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AIU EXAM

Course Title: "Introduction to International Relations"

SCHOOL: BUSINESS & ECONOMICS

Major: Economics

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Course Description:

- Why Study International Relations?
- The Definition of International Relations
- The Paradigm Debate
- Scholars, Policymakers and Citizens
- The Birth of The Nation-State
- The International System in the Seventeenth, Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries
- The International System in the Twentieth Century
- The Contemporary International System

Study Materials:

Books & Chapters: FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS by

Rochester, Chapters 1 & 2

Instruction:

Questions to answer for chapter 1:

1. How would you define “International Relations”?
2. What is “Sovereignty”?
3. How does international politics differ from domestic (national) politics?
4. How might the glass today seem both half-empty and half full, in terms of negative and positive trends in the world?
5. Give at least five examples of how global interdependence, has affected your life?
6. Describe the realist, idealist (liberal), Marxist, constructivist, and feminine paradigms. Which one strikes you as the best framework for trying to understand international relations?

Questions to answer for chapter 2:

1. What does the term “international system” mean?
2. What is the significance of the Peace of Westphalia in 1648?
3. What were the key features of the international system in the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries (in terms of power distribution and other important characteristics)? What about the twentieth century, from 1900 until 1945 until the end of the Cold War in 1990?
4. How would you characterize the contemporary, post-Cold War international system? What are the major trends?
5. How can we reconcile the traditional way of thinking about international relations? That is, as a “game” played mainly by nation-states, revolving around such concepts as national interests, national security, sovereignty, and citizenship; with the growing contemporary reality of cyberspace, a globalized world economy of multinational corporations, and other phenomena that seem to be blurring national boundaries and identities and rendering the traditional concepts problematical and perhaps anachronistic?

INTRODUCTION

International relations is an intriguing and important subject that places great emphasis on culture, education, foreign affairs, economics and political science and examines the impact they have on society and the world at large. In order to gain deeper understanding of global issues, one must study international relations. International relations is a broad subject and literally covers global issues confronting the entire world, interactions between states and even the rescue of astronauts in outer space including the placement of weapons of mass destruction on the moon.

International Relations involves serious matters ranging from nuclear weapons to pandemics. You cannot talk about the subject of international relations without talking about foreign affairs, foreign policy, sovereignty, international law, politics, diplomacy, peace, conflict negotiation and resolution amongst others. In this exam, I will discuss chapters one and two of Rochester's book, Fundamental Principles of International Relations, answering questions about sovereignty, the key features of the international system in the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries, and the difference between international and domestic politics.

In addition, matters relating to global interdependence and how it has affected my life personally, as well as realist, idealist (liberal), Marxist, constructivist, and feminine paradigms will be touched on and I would give my opinion on the framework that works best.

QUESTIONS FROM CHAPTER 1

1. How Would You Define International Relations?

For me, I would define international relations as the interaction of states in the global interstate system. It also attempts to explain the behaviors of people within one country as compared to the behaviors of members of other countries. It is a multidisciplinary field that encompasses other disciplines like political science, economics, international law, foreign affairs, and other relations as well as subnational entities like political parties, interest groups and bureaucracies.

Notwithstanding, many authors have different definitions of the term “international relations. However, one common feature with the various definitions is the fact that it involves the relations of states with each other, people and international organizations. Some other authors have a completely different view of what international relations is. J. Martin Rochester adopts his definition of International relations from political science, reflecting his primary concern with international relations as the study of the relationships between the world’s governments including not only their interactions with each other but also their interactions with transnational and subnational actors. He also stated that international relations is characterized by continuity and change. In other words, the more things change in world politics, the more they stay the same. For Karl W. Deutsch, in his book “The Analysis of International Relations 1988, he said “An introduction to the study of international relations is an introduction to the art and science of the survival of mankind”. Ikenberry is of the view that international relations is a drama, nation-states may be the lead actors, but non-state actors are hardly bit players on the world stage.

