

IR 210 Sample Midterm Exam Questions

Five Point Questions

1. How would you define power and influence in the international system? Is the US the most powerful country in the world?
2. What is critical thinking in IR? Why study IR?
3. How do you think acts of terrorism like September 11 will shape the study of IR? Refer to Dunne and Booth and Baylis and Smith and describe the next wave in the evolution of the study of IR theory?
4. With Lamy's worldview analytical framework in mind, respond to the following statements:
 - a. We have an obligation to respond to the needs of the poor throughout the world.
 - b. With the end of the Cold War, we should build-down our military forces.
 - c. Due primarily to increased economic linkages, we are building a global community and moving from the rules to the jungle to a civil society.
5. You have a tool box labeled **levels of analysis**. Each drawer represents one of four levels. Describe one tool (i.e. analytical approach) from each drawer and discuss how you might use it to explain a foreign policy decision (e.g. The French decision to oppose the US over the war in Iraq).
6. What are Mann's four networks of power? How have they helped to shape the four worlds of IR we discussed earlier in the course?
7. Every state in the international system must contend with three major challenges. These systemic challenges threaten the sovereignty and independence of states. What are they and how should we respond to these challenges?
8. With the waves of IR theory development in mind, identify several major international events that have shaped international relations theory.
9. With reference to Baylis and Smith, what is globalization? How does it challenge the core assumptions of realism? Does globalization have anything to do with the increase in terrorism?
10. Why did September 11 happen? Refer to arguments made in Booth and Dunne and our discussion of the four worlds of IR.
11. Why bother with theory? What kinds of theory do we work with in IR? How do we know if we have a useful theory? Make reference to lectures and Baylis and Smith.
12. Is Globalization good or bad? Is it making the state obsolete? How is it changing the ability of states to survive and prosper?
13. What does a constructivist mean when she/he says: *anarchy is what you make of it*? Why is anarchy a problem and how should states respond to it?
14. How do we study international relations?

Ten Point Questions

1. Why did the US reject Wilson's liberal internationalist ideas and accept the international activism and leadership that is an essential part of realism?
2. How would you explain the Bush Doctrine? Is anything new?
3. There are significant difference in the assumptions of the three-worldview categories. With those assumptions in mind, how would SM-realists, SRs, and ST-idealists (WOMP), respond to the following:
 - a. What is the nature of man?
 - b. Do we have an international society?
 - c. What is the nature of power in the international system?
 - d. Is war preventable? How?
 - e. Is it possible for states to effectively respond to global crisis situations?
4. What are the key controversies in each of the four worlds? Where do you think we face the greatest challenges in the future? Why? Here refer to the reserve readings, lecture and Baylis and Smith.
5. Realism is an incomplete theory because it is only a theory about power politics and survival and not a theory about the politics of the good life. How would realists respond to this criticism? Do SRs and STs offer an alternative and thus, a response to this criticism?
6. Answer all five of the following questions:
 - a. Provide a two-level game explanation for Clinton's decision to renew Most-Favored Nation trade status with China.
 - b. How could you use the third level of analysis to explain the purchase of submarines by small developing states?
 - c. What is operational code explanation for Prime Minister Thatcher's decision to invade the Falkland Islands?
 - d. Can the political culture of the US provide an explanation for our reluctance to pay our bills at the UN or is there a better explanation?
 - e. Are you aware of any foreign policy decisions that are best explained by the fourth level of analysis? (Be specific)
7. Martin Wight suggests we cannot know anything unless we have an understanding of theory? Why then do we continue to focus on the momentary tragedies and current events and avoid looking at the enduring and the major historical events? Why would some people say that not much has changed in the international system since Thucydides?
8. What are the differences between:
 - Critical and problem solving theories
 - Positivism and post-positivist theories
 - Vulnerability and sensitivity interdependence
 - Normative and empirical theories
 - Universalistic and particularistic views of humankind
9. In his chapter in *Worlds in Collision*, Ken Waltz claims that terrorists **have not** changed three basic and brute facts of international politics: the imbalance of world power; the existence of nuclear weapons; and the persistence of crises that plague world politics. Does this suggest that international relations will continue to be defined by self-interested states seeking to maintain stability, protect sovereignty and promote national interests? Will realist leaders continue to dominate the policy world? Are their alternatives to realism that might challenge the hegemony of those ideas? Why would people abandon maintainer ideas?