

**International Relations Field Exam**  
**January 2015**

Section I

1. Uncertainty has long been considered a cause of war. Provide your assessment of arguments about how uncertainty can produce conflict as well as those of their critics. Please specify what types of uncertainty are in play.
2. Since at least the 1980s, IR theory has been taught using the "-isms" as its main categories. More recently, however, there has been a move away from the "-isms" and towards a unified "strategic interaction" approach. Lay out the contours, implications, advantages, and disadvantages of this move.

Section II

1. A substantial literature has now emerged about the causes, conduct, and outcome of third-party interventions in civil wars. In particular, the literature has converged on a stark view of the prospects for successful nation- and state-building by outside powers. Drawing on these existing studies, what factor(s) do you consider are most important in explaining why these interventions have failed?
2. Recent research has challenged the conventional view that authoritarian powers do not face domestic audience costs. How are audience costs generated in (some) authoritarian powers, and how do these constraints affect foreign policy, if at all? What methodological challenges are posed by exploring audience costs in authoritarian powers?

Section III

1. Discuss three mechanisms that scholars have proposed through which international organizations are said to constrain state behavior. Evaluate the merits of the theory and empirical evidence in support of each.
2. Some scholars argue that international treaties shape state behavior by spreading norms that shape state preferences. Others argue that these treaties are more punitive instruments, shaping state behavior by via rewards and sanctions (and their threats). Evaluate the theoretical merits and empirical evidence for each position. Which view offers the most compelling account of the effects of international treaties?