International relations as a field of study can be traced at least as far back as ancient Greece and Thucydides' accounts of the Peloponnesian War, although it is generally considered to have arrived as a distinct academic field in the early twentieth century, following World War I. The Webster's online dictionary defines international relations as "a branch of political science concerned with relations between nations and primarily with foreign policies". Irrespective of how any person chooses to define international relations, it is important to note that it involves relations or interactions between people and states. The field of international relations has traditionally focused on war and peace and issue-area of international security and international political economy. Also, most professionals like economists, historians, climatologists, psychologists, sociologists, agronomists, and many other specialists find themselves involved in the study of international relations.

2. What is Sovereignty?

Sovereignty is the existence of a single supreme power or authority that can claim the exclusive right to rule over a patch of real estate, nation-state and people; and recognizes no other higher authority outside those borders, regardless of whether it is the United Nations, the pope or any other governing body. It can also be defined as a self-governing state. For instance, the power of a king to rule over the people in his kingdom without any interference from external powers or forces. Politically speaking, sovereignty refers to a dominant power or supreme authority.

Sovereignty is the bedrock of international relations. It lays out basic rules for how countries are supposed to interact with each other. The term sovereignty is used to refer to the autonomy and independence of modern nation states. In principle, it means that a country only gets to control what happens within its borders and cannot interfere with what happens elsewhere. In the world, we have large states such as the United States and China and smaller or lesser-known states like Nauru and Palau. States are political-legal

entities that enter into treaties, engage in other official interactions as well as exchange ambassadors. And no matter how big or small a state is, (as in the case of China representing over a billion people, or having fewer than 25,000 inhabitants, like in Palau) its sovereignty gives it formal equality with all other states.

3. How Does International Politics Differ From Domestic National Politics?

Politics is the set of activities that are associated with making decisions in groups, or other forms of power relations among individuals, such as the distribution of resources or status. We have both international politics and national politics, otherwise known as domestic politics. National or domestic politics and international relations are closely related and interdependent areas. Both have autonomous spheres but at the same time, are similar in nature.

Domestic politics is politics or power relations between citizens and leaders of a particular state. International politics is power relations between states in the diaspora while domestic politics is relations between the people of a state. International politics plays out in a setting in which there are no central institutions with authority to regulate the players. On the other hand, national politics involves the courts, legislatures and other authoritative bodies that oversee the participants or contestants. International politics is a game; and typically, games have rules. So, the question is, what rules generally governs the game of international politics?

There is at least one critical difference. If you think of the world over 6 billion people as a single polity, then there is definitely no world government. One unique quality of international political system is its decentralized character; while domestic politics remains the locus of authority in the world.

4. How might the glass today seem both half empty and half full, in terms of negative and positive trends in the world?

The glass seems both half empty and half full because it is hard to get a handle of the world today. The world has faced so much war causing a lot of damages, such as the fall of Berlin wall and the attack on World Trade Center in New York and an overblown of terrorist threats, the onset of financial crisis, human rights violations and greenhouse gases in the atmosphere contributing to global warming.

In many countries, human rights violations remain prevalent, including cases of genocide. If humanity is not destroyed completely by the arms buildup of Weapon of Mass Destructions, it may happen instead through the buildup of CO and other greenhouse gases in the earth's atmosphere that are contributing to global warming, making the last two decades since 1990 the warmest on record. Although no one currently alive has had to cope with sustained crises of the magnitude experienced by the much older generation that spent the most part of their youth suffering through World War I between 1914 and 1918, the Great Depression between the years of 1929 and 1939) and World War II from 1939 – 1945.

However, we have the potential of unprecedented international cooperation; average income per capita is rising in developing countries amid financial crisis; infant mortality and illiteracy is declining, impressive gains in the area of democratization, repressive regimes; notwithstanding, the latest freedom house report counts ninety countries as “free” representing roughly half of the global population.

Globalization of the international economy promises a better life for more consumers, if economic growth with equity and environmentally sustainable development can be promoted and world financial crises stabilized.

