

International Development Studies

Oral Exam Preparation

These questions are intended to offer opportunity for reflection on major development issues. They require you to utilize material from coursework, along with your own reading, in order to formulate thoughtful responses. Discuss each question with sufficient detail to support your generalizations. Be prepared to answer any of the questions provided below and note that these prompts may serve as a starting point for deeper conversation on any of these topics.

I. Thematic Questions

A. Human Rights

1. Examine the struggle between state sovereignty and human rights. What is the role of human rights in foreign policy? What tools are most effective in negotiating human rights within the international arena? How should the balance between state sovereignty and human rights be evaluated? Include any relevant international human rights legislation discussed in class to support your argument.
2. Examine the causes of forced migration and the impact of refugee flows on states. What responsibilities and roles do both individual states and the UNHCR have in regard to these populations? Finally, consider the implications of your answer and provide recommendations for mitigating these flows.
3. Consider the struggle to implement transitional justice after human rights violations. Review the obstacles and variables for successful justice, while also discussing the three forms of transitional justice available. What are some possible recommendations for successful future reconstruction of society after violence?

B. Global Politics

1. Theories of international relations often share elements in common despite their differences, and while nearly all of them agree that the international system is anarchic, they do not agree on for what that means for state behavior. Explain why and how they differ, while also discussing why these differences matter within the international system.
2. Questions abound regarding the best methods of fostering development. Please discuss poverty and its measurements, the continued impact of building an economy on the sale of raw materials, and some of the arguments surrounding foreign aid. How might developing states become most economically successful, while also intentionally supporting their populations toward improved social mobility?
3. Consider the contemporary role of sovereign states. Some say the state is losing its importance, while others argue its significance is simply evolving over time. Reference at least one international organization to illustrate your answers to the following: why do states form international organizations, and why do they work through them? In addition, discuss how transnational actors change the face of the international system. In other words, how do transnational corporations and advocacy networks influence international politics today?

C. Global Health

1. Describe what has come to be known as the brain drain of health workers from developing countries. Is it simply a matter of migration and potential pay or are there other forces at play? In addition, cover the patterns of where these health workers go and why. Finally, should the ethics of recruitment be considered by developed countries as they search to fill necessary positions? Why or why not?
2. If men and women have different life expectancies, but they do not tend to die from diseases biologically tied to a single sex, what are some of the main ways gender shapes health outcomes? Are these impacts only felt in developing states? Finally, consider potential recommendations to continue to improve health outcomes for both men and women.
3. Discuss global health security and the International Health Regulations. Are the International Health Regulations a priority and necessity for developing states, or are they primarily in place to serve the interests of developed nations? Could the budgets of developing states be better utilized on national healthcare programs or are these standards in their best interests as well?

D. Political Economy

1. Consider the development of United States land policy within the trajectory of the broader economic history of the United States. How did Thomas Jefferson, the Confederation Congress, and the Northwest Land Ordinances affect land policy? In later periods of US history, what similar significant events or changes took place in the economy of the country?
2. Evaluate the trajectory of political economy history from Adam Smith to the present. Include a description of key economic thinkers of the twentieth century (e.g., Veblen, Galbraith, Schumpeter, Polanyi, Keynes, Hayek, Friedman).
3. Discuss the purpose of studying political economy. How does studying political economy inform decision making, and in reverse, how can it inform political and economic decision making? What tools do states use in regulating foreign trade? What political-economic systems are most and least likely to impose strict regulations on trade?

II. Classics in International Development

The works listed below are independent readings. The following questions will help guide your reading and provide structure for your senior exam. You should be able to explain the thesis or primary themes of the following works, as well as the context of the scholarship.

A. Acemoglu and Robinson - *Why Nations Fail*

1. Do you think that institutions explain all of the differences in development across countries? Are some of these differences due to geography, culture, ideas or even just luck?
2. The book argues that China has so far developed with extractive rather than inclusive institutions, and therefore China's rapid growth cannot continue and may even collapse. Do you agree?

3. Did the authors use primarily qualitative or quantitative evidence to support their argument? Was this method effective?

B. Sen - *Development as Freedom*

1. Among all different freedoms, which one is the most vital in the lenses of “Development as freedom”? Why?
2. Does Sen attach too much importance to democracy, in particular in light of cultural differences? Is Sen imposing a Western way of doing things?
3. What does Sen consider to be the cause of poverty? Do you agree with the assertion that democracies are always more economically prosperous?

C. Collier – *The Bottom Billion*

1. What four traps does Collier describe? What role do they play in economic development?
2. What arguments does Collier make regarding globalization and the marginalization of the bottom billion in the global economy?
3. Which tools does Collier argue are most effective to encouraging economic development?

D. Sachs – *The End of Poverty*

1. What are the eight barriers to economic growth that Sachs describes? Does he emphasize any in particular? Do you agree? Why or why not?
2. Through discussion of the barriers above, the first half of the book considers why some countries are economically successful and others are not. In what way does Sachs consider the impact of colonization? How do his arguments compare to those of Collier?
3. Which side of the foreign aid debate does Sachs fall? Does he encourage aid and international support? Why or why not? How do the perspectives of other influential authors compare?

III. Influential Authors

Know the works and contributions of five of the authors below. While you may not have read all of the work by these authors, you should know the significant contributions they have made to the discipline.

Daron Acemoglu
Paul Farmer
Dambisa Moyo
Adam Przeworski

Jeffrey Sachs
Amartya Sen
Joseph Stiglitz
William Easterly

IV. Theories

Explain the differences between the international relations and development theories listed below. Know which theory you subscribe to, and in addition, be able to understand and articulate how a few contemporary examples tie to these theories.

Realism
Liberalism
Constructivism
Marxism

Modernization
Dependency
Post-development
Capability

V. Professionalization

- A. Attend a professional conference
- B. CV edited by the University Writing Center listing conferences, papers written, coursework, and department participation.