

International Relations Field Exam
August 2015

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. Neo-realists have argued that the fundamental competitive dynamic of international politics can be deduced solely from the assumptions that the international system is anarchic and that states seek survival. This deductive account has been challenged by theorists who argue that anarchy need not imply competitive self-help dynamics in the international system and that states' identities and interests coevolve over time. The constructivist literature on world politics led the charge in this re-consideration of the implications of anarchy and pushed scholars to consider where state preferences come from. Summarize the deductive argument laid out by Ken Waltz in the *Theory of International Politics* as well as at least one version of a constructivist critique of Waltz; then present your own view of where state interests come from.
2. A book review of David Lake's book *Hierarchy in International Relations* in published in the journal *Millenium* opens this way: "In this landmark study, David Lake argues that international political order is characterized by hierarchical relations among states. This important breakthrough reveals a fundamental paradox in conventional International Relations (IR) theory, which, as most of our disciplinary tools and concepts attest, has for long told us that international politics is structured by a lack of supranational authority. Relying on a sophisticated research design and an equally impressive data set, Lake carefully dismantles the continued salience of anarchy, arguing instead that hierarchy – state subordination, in whole or in part, to the authority of another, more dominate state—is *the* defining feature of international political order." Is this statement true? Start by summarizing Lake's argument. Then explain the theoretical value-added of Lake's book by relating it to other perspectives on this central debate in IR theory (e.g. consider Gilpin's, Keohane's, or Ikenberry's perspectives on the role of institutions). Suumarize the research design in Lake's book and assess the evidentiary basis in support of his theoretical argument.

Section II (pick one):

1. Although a vast literature has developed around explaining the onset of interstate wars, comparatively little research has been devoted to explaining war outcomes. In marked contrast to civil war studies, our theories of military effectiveness have largely ignored battlefield dynamics, leaving our theories mostly silent on the question of why states win wars. In your view, what is "military effectiveness," and what factor(s) offers the most compelling account of why states win interstate wars? Where are the shortcomings in our understanding of military effectiveness in interstate wars?

2. The audience cost literature remains one of the most productive research agendas in the study of interstate behavior. Yet critics have emerged, suggesting its core claims stand on shaky theoretical, methodological, and empirical grounds. In your view, is the case for audience costs affecting foreign policy behavior, including interstate crises and wars, persuasive? When and why do audience costs matter most, if at all, particularly in the area of security studies? What new avenues, theoretical or otherwise, would you suggest for building upon existing research?

Section III (pick one):

1. The flow of trade is now highly institutionalized at the multilateral and bilateral level and the flow of investment is regulated by many overlapping bilateral investment treaties, while the flow of migrants is largely unregulated at the international level. What explains the different levels of institutionalization of these three flows? Why do international regimes governing cross-border flows vary so much by issue area?
2. The League of Nations failed quickly. The United Nations has now outlived many predictions and several existential challenges. Why has the UN lasted this long? Does it matter? If so, how? And if not, what, if anything, could make it more effective? Engage with both the positive and negative sides of this debate, and discuss difficulties in resolving questions about the power vs. the irrelevance of the UN, with reference to relevant scholarship.