

**DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH
COLUMBIA COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION: INTERNATIONAL
RELATIONS 4 HOURS – 5 October 2023**

You must answer a total of two (2) questions for this examination. You have four (4) hours to do so. You must answer one (1) question from the core section and one (1) question from the subfield section. This is a closed-book exam. In your answers to any of the questions below, please be sure to present an argument in direct response to the question and to refer to relevant readings and empirical examples. Your answers should 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, including with your Qualifying Paper.

SECTION 1. INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS THEORY – CORE QUESTIONS

1. There are scholars and practitioners alike in just about every era who proclaim that theirs is an era of particular or special significance, such as on the cusp or in the midst of major change in world politics. Today is no different in that regard – but do you agree that we are in the midst of very significant change(s)? If not, why not? If so, what are those changes and what is their significance? What supports your argument?
2. International Relations scholars have long wrestled with the question of the appropriate level of analysis, variously favouring systemic, state, or individual levels of analysis. What is at stake in these debates? Is the choice of level of analysis simply a matter of methodological preference? Under what conditions, if any, does it make sense to speak of some level of analysis choices being substantively better than others? Discuss with reference to relevant literatures.
3. Various coalitions have been operating in international relations, and most recently BRICS announced the addition of six new members. What are the prospects of BRICS or any other ‘minilateral’ coalition supporting and/or establishing international norms, and what international norms are they / would they be?
4. What does it mean to study global IR? Is “global IR” the attribute of a text (“this is a global IR reading”), a scholar (“X is a global IR scholar”) or an approach to studying IR?

SECTION 2. SUBFIELD – International Organizations

1. Apart from the difference in membership, how different are regional organizations from global ones? How well, if at all, do theoretical concepts developed for global IOs apply to regional IOs? What additional concepts, if any, are required to understand the role(s) of regional IOs? Discuss with reference to at least two international organizations, including at least one regional organization.
2. In trying to understand the role and significance of international organizations (IOs) in contemporary world politics, how helpful is the rule of thumb that ultimately IOs do what their most powerful member states want? Discuss with reference to relevant literatures and at least two contemporary international organizations.
3. What is the relative importance of international organizations within transnational governance? How has this changed over the past decade? Be sure to define transnational governance, discuss at least one area of governance, and specifically set your analysis within the relevant literature on IOs.