Study Questions to Help You Prepare for Exam #1

PSCI 12000-01 Introduction to International Relations

Jan. 13 & 15
• Identify, and explain the roles of, the main actors relevant to our current international system.
• What is globalization, and how does it play a role in international relations (IR)?
• Why is reconciling individual interests with collective interests such a central problem in IR?

Jan 17 & 22
• What did the international system look like before 1648? How has it evolved since 1648?
• What is power? Give examples of various forms of power in the international system.
• What is sovereignty, and why is it such a central concern in IR?
• What changes did the American and French Revolutions bring to the international system?
• How has the polarity of the international system changed over time? How might that have changed the behavior of actors in the international system?

Jan. 24
• What are the assumptions of realism? How do they shape how realists view the world?
• How does the Melian Dialogue (between Athens & Melos) demonstrate the foundations of realism?

Jan. 27
• What’s “Neo” (new) about Neo-realism? How does it differ from realism?
• According to Kant, how can the international system move toward lasting, or perpetual peace? How did Woodrow Wilson’s Fourteen Points echo or move beyond these ideas?
• Why is interdependence important for liberals? Why might realists be suspicious of it?
• What is a “security dilemma”? When should we expect a security dilemma to occur? Why?

Jan. 29
• What’s “Neo” (new) about Neo-liberalism? How does it differ from liberalism?
• What is “positive peace”? How does peace studies suggest that this differs from “negative peace”?
• Constructivists argue that many elements of IR are socially constructed. What does that mean? Why does this belief matter in their approach to international relations?
• How do liberal, difference, and postmodern feminism differ from one another (and from other theoretical approaches to IR)? Think about a policy or insight that might result from thinking about IR from each of these Feminist IR perspectives.

Jan. 31
• What does (Neo)Marxism suggest is most important in understanding the international system?
• How do the media and public opinion affect a state’s foreign policy?
• What characteristics of states affect the crafting of foreign policy?
• What characteristics of individuals (leaders) affect the crafting of foreign policy?
• What other factors affect a state’s foreign policy?

Feb. 3
• What is the Rational Actor Model of foreign policy decision-making?
• What is the difference between utility maximization and expected utility maximization?
• How might foreign policy deviate from the Rational Actor Model’s expectations? Why?
• What is the Principal-Agent Problem? How might it affect foreign policy decision making processes?
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Feb. 5
- How did the Kennedy Administration’s policymaking process conform to or deviate from the Rational Actor Model during the Cuban Missile Crisis? Why? What happened as a result?
- How did the US policymaking conform to or deviate from the Rational Actor Model during the War in Afghanistan? Why? What happened as a result?

Feb. 7
- How has China’s rise in power relative to other countries in the international system affected
  - ...the distribution of power in the international system?
  - ...regional politics in Asia?
- Why does the U.S. pay for the defense of its allies?
- How did Trump Administration policy regarding U.S. involvement in Syria change?
- What consequences might Trump Administration decisions regarding involvement in Syria have on
  - ...U.S. interests?
  - ...U.S. reputation abroad?
  - ...alliance partners?

*NOTE: Your textbooks have useful study questions and key terms at the end of each chapter.*