

International Relations Field Exam
August 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: “The Theory of the Nuclear Revolution should be abandoned because it fails to explain why the United States and the Soviet Union acquired such large nuclear arsenals during the Cold War.”
2. What is the role of theory in the study of international relations, if any?

Section II (pick one):

1. Discuss the following statement: “Recent relations between the United States and North Korea show that the madman strategy does not work, and cannot successfully compel adversaries.”
2. Lay out the three most important developments in the study of international security over the past twenty-five years, identify the most important of the three, and explain why it matters more than the other two.

Section III (pick one):

1. In the second half of the 20th century, there was a proliferation of various forms of international organization. But in the 21st century, fewer new inter-governmental organizations have been founded and fewer new multilateral treaties have been created. Why is this happening? Your answer should discuss what at least two theoretical traditions within IR might have to say about these trends.
2. “Large corporations are the main drivers of trade liberalization in the USA.” Discuss this statement in light of recent research on the political economy of trade. In elaborating your answer, please be specific about the actors involved in these negotiations, their constraints, and preferences.