

International Studies 701 Midterm Essay

Instructions:

1. Answers are due by the beginning of class on Wednesday 26 March and should be 4 to 5 pages in length (word-processed, double-spaced).
2. Use the readings in your answers!—the [entire] purpose of this exercise is to give you an opportunity to integrate the material we have been reading over the past six weeks with practical research problems and literatures.
3. Use a standard citation style (for example MLA, APA or Chicago style: for online style guide references, see <http://www2.lib.ku.edu/watsonref/cite.htm>) and be sure to put in quotation marks any exact quotes, and provide a citation to any paraphrase. Provide the full URL and date of access for any material obtained from the Web. If you have any questions on what should and should not be cited, or other questions dealing with academic integrity issues, <http://www.writing.ku.edu/students/docs/integrity.html>

Questions: answer only one

1. Select an issue in international studies of interest to you and discuss a case where you think that appropriate use of concepts and definitions has served to clarify our understanding of the issue, and a case where the existing concepts and definitions are inadequate for the study of the issue. Discuss the extent to which these successes and failures are consistent with the attributes of concepts and definitions advocated by Geering.
2. Select an issue in international studies of interest to you where there is a disagreement concerning issues of causality—that is, disagreement over what (if anything—the situation could be random) is determining some phenomenon. Apply some of the formal discussions of causality we have considered to the issue and indicate how these might be used to clarify it.
3. Within the general field of international studies that you are interested in, indicate one or two questions where you think that the “scientific” method of study is likely to be *most* effective, and one or two questions where you think it is likely to be *least* effective. The bulk of your answer should focus on *why* you are making these distinctions. In the case of the questions where the scientific method is not effective, what alternative methods should be used, and how are these methods determined?
4. Take a “story”—this can either be an academic or journalistic account, and can come from either a single source or a composite—that explains some major event in international behavior (for example, the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe; the Asian currency crisis of 1997; the “clash of civilizations”). Identify two or more hypotheses or propositions embedded within this, and outline how you would go about systematically studying these. Your answer should include a discussion of how the study you have proposed satisfies the criteria (or at least some of them) of Gerring and King, Keohane & Verba.