

International Relations Preliminary Examination for Doctoral Students
September 21, 2008
University of Kansas
Department of Political Science

Instructions: Students must answer three (3) of the following questions.

Advice to the student: 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.

1. Compared on ontological and epistemological grounds, are rationalism and constructivism opposing approaches to the study of international relations?
2. Discuss the evolution of international relations theory. What have been the major issues and turning points? What are the underlying forces or dynamics that explain this evolution? Have we seen progress?
3. To what extent has the conventional wisdom in development theory and practice moved beyond the Washington Consensus? What specific theories, agenda, or practices in international development today can you point to in order to either support or disprove claims of a “post-Washington consensus”?
4. What is the conventional wisdom on the role of public opinion in foreign policy in the United States, other democracies, and non-democracies? How has this conventional wisdom been challenged?
5. What are the roles of philosophy of science and methodological choices in the discourse and research of foreign policy analysis?

6. Is “low-intensity conflict” (LIC) 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.

7. What constitutes the power of international organizations?

8. Identify the major debates within the “English School” as they exist in the field of International Ethics. In your answer, confront the discussions, which have occurred over the forms of international system and international (and world) society, how societies originate, form or come about, and the discussion regarding “order” versus “justice”. To which empirical issues or practices have these debates been applied by English School scholars? Finally, how would you characterize the current status of these debates?

9. Pick **two** of the following processes or topics widely researched in the field of international law: human rights, humanitarian intervention, torture, and environmental degradation. Explain the primary issues and debates concerning these topics currently within international law.