of these actors in society influencing IR in lasting ways? Focusing on any one type of non-state actor (firms, terrorist organizations, NGOs, etc), what are a few of the big questions left for scholars to understand?
2. Most theoretical approaches to international relations incorporate incomplete information into their explanations in some way – for example, private knowledge, uncertainty, risk, learning, or information gathering and revelation. How do the major 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? Explain your reasoning with reference to international relations research and theories.
3. Historically, there was a clear divide between what was categorized as domestic politics and what was categorized as international politics. Today, many would argue that the line between what is international relations and what is comparative politics is blurry. Is this blurriness good for science? Is it good for the field? Please discuss how the treatment of domestic politics have changed over time for IR scholars. For IR, what are the relative costs and benefits of focusing more heavily on things that are domestic?
4. Do international institutions have an independent effect on government behavior? In your answer:
 - a. Consider how we *know* if an independent effect exists and how various authors approach this concern.
 - b. Evaluate whether the evidence, on balance, suggests that institutions are important determinants of behavior in international relations.
 - c. Cite research from at least two policy areas (e.g., security, trade, finance, environment, human rights, international law, etc.)
5. Much recent research on human rights and human security concerns how international actors can or cannot influence human rights/human security outcomes in specific countries. In your opinion, what are the two most promising avenues for how international actors can influence human rights/human security outcomes? Please evaluate the quality of the evidence in this area. What questions remain?
6. Are explicit assumptions about the mechanisms of human choice required for coherent theories of international relations? Explain your answer in both theoretical terms (requirements of a coherent theory) and in terms of conducting empirical research. Include in your answer a discussion about the assumptions concerning the origin of preferences, the decision calculus, and the capacity of the various approaches to produce theoretically useful hypotheses.
7. There is a growing interest in theory-building and empirical projects that combine elements of IPE and studies of conflict. Pick an area of IPE and please describe how a

focus on international or civil conflict could inform future research. Is the study of conflict necessary for the study of IPE? Conversely, is the study of IPE necessary for the study of conflict?