

International Relations Field Exam Fall 2020

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 Section**. Identify each answer by question number when you begin writing. Full citations are not required for the exam; however, do identify authors associated with the arguments or themes whenever possible.

Theory and Methods

1. In recent years there has been renewed discussion about the need for international relations research to be policy relevant. What makes research policy relevant? What is an example of a literature or set of findings, if any, that has policy relevance? What literature is lacking policy relevance and what would make it more relevant?
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 some recent advances in the measurement of power? What are the major weaknesses of current measures of power and what is one major improvement you would suggest to improve how we measure power?

Subfield Questions

3. The study of cyber security is a rapidly growing area of international relations research. What aspects of traditional security studies are applicable to the study of cyber security? What aspects need to be modified to account for cyber threats? What is the most important unanswered question in the study of cyber security and what are some promising directions for addressing it?
4. Koremenos, Lipson, and Snidal (2001) argue that international institutions are “rational, negotiated responses to problems international actors face.” In what ways does international institutional design vary and how can states use institutional design to solve problems in international relations? In your answer, be sure to draw connections across research on various international institutions. Has this line of inquiry been useful? What are some challenges to studying the rational design of international institutions and how can they be addressed?
5. Massoud (1996, 491) says war termination is “a neglected topic” within conflict studies. Provide an assessment of this statement, is war termination a neglected topic? In answering this question review the major research themes in war termination, the major questions, and the predominant answers. What methodological issues hinder the advancement of knowledge in this research area? Finally, discuss two future directions for war termination research and why you feel they will advance knowledge in this area.
6. A basic assumption in the study of international relations is that states desire to preserve their legal sovereignty. However, states often cede sovereignty to international institutions. Why do states commit to international institutions? Moreover, once states commit to international institutions, to what extent do they comply? In your answer, be sure to discuss the costs and benefits of commitment and compliance across various types of international institutions. What is the difference between compliance and effectiveness and how can research assess each?