

International Relations Field Exam
January 2020

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 (pick one):

1. Discuss the following statement: “Data limitations have made it difficult to discard theories of the causes of international conflict and improve our understanding of the world.”
2. What is the role of IR theory in the study of world politics?

Section II (pick one):

1. How did the spread of nuclear weapons shape world politics and what future security concerns would additional proliferation raise, if any?
2. Discuss the following statement: “The theory of audience costs accurately captures an important strategic consideration for leaders in interstate crises, but it simply cannot explain differences in foreign policymaking between democracies and autocracies.”

Section III (pick one):

1. Since the end of WWII, there have been significant changes in when and how states engage in military conflict. Have international laws and norms played an important role? Discuss the most important changes in conflict patterns and assess the causal effect of international law, if any.
2. Are international institutions designed to efficiently resolve cooperation problems or to magnify the interests of powerful states? What is the strongest empirical evidence for each view?