

International Relations Field Exam
January 2026

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. US counter-insurgency doctrine identifies civilians as important actors that can contribute to counter-insurgency success. Describe the role that civilians play in insurgency/counter-insurgency and whether and how this can explain variation in civilian victimization in civil wars.
2. IR scholars frequently refer to the post-1945 period as the period of “Long Peace,” referring to how there have been much fewer interstate wars compared to pre-1945. List several possible arguments that can explain the “Long Peace” and provide reasons for which one you think is the most persuasive. Also discuss if you expect the Long Peace to continue, or if the Long Peace characterization is no longer relevant.

Section II:

1. Many studies on trade focus on individual-level preferences. What are the pros and cons of this approach, and how much of economic openness (or the lack thereof) can this approach explain?
2. Explain how and why international institutions can help states facilitate can help states foster international economic activities such as trade and FDI flows.