

PhD Comprehensive Exam
Fall 2022
Morning Exam

Answer *one* of the following arguments.

1. International Relations scholars have traditionally separated the study of international and domestic politics, arguing that the two occur in drastically different contexts—that is, international politics takes place in an anarchic environment, while domestic politics takes place in a hierarchical environment.
 - Is this argument a compelling reason to treat international and domestic politics as distinct fields of study? Why or why not?
 - What are the advantages and disadvantages of incorporating domestic politics into theories and analyses of international politics?

2. What are the most significant theoretical and empirical contributions to the study of international relations over the past 20 years (2002-2022)?
 - Discuss at least one theoretical contribution and one empirical contribution in your answer, citing specific examples from the literature.
 - Explain why/how these contributions have significantly advanced the field, citing examples from the literature. If there are obvious alternative contributions that you see as *less essential* than those you identified, discuss these relative merits as well.
 - Despite any contributions you discuss, what weaknesses in the field of international relations offer particularly attractive opportunities for further research?

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Afternoon Exam

Answer *two* of the following questions.

1. Why does interstate war occur? Please, in some way, engage the myriad proposed answers to this question—as you develop *your* answer.
2. How do individual grievances turn into large-scale, violent, internal (i.e., civil) conflicts? In your answer, discuss the strategic and tactical considerations of the aggrieved in organizing resistance, as well as of the government in responding to that resistance.
3. 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.
4. Have nuclear weapons changed international politics? Why/how or why/how not? In your answer, please also compare and contrast Cold War and post-Cold War conceptions of nuclear weapons, deterrence, and conflict.
5. What political and economic interventions do best at increasing human security, and why? What political and economic interventions do worst at increasing human security, and why? Your answer should discuss at least one political and one economic intervention. If you only discuss one on the “best” and one on the “worst” side, be sure to address whether political interventions *overall* perform better (or worse) than economic ones.
6. Major events—such as September 11, the 2008 Financial Crisis, among others—demonstrate the importance of non-state actors. How have theories of international relations incorporated non-state actors? Focusing on any one type of non-state actor (e.g., firms, terrorist organizations, non-governmental organizations, and so on), what are some “big questions” to which the field does not yet have good answers?