

International Relations Field Exam
August 2025

Please answer three questions in total. 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. Can behavioral and rationalist explanations of war co-exist? Make sure to assess the core assumptions behind each explanation and each of their contribution and limitation to understanding conflict.
2. A large body of scholarship has argued that democracies enjoy an advantage over autocracies in their conflictual behavior toward other states. What are the sources of that alleged advantage, and to what extent has the empirical literature established that the democratic advantage exists?

Section II:

1. Many scholars believe the Liberal International Order (LIO) is under threat. Discuss the domestic and international reasons for why we observe a backlash to the LIO and whether you believe the LIO is salvageable.
2. When and why do states comply with international agreements that govern economic affairs?