

International Relations Field Exam  
August 2017

Please answer one and only one question from each of the three sections below. 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

- (1) Which systemic theory of international politics do you think best explains change in the international system? Why and how does it out-perform other theories? Be sure to define "change" and to provide examples from two historical eras.
- (2) Is the casual identification revolution in political science improving or hindering the development of new, generalizable, theories of IR? Discuss and give concrete examples from past and present IR scholarship.

Section II

- (1) A "behavioral turn" has recently swept through the study of international security. Scholars have revived their interest in "soft" variables such as resolve and reputation when explaining the onset and severity of interstate conflict. As part of this "turn," scholars have increasingly drawn on experimental methods to capture these processes at work. In your view, how important are resolve and reputation for explaining interstate crises? What are the advantages and disadvantages of a research program built around these factors? Be sure to provide empirical examples in your answer.
- (2) Viewed narrowly, much of the study of international security has centered around explaining the outbreak

of interstate wars or their resolution. Yet as Stephen Pinker and others have noted, wars between states have largely disappeared since 1945. In your view, what is the most compelling explanation for this trend? Is this trend permanent, or should we expect a reversal in the future?

### Section III

- (1) There is a long-running debate regarding foreign aid effectiveness and whether it should be eliminated (e.g. Easterly vs. Sachs). Given your understanding of the causes and consequences of foreign aid, is it an effective tool? If so, under what circumstances is such aid most effective? If not, why is aid ineffective? Provide empirical examples in your answer.
  
- (2) Does economic globalization lead to a race-to-the-bottom in terms of domestic economic and social institutions? Discuss drawing on at least two regions or countries.