

**PhD COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION
IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
MARCH 16, 2016
MINOR FIELD EXAMINATION**

You must answer a total of **three questions** in this examination. **One question** must be selected from the **IR theory** section, **one question** from your pre-designated subfield section of **IPE**, and a **third** from **either** of these two sections. You have **four hours** in which to write your answers. Please remember to *save your work frequently* on the computer you are using. This examination has 2 pages.

Your answers should, at a minimum, demonstrate breadth and depth of knowledge of the relevant literature and familiarity with the main perspectives and debates in each area. You should choose and construct your answers to avoid repetition with respect to content and literature.

I) INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS THEORY

1. Since the mid-1990's, there has been debate about the concept of sovereignty in International Relations. Describe what you see as the main features of this debate. Has this debate improved IR theory in general and/or our ability to theorize specific phenomena? If so, what has been improved? Or has it been a bunch of hot air? If so, why?

2. Two years after the Russian annexation of Crimea, in a time of continued and severe economic sanctions, Russian and American astronauts continue to cooperate very closely on the International Space Station. What can international relations theory tell us about the co-existence of conflict and cooperation between states?

3. Commentators on national elections in Canada, the USA and elsewhere often implicitly assume that election results can directly impact international politics, significantly affecting both a country's foreign policies and its ability to realise them. Are they right in making this assumption? Cite relevant theoretical literatures to examine both the case that national election results 'matter' in world politics and key arguments that their impact will be limited.

4. In a 2001 article on "Taking Stock" of the constructivist research program in IR and comparative politics, Martha Finnemore and Kathryn Sikkink argued that constructivist IR scholars and ideational scholars of comparative politics have had fruitful research exchanges that have enriched IR scholarship. Do the fruitful overlaps between comparative politics and international relations extend beyond constructivist research, and if so, why should we continue to separate these two fields of political science?

II) INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL ECONOMY

1. A growing body of literature examines how democracy affects international economic relations. Authors have examined the impact of democracy on trade, sovereign debt, foreign

direct investment, exchange rates, and foreign aid, among other topics. Write a critical review of this literature and propose avenues for future research.

2. Some researchers argue that we cannot understand international economic relations without taking the preferences of domestic groups into account. These scholars point out that international economic policies help some domestic groups while hurting others, and contend that governments take these distributional effects into account when making foreign policy. Evaluate this domestic-focused research agenda. What, if anything, has it taught us about IPE, and how well can it explain variation in international economic policymaking? Your answer should draw on literature from international trade and finance.

3. Over the past sixty years, many countries have reduced their barriers to international trade and foreign investment. How would you explain these global trends? Your answer should draw on academic studies about both trade and investment, and should consider whether we need different theories to explain commercial and financial globalization, or whether a single theoretical framework can account for trends in both policy areas.

4. Joseph Nye writes:

"Not many top-ranked scholars of international relations are going into government, and even fewer return to contribute to academic theory... The fault for this growing gap lies not with the government but with the academics. Scholars are paying less attention to questions about how their work relates to the policy world... Some academics say that while the growing gap between theory and policy may have costs for policy, it has produced better social science theory, and that this is more important than whether such scholarship is relevant. Also, to some extent, the gap is an inevitable result of the growth and specialization of knowledge. Few people can keep up with their subfields, much less all of social science. But the danger is that academic theorizing will say more and more about less and less."

Choose one substantive topic regarding International Political Economy in which you think Nye's criticisms may be valid. Explain and provide suggestions for future research. Next, choose a substantive IPE topic for which Nye's criticisms are off the mark. Explain. What, if anything, does this say about how scholars have approached these topics? Refer to specific readings and evidence where appropriate.