

International Relations Field Exam
August 2013

Please answer one question from each section. Keep in mind that you will be evaluated not only on your knowledge of the relevant literature, but also on your ability to think independently and make a compelling argument.

Section I (pick one):

1. One of the main distinctions within IR theory is that between rational theories and all other, extra- or non-rational theories of international politics. What is the role of rationality in IR theory? In your view, what is the potential and what are the limitations of rational theories in IR? How can we better incorporate the non-rational aspects of international behavior into our theories? Feel free to pick particular issue areas within IR to illustrate your arguments.
2. The study of international norms, their content, diffusion, and role, has gained renewed importance in IR. What do we know about norms and, in your view, how should their study evolve?

Section II (pick one):

1. To what extent can international relations theories help explain the dynamics of civil conflict? Evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of utilizing IR approaches to understand civil conflict, including ways in which international relations scholarship might benefit from theoretical and empirical insights drawn from the study of civil war.
2. Domestic politics affect international security in non-trivial ways. Discuss, with attention to both theory and evidence, and consider the implications for the study of international relations.

Section III (pick one):

1. Some scholars claim that international law causes changes in state behavior. Discuss with reference to trade and at least one other issue area.
2. Is humanitarian intervention an effective tactic? Does peacekeeping work? Evaluate existing scholarship relevant to these questions, and discuss why they might be difficult to answer. Empirical examples may be useful.