

## SAMPLE MID-TERM EXAMINATION

*These are sample questions. The number of questions per section does **not** reflect the number that will be given on the exam. You should anticipate around 17 questions in part A (of which you will answer 15), and around 6 questions in part B (of which you will answer 4). Note that the sample questions may not reflect all possible question formats (e.g. you may be asked True/False, or chronological questions).*

**A. Answer fifteen (15) of the following questions.**

**QUESTION 1.** World War I began after a crisis caused by a Serb nationalist assassinating:

- (a) Kaiser Wilhelm
- (b) Archduke Franz Ferdinand
- (c) Karl von Clausewitz
- (d) Otto von Bismark

**Answer.** Archduke Franz Ferdinand, the heir to the Austrian throne.

**QUESTION 2.** When one uses physical force to repel an attack, then one engages in:

- (a) deterrence
- (b) compellence
- (c) defense
- (d) preemption

**Answer.** Defense.

**QUESTION 3.** A situation in which an actors are involved in a sequence of interdependent choices that jointly determine the outcomes, is referred to as:

- (a) series
- (b) strategic interaction
- (c) dilemma
- (d) game theory

**Answer.** Strategic interaction.

**QUESTION 4.** Even if individual members of a group are rational, the group may behave irrationally no matter what aggregation rule is used to determine the social preferences as long as it is not dictatorship. This result is known as:

- (a) Arrow's Theorem
- (b) McKelvey's Theorem
- (c) Condorcet's Paradox
- (d) Chaos Theory

**Answer.** Arrow's Theorem.

**QUESTION 5.** An example of a transnational organization is

- (a) Federal Bureau of Investigation
- (b) American Red Cross
- (c) Amnesty International
- (d) Palestine Liberation Organization

**Answer.** Amnesty International.

**QUESTION 6.** Which of the following schools assumes that most nation-states are rational, unitary actors pursuing goals of national interest, irrespective of their form of government or type of economic organization?

- (a) idealist
- (b) radical
- (c) realist
- (d) transnationalist

**Answer.** Realist.

**QUESTION 7.** Many scholars date the modern nation-state from

- (a) Fall of the Roman Empire
- (b) Treaty of Westphalia
- (c) Treaty of Versailles
- (d) Declaration of Independence

**Answer.** Treaty of Westphalia.

**QUESTION 8.** The level of analysis most appropriate for understanding public support for the U.S. war against the Taliban in Afghanistan is the

- (a) societal level

- (b) individual level
- (c) system level
- (d) type of government level

**Answer.** Societal level.

**QUESTION 9.** The state is an entity having the special legal status of

- (a) a freely elected government
- (b) predetermined foreign policy
- (c) sovereignty
- (d) hierarchy

**Answer.** Sovereignty.

**QUESTION 10.** Since policy options for allies can often be constrained to those consistent with the terms of the alliance, alliances

- (a) can often lead to disaggregation of power
- (b) can often make international politics less predictable
- (c) can often lead to spread of war
- (d) have often disappeared from world politics

**Answer.** Can often lead to spread of war.

## **B. Answer four (4) of the following questions.**

**QUESTION 11.** People adhered to the Ptolemaic theory of mechanics for a long time even though they knew it had problems explaining certain empirical phenomena. Only the coming of Newtonian mechanics caused them to discard it. Explain why it is a good idea to adhere to such a principle, and give some criteria that we should use to judge a new theory.

**Answer.** See the section on “Theory Selection” in the lecture notes. One would not discard a theory if it does an adequate job in many cases but fails in others unless there is a more compelling theory that is (a) logically consistent, (b) explains what our current theory explains, (c) explains at least some of the phenomena that our current theory fails to explain, and (d) does not depend on an excessive number of auxiliary assumptions.

**QUESTION 12.** What is *Social Darwinism*? What are the possible consequences of combining this philosophy with *nationalism*. Give at least two historical examples.

**Answer.** See the section on “Nationalism and the Nation-State” in the lecture notes. Social Darwinism is a pseudo-scientific theory that attempts to apply Darwin's idea of *natural selection* and *survival of the fittest* to societies, nations, and states. Under this ideology, the fittest nations survive, the strong gobble up the weak, and the entire process is “natural.” Nationalism, as a set of forces that create loyalty-commanding groups on the basis of core similarities, feelings of community, and desire for self-rule, defines the group in relation to the outsiders. Social Darwinism constructs a hierarchy of groups and provides justification for mistreatment of the

outsiders. These undesirables are portrayed as deficient and unworthy of survival, and the “theory” provides an excuse to remove them, usually by violent means. Some examples would be the Nazis (especially the Holocaust), the Japanese behavior in China and Korea, and Serb nationalism recently.

**QUESTION 13.** When Hernando Cortez landed in Mexico, he burned his own ships. When the Greeks fought at the walls of Troy, the Trojans attempted to burn their ships, and the Greeks fought to defend them. Compare and contrast the behavior of the two invading forces: What was each trying to achieve? How does this tactic work in general? Give at least one other example of its use.

**Answer.** See the section on “Reducing Freedom of Action” in the lecture notes. Cortez burned his ships to ensure that his soldiers would have no choice but fight or perish in the new country. The Greeks got the logic backward (so did the Trojans), and even though they managed to defend their ships, their very presence was a source of temptation to abandon the war. The general idea is to acquire credibility by re-structuring the situation in such a way that you would have no choice but to carry out a specific (painful) action that otherwise you might be tempted not to. In the Cortez example, he was worried that his soldiers might refuse to fight if the going got tough if they could escape back to Spain, so his action committed them irrevocably to conquest. An example of a similar commitment device would be a currency union (e.g. the Euro), which makes abandoning the European Union exceedingly costly for all those committed to the Euro. This was one of the reasons Britain decided not to adopt the Euro, at least for a while.

**QUESTION 14.** Explain the differences between a **multipolar** and **bipolar** system and give examples of each. What are some of the arguments about the consequences for *system stability* when it is bipolar?

**Answer.** See the section on “Polarity in the International System” in the textbook. Polarity refers to the number of major actors (poles) in the world system, where an actor is defined as “major” if it is much stronger than most other actors in the system. A system is multipolar if there are several strong actors, and it is bipolar if there are only two major actors. The system was multipolar before World War I (Britain, France, Germany, Russia, Austria-Hungary, and the U.S. were all great powers), and it became bipolar after World War II (U.S. and USSR). States presumably behave differently if they have one opponent or many, and so system polarity may make the system more or less stable in the sense that it is more or less prone to great power wars. Proponents of bipolarity argue that in such a system, the two superpowers are more or less evenly matched. Most other lesser powers would gravitate toward one of the two camps, and the remaining unaligned ones are too weak to make any difference whether they join one side or the other. Given that each superpower only has one main adversary, with time each will come to know the other. They will know what to expect, and will be very careful and circumscribed in their actions toward each other. All of this would reduce uncertainty, the chance for mistakes, and therefore would decrease the likelihood of a general war between them. On the other hand, should a general war break out in a bipolar system, it would be guaranteed to be exceptionally severe. Hence, both sides would put a premium on conflict management. But because both know that a general war would be so costly, both know that each would try to avoid it. This opens up a whole range of possibilities for militarized disputes through proxy, where friends of the superpowers would fight it out, with their masters stepping in when things threaten to get out of hand.