

# INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS PRELIMINARY EXAM

Spring 2010

## General Instructions and Advice:

Students must answer three (3) of the following questions. Choose questions that enable you to demonstrate a **broad** knowledge of international relations. Examination answers should demonstrate knowledge of the history and development of the field. Relevant real world examples should be integrated into the answer and important recently published literature should be cited.

A good exam is characterized by coherent and forceful arguments based on existing work and evidence in the field. A weak exam is one where the argument is made in isolation from the literature and/or where no argument is made. Almost all the questions are designed to allow you to take a position on an issue. Do so, and do not simply produce an annotated bibliography. In other words, use the questions to show that you both know the material and can present an argument as a scholar.

We anticipate that each question can be answered in approximately 3000 words. Please double-space your answers, provide reasonable margins, and number the pages.

## Questions:

1. The field of International Relations seems to be increasingly fragmented. What are the sources of this fragmentation? Is there any remaining "core" of the field of international relations, and, if so, of what does it consist?
2. Examine critical approaches in IR theory in general (which theories/authors would you consider "critical" and why) and focus upon two or three specific traditions of critical theory and what it is that they are "critical of". Also, describe what they have in common, if anything, with other "mainstream IR" approaches.
3. Over the past two decades, scholars such as John Mueller and Martin van Creveld have argued that war, as an international institution, has been radically transformed or, in Mueller's terminology, is "obsolete." This claim seems to run against the "Everything you need to know about international relations is in Thucydides" school of thought. Address this issue with a specific focus on war as an international phenomenon and changes in the role of war in the post-WWII period.

4. Is "low-intensity conflict" a political behavior that is qualitatively distinct from "conventional" conflict, or is it simply the low end of a continuum? Assess the extent to which existing theories of international conflict are relevant to LIC.
5. In 1986, Steven Smith asked if Foreign Policy Analysis as a "...distinct (if eclectic) approach to the study of foreign policy has anything to offer other than footnotes to grand theories of international relations or historical case studies...?" In 2007, David Houghton wrote that "...there is a deeper reason for FPA's persistent 'minority status' within IR: it has not fully engaged with the rest of the discipline and does not appear to fit anywhere within the framework of the contemporary debates going on in IR." Address these critiques of FPA with reference to both past and current scholarship in Foreign Policy Analysis
6. The democratic peace literature in international relations implies certain propositions about foreign policy and foreign policy making. Discuss these propositions and place them in the context of research in foreign policy analysis.
7. Assess the Just War Tradition in both IR theory and the sub-field of International Ethics. Characterize, as well, some of the most recent debates over the development of a jus post bellum, including the application of Just War to terrorism.
8. What explains the deviant, pathological, or hypocritical behavior of international organizations? Discuss both rationalist and constructivist based explanations and illustrate using briefs examples from at least two different international organizations.
9. "To aid or not to aid, that is the question." What are some of the current arguments for and against the provision of international development aid? Should the US continue to give development aid? What are the arguments for and against the provision of aid to the developing world?