

International Relations Major Field Exam, Spring 2020

Part I: General (Morning) Questions

Answer one of the following two questions. Please indicate the question number at the beginning of your answer.

1. What are the most significant theoretical and empirical contributions to the study of international relations over the past 25 years? In your answer, discuss at least one theoretical contribution and one empirical contribution, citing examples from the literature. Also, explain how these contributions have advanced the state of the field. Finally, discuss some existing weaknesses in the field of international relations that remain even with the contributions you note.
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. 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? Should the two fields be treated as separate? Can insights from one inform the other? Why or why not?

Part II: Subfield (Afternoon) Questions

Answer two of the following questions. Please indicate the question number at the beginning of each answer. Please be sure to leave a page break between your two answers for clarity.

1. Conflict: 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?
2. IOs: 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.).

3. HR: 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?
4. Intel: 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.
5. Decision: Assume that explicit assumptions about human decision making are required for effective theories of international relations. Evaluate rational and cognitive assumptions in terms of their capacity to provide a foundation for building international relations theory and for conducting foreign policy analysis.