Fall 2007
International Relations MA Exam

Majors: Answer the question in Part A and two questions from Part B

Minors: Answer the question in Part A and one question from Part B.

Part A

The problem of cooperation and conflict in an anarchical international system has been a, if not the, central concern of international relations theorists for some time. Write an essay discussing some of the major approaches to understanding international anarchy and its consequences for cooperation and conflict among nations. Be sure to make specific references to influential scholars and their work.

Part B

1. Discuss the following statement: “Gendered divisions of power, violence, labor, and resources are not coincidental to but are central elements of our rapidly changing world... However, these gendered divisions are rendered invisible by the hegemonic discourse of conventional IR. It is therefore necessary to expose the ways in which gender shapes our understanding of national and global politics and how international processes have gender-differentiated consequences.” (V. Spike Peterson, “The Politics of Identity in International Relations,” Fletcher Forum of World Affairs, Summer, 1993, 1-12)

2. Write an essay that describes, explains, and evaluates the relevance of the theory of imperialism for understanding international relations. Refer to relevant literature.

3. Did the events of September 11, 2001, the subsequent "war on terrorism," and the on-going war in Iraq change the fundamental principles that drive international politics? If so, how so, and to what extent? If not, on what grounds do you come to your conclusion? What theory or theories of international politics appear to be most relevant in explaining current events and trends? What accounts for the superiority of the theory or theories you selected?

4. In a recent Foreign Policy article, "One World, Rival Theories," Jack Snyder characterizes constructivism as a form of idealism. Do you agree or disagree? In what way (if any) is constructivism idealist? In what way is calling it idealism a misinterpretation? Be sure to refer to specific authors, debates and approaches in your answer.

5. International law operates within a fundamentally decentralized system of world politics. Within this system, there is still no government above the individual states to keep them in harmony, and the prevention of war continues to require assorted alliances, threats of deterrence, and acts of retaliation. In your judgment, is this a viable legal system for a world that may be characterized by increased nuclear proliferation and by
nuclear terrorism? If not, what can be done to go beyond our "Westphalian" system of international law to a more durable system of legal norms and procedures? Also, to what extent has the transformation from Cold War bipolarity to expanding multipolarity been an important factor in enhancing or degrading worldwide stability? Answer fully, and with explicit reference to pertinent concepts of international law.

6. The concept of hegemony, frequently employed in theories and discussions of international relations, is not always well defined. What are some of the major conceptualizations/definitions of hegemony in the international relations literature? According to these conceptualizations/definitions, is the United States a hegemon today?
International Relations
Masters Examination
Spring 2007

**Directions:** This is a 48-hour examination. **MA majors** – Answer the question from Section A and two (2) questions from Section B. **MA minors** – Answer the question from Section A and one (1) question from Section B. Focus on preparing coherent, well-organized essays that display your mastery of the literature and indicate how that literature expands our collective knowledge. Completed examinations should conform to the following guidelines:

- Place your student NEW ID# at the top of each page of your examination. Do not write your name anywhere on the examination.

- Clearly identify the question you are answering at the start of each response.

- Cite sources throughout your examination using a standard format and provide a bibliography that covers all of the materials used in preparing your responses.

- Number your pages consecutively for the entire examination.

- Submit a cover page with your responses that lists your ID# and the type of examination you completed (e.g. MA Minor, MA Major).

**Section A**

Ever since Waltz’s *Man, the State of War* (1959) and J. David Singer’s seminal article (“The Levels of Analysis Problem in International Relations,” *World Politics*, 1961), the “levels of analysis” framework has provided many scholars with a useful classification device for thinking not only about the causes of war but international relations more broadly. Others, such as Michael Doyle in *The Ways of War and Peace* (1997), argue that the levels of analysis framework obscures more than it illuminates. Evaluate the usefulness of the levels of analysis framework for thinking about international relations, addressing its strengths and weaknesses.

**Section B**

1. Is there a common set of assumptions that unites the various strands of realism into a coherent body of thought about the dynamics of international relations or has the label become meaningless? Explain, making sure to cite specific realists and their work.

2. The historian, Walter Laqueur, has argued that trying to develop a definition of terrorism is a fruitless endeavor. Indeed, the inability of scholars and government officials to find a consensus definition of terrorism seems to underscore Laqueur’s point. Based on your reading of the literature on terrorism, is there any hope a consensus definition might emerge in the near future? If yes, what would such a definition look like and why has it been so hard to find language that is acceptable to everybody? If no, what are the barriers to developing an agreed-upon standard and why are they so difficult to overcome? In crafting your response, be sure to discuss specific definitions of terrorism and the arguments of specific scholars on this definitional issue.
3. Theorists as diverse as Thomas Friedman, Benjamin Barber, and Ellen Meikings Wood characterize the contemporary stage of the international political economy as one based on “neoliberal globalization.” Define, describe, discuss, and evaluate this era of “neoliberal globalization.”

4. Many commentators and pundits on contemporary United States foreign policy claim that the fraction of the foreign policy elite known as the “neoconservatives” have been the most influential sector of this elite since the dawn of the 21st century. Who are these people and what do they believe? Evaluate their claims, recommendations, and impacts on United States foreign policy.

5. “Everything in this world exudes crime,” says Baudelaire, “the newspapers, the walls, and the face of man.” Yet, this “face” does not belong solely to what Grotius called “men of deplorable wickedness.” Rather, the real problem of preventing war, terrorism, and genocide always lies in controlling the presumably “normal” or “banal” human being. Is this a correct statement? If it is, please explain fully, with particular and verifiable reference to major twentieth and twenty-first century crises of world order. If it is not, please explain fully with equally compelling reference to the role of “evil” in world affairs. Be sure to cite as widely as possible to pertinent literatures.

6. Constructivist approaches to understanding patterns of behavior in international relations (i.e. norms) suggest that purely rationalist or interest-based approaches to the coordination of behavior are unsatisfying. For example, early critics such as Kratochwil and Ruggie said that regime theory and its variations (e.g. hegemonic stability theory) were too “thin” to account for lasting cooperation. Explain the conflict between rationalist and constructivist understandings of cooperative behavior: which offers a more satisfying approach to understanding the establishment of “standards of behavior appropriate to actors with a given identity?” Refer to specific authors and works in your answer.