

IR Comp Fall 2018

Morning Questions

*Please answer **one** of the following questions. Indicate the question number and provide the text of the question at the start of your answer.*

1. 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?
2. Lake (2011) argues that the field of international relations should eschew a focus on grand theory (or the “isms”) and “focus instead on developing contingent, mid-level theories of specific phenomena.”
 - a. Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Why or why not?
 - b. If you agree, should we still teach our students about grand theory? Why or why not?
 - c. If you disagree, explain what you see as the proper roles of grand and mid-level theories in international relations scholarship. Should all mid-level theories be derived from grand theory? Do grand and mid-level theories serve useful, but separate, purposes?

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Afternoon Questions

Please answer *two* of the following questions. Indicate the question number and provide the text of the question at the start of your answer.

1. 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.)
2. 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.
3. Over the last twenty-five years, research in political economy has increasingly adopted either a factorial or sectoral model of societal preferences over foreign economic policies. Are these approaches competing or complementary?
 - a. In your answer, explain the factorial and sectoral models by using them to derive the preferences for various societal groups over trade, monetary, and exchange rate policies.
 - b. If you argue that they are competing, explain how we should select between them and then use your criteria to state which one is preferred.
 - c. If you argue that they are complementary, discuss how they should be combined.
 - d. Finally, evaluate the extent to which these preference-based models explain and predict policy outcomes.
4. Why do state actors violate their citizens' physical integrity rights? Answer by developing and applying YOUR preferred theory of government respect for physical integrity. Based on that theory, what can be done to prevent violations of physical integrity rights?
5. 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.
6. In the context of national security in the United States, define and explain the "intelligence cycle." What are its phases, and what are the perils for failure in each? What can be done to improve this process? In your answer, provide references to the key academic literature on this subject.

7. The bargaining model of war dominates contemporary discussions of international conflict. What does this theory uniquely contribute to our understanding of international conflict (i.e., what does it add that others do not)? Does the bargaining model succeed or fail at fully explaining international conflict? What, if anything, might it be missing that other work can/should address?

8. The field of international conflict management leaves the impression that little knowledge has accumulated. First, is this an accurate impression? Why or why not? Second, how would you advise scholars to move the field forward? That is, what two broad themes would you encourage researchers to pursue? Why these two? What benefits would such a research program bring, and how would it build off existing research?