

International Relations Field Exam January 2018

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) Why do some international norms gain wide adherence and drive subsequent state behavior, while others do not? Your answer should draw on the literature on norms and address their effects (if any) across two issue domains.

(2) Some scholars argue that the international system is undergoing a wrenching series of changes --- perhaps the most sweeping since 1989. Do you agree? What, if anything, can we learn from earlier systemic transformations that might shed light on the processes of change in the contemporary international system?

Section II

(1) Much of the scholarship in security studies has traditionally focused on either the onset or termination of interstate war. In recent years, however, a vigorous debate has emerged about the sources of military effectiveness on the battlefield itself, the so-called "missing middle" of our studies of war. In your view, what factor(s) best explain the sources of variation in the wartime performance of states? Be sure to provide a definition of military effectiveness in your answer and to demonstrate your argument using at least two empirical examples.

(2) International relations scholars have increasingly turned their attention to studying how international organizations like the UN, as well as external mediators, play an important role in shaping patterns of war termination and recurrence. Civil war scholars, however, argue that processes of war termination and the durability of postwar settlements are shaped at the microlevel by local actors and dynamics. External interventions in this view are often misguided and ineffectual, if not worse. Under what circumstances (if any) are external interventions by international organizations or third-party states likely to contribute meaningfully to the end of war and the prevention of its recurrence in a given country?

Section III

(1) IPE scholars assume that foreign policy results from the aggregation of individual preferences. What is the evidence, if any, that supports such an assumption? Discuss the strengths and limits of the existing evidence.

(2) Is trade with low income economies responsible for the recent growth of populist movements in the West? To address this question, borrow from the analytical toolkit of the gains from trade literature, and discuss recent micro evidence.