5. Give at least five examples of how global interdependence has affected your life.

Global interdependence simply refers to worldwide mutual dependence between countries. Global interdependence has affected my life in the following ways:

1. Technology is making international relations increasingly relevant to our daily lives. For example, through technology, social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp to mention just a few, were created and these platforms make it possible for me to connect with likeminded individuals across the globe without having to fly several hours to meet them. We discuss business ideas via zoom and google meet. Global interdependence has made it possible for me to improve my knowledge and learn new skills from people from other countries; skills like internet marketing, public speaking, forex trading, crypto trading, etc. It has also assisted democratization by creating dramatic opportunities to enhance communication, travel and information processing worldwide, opening up closed societies to new ideas.
2. Global interdependence has also enhanced trade which I believe will cause a radical change and positive increase in my finances. For example, having the opportunity to sell and market other people's products on e-commerce sites like etsy, ebay, amazon, etc. And having people from other countries who need these products buy them either for their personal use or commercial purposes as well. President Bush pointed out the importance of removing tariffs and other barriers on imported goods hoping other countries will reciprocate the same free trade.

3. We are usually affected by what happens in the distant earth. Global warming that starts from a country will affect other countries as well. It also helps lower energy costs and better agricultural yields.
4. Global interdependence has helped people gain information or read news about other countries. For example, you pick up a newspaper from New York and find headlines reporting important stories touching both international and local updates.
5. It has helped with transportation. Prior to the twentieth century, the fastest mode of transportation was the steam locomotive which could reach a 100 speed per hour. This can connect family and friends and make life enjoyable. Notwithstanding, it can also facilitate the growth of terrorism which is a threat to us. In recent times, newer model of cars have emerged with countries like Korea, Japan, China, etc producing cars that are shipped to other countries.
6. Apart from cars, other gadgets like phones as well are produced in one country and exported to another. I get to communicate with a friend that resides in the country where I need to make a purchase, to do some due diligence on my behalf, before I firm up my decision on the purchase, many thanks to global interdependence.

6. Describe the realist, idealist (liberal), Marxist, constructivist, and feminist paradigms. Which one strikes you as the best framework for trying to understand international relations?

A paradigm simply means a big theory. In the field of international relations, there are different paradigms. In other words, people hold different views and have different theories. Some of such people are classified as realists, idealists, Marxists, constructivists and feminists.

The realist paradigm was adopted from Thucydides' assumption that the strong do what they will and the weak suffer what they must. The realist stresses the conflictual side of international relations' coin and take

a relatively negative, pessimistic view of human nature and human progress. To the realist, the ultimate goal of all countries is security in a hostile environment.

The idealist paradigm also known as liberal paradigm, stresses the cooperative side of international relations. It takes a positive, optimistic view of human nature and human progress. Idealists focus their arguments on the legal formal aspects of international relations, such as international law and international organizations, and on moral concerns like human rights and democracy.

Marxist paradigm shares the liberalist's concern with moral, normative issues but offers a very different analysis of dynamics of world politics. For well over a century, this paradigm occupies a prominent place in comparative and international politics. Marxists tend to view international relations more as a class struggle than a struggle between states. Marxist paradigm owes its origin to Karl Marx.

Constructivism stresses the power of ideas, emphasizing on the agents more than the structures. Constructivists study the emergence of new normative beliefs and new knowledge that become widely accepted and that can cause a redefinition of interests and changed behavior.

Feminist paradigm draws on constructivism concepts and is found across several disciplines, likewise has added important insights in the study of international relations. The feminist is of the opinion that women have been excluded from both the study and practice of international relations, which has had the effect of privileging the male view of international relations. The feminists have gender-based identities and beliefs.

In my opinion, having learned about all paradigms, I would say they all have valid points and it will be good to take into consideration each of these paradigms in order to deeply understand international relations. However, we are in the 21st century and things have changed. Women are now taking seats at the table of politics and striving to walk in the corridors of power. That said, the study and practice of international relations is no longer reserved only for males. I am a woman, and although I applied twice to study international relations in 2011 and 2012 respectively at LECIAD, Ghana, I was rejected on both attempts, but I never gave up. I am now pursuing my dream of studying and practicing it. It is quite challenging, but I like to take on new challenges and thrive while doing so.

