

## International Relations Field Exam – Spring 2020

Field Committee: Dr. Jillienne Haglund, Dr. Dan Morey, Dr. Clayton Thyne

Instructions. This field exam has two sections and you are to answer *three* questions in total. *One* question from the Theory and Methods section and *two* questions from the Subfield Questions section. Identify each answer by the section title and question number when you begin writing. Full citations are not required for the exam; however, do identify authors associated with arguments or themes whenever possible. You have eight hours to complete the exam. This is a closed book exam; you may not use any resource (notes, internet, books, etc.) for any part of this exam.

### Theory and Methods (pick one)

1. In 2015, Susan Hyde published an article in the *Annual Review of Political Science* that focused on experimental methods in international relations. She claimed that “the potential utility of experimental methods for international relations (IR) research continues to be a hotly contested topic.” Why is this approach so highly contested in IR compared to other subfields? Have IR scholars using lab, survey and field experiments been successful in these endeavors? If so, in what way? If not, what are the challenges to experimental methods in IR and how can we overcome these (if at all)?
2. Power is a central concept to Political Science generally and International Relations specifically. What is power? In answering this question, discuss conceptual definitions of the term power prominent within the discipline, forms of power, factors that make an actor powerful, and leading empirical measures of power in international relations. What are the major weaknesses in the way we measure power and what is one major improvement you would suggest to improve how we measure power?

### Subfield Questions (pick 2)

3. While older versions of scholarship on the study of civil wars focused primarily on factors internal to the civil war state, more recent scholarship recognizes the importance that external actors can play in the onset, duration and outcome of civil wars. What are some of the primary findings from this newer vein of research? If we consider an ongoing civil war today (e.g., Syria), what advice would you give the president based on this research?
4. Measurement problems are an issue for those seeking to study state human rights practices. What are the major challenges to measuring human rights abuses? Identify some common datasets used to study respect for human rights, discuss their strengths and weaknesses, and note the implications that these weaknesses have on scholarly work on human rights. Which of these data sources provides the most reliable and valid measures of respect for human rights? Identify several ways we can improve upon existing measures of respect for human rights.
5. In the study of international relations, domestic politics are now a common explanation of international phenomena. How important are domestic politics for explaining international outcomes? Specifically, in what ways have international relations scholars used domestic politics to explain various international outcomes (e.g. international conflict, international economic outcomes, compliance with international law)? Is focusing on domestic politics the most promising avenue forward for IR scholarship? Moreover, the focus on domestic politics in explaining international outcomes has connected the subfields of international relations and comparative politics. What differentiates these two subfields and is continued specialization among the subfields warranted?
6. Research at the dyadic level of analysis has focused upon the Balance of Power versus Power Transition debate. These two theories make opposite assumptions and contradictory prediction yet fifty plus years of research has failed to adjudicate between the two arguments. Why has the field of international relations been unable to resolve the BoP-PT debate? In answering this question, be sure to discuss each theory in detail, highlighting the areas of agreement and disagreement between the two theoretical camps, as well as the empirical support for each theory. What do we need to do to resolve the debate so we are not still debating BoP-PT in another 50 years?