

**International Relations Field Exam**  
**January 2010**

Please answer one question from each section. 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.

Answer one (1) of the following:

I A. Anarchy is often understood to be the distinguishing characteristic of international relations. Although a truism at the level of the international system, are all relations among individual states necessarily anarchic? If not, how might this affect our theories of international politics? Conversely, is anarchy unique to international politics? What might we learn from studying similarly organized political systems?

I B. Some have argued that international relations as a field is too abstract, too tied to arcane theoretical and philosophical debates, and has failed to be of service in understanding contemporary problems of international politics. Please address whether (and how) you believe theories of international politics have shed light on one of the three following substantive concerns: the causes of war, the formation of international institutions, US-Soviet relations between 1945 and 1991. Justify your answer using the relevant literature.

Answer one (1) of the following:

II A. What accounts for peace among European states since 1945? Discuss at least three alternative arguments and identify an empirical strategy that you might use to differentiate them.

II B. Even in issue areas where there would appear to be benefits from international cooperation, states routinely fail to address global problems. The recent climate change summit in Copenhagen represents such an example, with the negotiations described as a "failure" across the developed and developing world. Explain why international cooperation on environmental issues is difficult, and outline the conditions under which cooperation would be most likely on climate change. Extend your argument to other issue areas in which there is the potential for international cooperation.

II C. Are civil and interstate wars the same? How are they different, and in what ways might their differences/similarities affect the possibility of a single theory to account for both?

Answer one (1) of the following:

III A. Select three major approaches to explaining cross-national and over-time variation in trade policymaking and apply them to explaining cross-national and over-time variation in immigration policy. Assess the strengths and weaknesses of each approach. Indicate in what ways, if any, that the strengths and weaknesses of each framework vary across the two issue areas. (Note: Knowledge of the literature on immigration policy is not required to

answer this question.)

III B. Studies in international relations that use ideas to explain the adoption of national security and economic policies often encounter two methodological problems. If ideas reflect the conditions under which decisions are made, for example material interests, then analysis of the impact of ideas on policy is subject to omitted variable bias as the ideas are correlated with a causally prior omitted variable, material interests, which affects the policy choice. Further, if ideas are rationalizations for policies chosen for other reasons, then the ideas are consequences of policy choice and are endogenous. Assess the extent to which these two problems characterize an idea-based explanation for policy choice in the literature. Discuss how analysts can alter the designs of their research to make valid inferences about the role of ideas in policy choice.