

**International Relations  
Preliminary Examination  
Fall 2003**

**RULES AND DIRECTIONS:** You will have eight hours in which to answer the required questions. **The exam must be handed in no later than 4 p.m.** Be sure to save some of your time for putting the answers into an organized, typed or legibly written version in good English. Also be sure that you answer all the parts of each question, that your answers draw upon and specifically refer to relevant literature, and that your answers address the questions and are not repetitive. This is a “closed book” exam. Students may not use notes or books, nor may they discuss the examination with anyone while taking it.

Answer one question from part A and two questions from part B. Please read the instructions for part B carefully.

**Part A: Thematic Questions**

**Answer one (1) of the following questions:**

1. How have various strands of liberalism shaped international relations theory? What are the principal strengths and weaknesses of these strands for explaining and/or understanding world politics?
2. The international system is often described by IR theorists as “anarchic”? How accurate or useful is this description? What are the implications for IR theory and practice?
3. Are rationalism and constructivism incommensurable or compatible approaches?

**Part B: Seminar Questions**

Most of the questions in this section raise issues that cut across courses that you have taken. Thus, they are intended to bridge different literatures. In writing a ‘bridging’ essay, be sure to draw explicitly on both literatures. Answer two of the following questions. Minimize duplication across your essays. Some pairs of questions are exclusive, in the sense that you can choose to answer only one, but not both, of the pair. This is the case for #1 and #2; #3 and #4; and #5 and #6.

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*Reminder: do not answer both #1 and #2.*

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1. Can theoretical approaches used to explain violent ethnic conflicts account for the causes of large-scale human rights abuses by states, including genocide?
2. Compare and contrast the literature on political economic explanations of human rights violations with the literature on causes of civil and ethnic conflict in terms of their research questions, methodologies, and conclusions.

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*Reminder: do not answer both #3 and #4.*

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3. Discuss the main arguments on the conditions under which we would expect compliance with international norms and law, and evaluate the arguments with references to at least two issue areas, including genocide.
4. Summarize the international relations literature on the origins of norms and regimes and discuss which arguments are useful (if any) in understanding the origins of human rights regimes.

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*Reminder: do not answer both #5 and #6.*

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5. Do international institutions have ethical responsibilities to intervene to prevent or stop violent ethnic wars, genocide, and other instances of mass killing? What types of interventions are likely to be most successful? Why?
6. How do various traditions of ethical theorizing underpin different responses to the question, where does ethical responsibility reside in processes of mass political killing, including genocide?

7. Can postcolonial critique illuminate the functioning of norms and institutions in international relations? How so, or why not?
8. What are analytical strengths and weakness of conceiving of certain civil wars as "ethnic" conflicts? What are the practical and/or normative implications of viewing internal war through the lens of ethnicity?
9. Does the turn toward ethical theory in the study of international relations rest on gendered premises? How so, or how not? With what implications?
10. Are nationalist discourses gendered? What are the implications for theory and practice?
11. Although there is a substantial literature on psychological, discursive and ideological explanations for genocide and human rights violations, almost none of it is framed explicitly in constructivist terms. Discuss how this literature relates to the main tenets of constructivism.
12. Do various theoretical approaches to studying the causes of, and solutions to, civil and ethnic wars create a normative bias in favor of political stability over justice? What are the implications?
13. How is theorizing of mass political killing, including genocide, affected if attention is paid explicitly to processes of cultural production of international hierarchy?
14. Do developments in feminist theory assist in theorizing the possibilities and limits of universal norms, or cosmopolitan ethics, in international relations.