QUESTIONS FROM CHAPTER TWO

1. What Is Meant By The Term International System?

International system can be defined as the broad pattern of political, economic, and other interrelationships that impact world affairs or, if you will, the general backdrop against which the drama of international relations is performed. Metaphorically, it is the game board upon which the game of international relations is played.

International system provides the platform and the recipe to spearhead the performance of international relations. The key components of world politics change so much that we say the international system is transformed. These changes bring a new system for international relations drama to be performed and hence, makes the international system a work in progress. An examination of the international system forces us to look at world politics as a whole rather than focusing on a particular region which will not give a clear picture or understanding of international systems. For instance, observers believe that the fall of Berlin war in 1989 and the disappearance of the U.S – Soviet Cold War rivalry ended a bipolar international system that had lasted almost a half century after World war II.

2. What is the significance of the Peace of Westphalia in 1648?

The peace of Westphalia brought together the rulers of England, Austria, Spain, France and Holland which ended the conflicts. The Westphalia also created a revolutionary new system of sovereign states, whose rulers could claim authority over all domestic matters within their borders and authority to conduct foreign affairs abroad on behalf of their subjects.

The peace of Westphalia in 1648 also caused the distinction between domestic policy and foreign policy to suddenly have much greater meaning than previously. It also ended an old system and birthed a new system. The peace of Westphalia represents the majestic portal which leads from an old world to a new world. Some hold the argument that technology and globalization may be producing a Westphalia moment, the driving force behind the elimination.

3. What were the key features of the international system in the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries (in terms of power distribution and other important characteristics)? What about the twentieth century, from 1900 until 1945 until the end of the Cold War in 1990?

In the seventeenth century, sovereignty resided in the monarch and not the people. The sovereign power of the monarch was derived from divine right of kings. England, Austria, Prussia, Russia and France were the chief actors in international relations and are known as the great powers.

Towards the eighteenth century, with the French and American revolutions, the idea of representative government and the consent of the governed began to gain recognition and acceptance. The size of government was limited by the magnitude of resources that the ruler could command which required either collecting taxes from subjects or acquiring gold and commodities from overseas trade or loans. The

Congress of Vienna in 1815 was a watershed event in the history of the international system. Additionally, the peace conference convened following the defeat of Napoleon imperialism was a response to both the need to pacify a restless public at home and a need to gain access to raw materials and markets associated with rapid industrialization. Industrialization did not only distort the distribution of wealth in favor of certain states, it also further tilted the distribution of power in their favor.

In the nineteenth century, a new nationalism implied that the whole societies and economies were now actors in world politics, including combatants in war, in ways they had not been previously. The year 1900 marked a high point of European dominance of the international system, as European powers claimed sovereign control over almost 85 percent of all the land on planet earth. Between the years of 1914 and 1918, the World War I struck and the powers were defeated. This resulted in the decline of the European multi-polar system. In the 1930s, the peace that followed World War I created the climate that was to produce World War II.

The war to end all wars proved to be a prelude to an even worse systematic war generation. The distribution of power during the interwar period was multipolar, with Britain and France, the two leading powers in Europe concerned about how other states such as Italy, a weakened but potentially resilient Germany, and the Soviet Union might affect the power equation.

In 1945, mankind knew the means to completely destroy human species with the introduction of weapons of mass destruction and this had profound consequences for world politics. One development was the emergence of only two states – the United States and the Soviet Union, as dominant actors in the international system. However, the second development was the emergence of a highly polarized system in terms of alignment patterns, that is, the East-West axis of conflict waged between two cohesive blocs organized around rival ideologies and led by the two superpowers.

4. **How would you characterize the contemporary, post-Cold War international system? What are the major trends?**

For about almost half a century, the relatively, neat, tidy, bipolar era following World War II featured two superpowers immersed in a global struggle, leading two fairly cohesive blocs. Now, the first and second world separated by the third world is history. The trends underway in the 1970s and thereafter were the tip of the iceberg, serving as a warning to the current era.

The post-cold war is marked by four key properties and we are witnessing merely the transformation of the international system from bipolarity back to back, to the more normal pre-1945 historical pattern of multipolarity. We are on the verge of a much more epic, fundamental transformation.

The major trends are:

- i. **The growing diffusion and ambiguity of power:** Major developments have led to a greater diffusion of power in monetary affairs, both among states and between states and societal actors. But the diffusion of power has mainly been in the dimension of autonomy, rather than influence, meaning that leadership in the system has been dispersed rather than relocated; a pattern called leaderless diffusion. The pattern of leaderless diffusion, in turn, is generating greater ambiguity in prevailing governance structures.

- ii. **The growing fluidity of alignment:** Fluidity is the growing need of organizations and nations today. They are facing an increasing dilemma in how they organize and manage their systems and structures. And are forced to deal in increasingly complexity and environmental turbulence and 'adapting the suitable response' remains increasingly a difficult one to master, within the existing regime and structures. There is a consideration discussion concerning changing

structures and models to become more adaptive, agile, and fluid and to be in alignment with one another.

iii. **The growing importance of non-state actors and the growing agenda of issues:** Non-state actors play a major role in foreign policy making of nation-states and significantly influence their foreign policy behavior. They lobby in both domestic and international settings and mobilize their host or home states and national and global public opinion.

Non-state actors exert an increased influence on the management, decision-making, and activities of the leading international financial institutions, the IMF and the World Bank. This has important implications for global governance, and the interests of developing countries.

iv. **The growing ambiguity of power with the term power and superpower is problematic:** A superpower is a state with a dominant position characterized by its extensive ability to exert influence or project power on a global scale. This is done through the combined means of economic, military, technological, political and cultural strength as well as diplomatic and soft power influence.

In Politics, superpower refers to a state that possesses military or economic might, or both, and general influence vastly superior to that of other states.

5. **How can we reconcile the traditional way of thinking about international relations? That is, as a “game” played mainly by nation-states, revolving around such concepts as national interests, national security, sovereignty, and citizenship; with the growing contemporary reality of cyberspace, a globalized world economy of multinational corporations, and other phenomena that seem to be blurring national boundaries and identities and rendering the traditional concepts problematical and perhaps anachronistic?**

Firstly, the traditionalists focus their attention on the state as their unit of analysis; while others base their analysis on power as the sole explanatory variable in the study of international relations. Similarly, the behaviouralists have developed different approaches in their analytical framework. However, we can reconcile the traditional way of thinking about international relations and with the growing contemporary reality, as suggested by Naill Ferguson, it should neither be uni-polarity nor multi-polarity but apolarity. Although national security may remain a preeminent goal of nation states, it has been broadened beyond its classic military definition.

The rise of non-state actors has potentially far reaching implications. Since the end of World War II, non-state actors have increased. We should also blend overlapping governance arrangements and multiple loyalties. We can also learn from the effect of the wars, cyberspace, and other phenomena to derive unique neutral solutions to these problems.

CONCLUSION

Nations can be likened to a family, just as a family relates with each other, so do countries or states also have relations with each other. Nations relate with each other in so many ways and there are policies to help with the flow of communication. Although international relations has not been easy to define, professors, policy makers and scholars have all tried to explain what it is, and give an easier understanding.

The exam has covered areas such as the definition of international relations, sovereignty, international system as well as the different paradigms of international relations.

Conclusively, International relations is primarily the relationship between nations and is affected by so many factors. Sovereignty is the supreme authority over other subordinates. And the international system can be described as the table on which international relations takes place. Sovereignty influences the relations between or amongst states or nations.

There are paradigms that help to understand international relations, and examples include, the realist paradigm, idealist paradigm, Marxist paradigm, feminist paradigm and constructivist paradigm. Finally, we cannot speak about international relations without understanding the international system, international politics, and domestic politics and how it affects individuals.

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