

17.42 // Causes & Prevention of War //  
Exam date: Wednesday, May 20, 1:30-4:30  
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## FINAL EXAM STUDY QUESTIONS

Please bring this list to the exam.

You **may** outline your answers on these study-question sheets, but will not be permitted to consult other materials.

You will be asked to answer **two** from a choice of three questions, drawn for the list below, plus some shorter identifications. Total exam time: 2.5 hours (1 hour for each essay, 30 minutes for the shorter IDs).

You are encouraged to study together as you prepare your answers.

1. If you were designing a world of states best able to co-exist without war, what would your states be like? You may comment on the nature of their political systems, their economic systems, their administrative and educational institutions, their national cultures/ideas/values, their foreign and defense policies, or any other national attributes you believe are relevant. However, confine your remarks to a few (2-5) attributes, and explain why you think they matter most. Also, please indicate how much you think war would diminish if all the world's states followed your design.

Use historical examples and evidence drawn from course readings and lectures.

2. In Perception and Misperception in International Politics (chapter 3) Robert Jervis notes that sometimes unyielding policies cause war by provoking a conflict-spiral, while sometimes concessions cause war by encouraging aggressors to make more demands, and to falsely expect that the other will grant these demands.

- a. Which problem occurs more often in international history? Comment on the cases covered in this course.
- b. What policy prescriptions follow from your answer? How could past policy makers have avoided the spirals or deterrence failures that you discuss?

3. What has been the single most **potent and preventable** cause of war during the last hundred years? Explain why your war-cause is both potent and preventable. Also identify the second and third most potent and preventable war-causes, and explain why they are less potent and/or less preventable than the prime cause you identify.

4. What foreign policy should the United States adopt to keep itself and the world at peace? Some people argue an activist U.S. foreign policy only leads to U.S. entanglement in wars like World War I, World War II, Korea and Vietnam. In this view few wars are prevented, while more are caused or intensified, by U.S. activism. Others argue that an isolationist U.S. policy permits wars among other states; then the U.S. is eventually drawn in, as in 1917, 1941, and 1950, to settle wars that it could have prevented by early action. They suggest a paradox: "To preserve peace, we must threaten war."

Still others argue that both an active or isolationist policy can cause war or peace, depending on specific policies and circumstances.

Discuss these views with reference to relevant history. This history could include past American policies or the policies of other powers covered in this course.

5. Many later observers have seen their own times reflected in the work of Thucydides and have perceived close parallels between the Peloponnesian War and conflicts they observed first hand. Others argue that the Peloponnesian war was different in important ways from most wars, and should not be used to infer lessons about managing foreign policy or war today. Who is right? Of the wars studied in this course, which were most similar to the Peloponnesian War in their causes and conduct? Which were most different? Of those that were similar, what were the most important common features between the Peloponnesian War and the similar wars you identify? What lessons can be drawn from Thucydides' account for the conduct of policy today?

6. What is the future of war? Will warfare be more or less common during the next century than it was before 1945? Will it be more or less violent than pre-1945 warfare? In developing your answer, clearly state your factual and theoretical assumptions. (You may wish to offer different answers for different regions of the globe.)

7. Is national misperception curable or incurable? Discuss ways to address misperception and explain how successful you think these measures would be. Refer to historical cases to support your argument.

own view on the matter, using the wars covered in this course as cases.

Finally, state any policy prescriptions that follow from your analysis.

For purposes of your answer, assume that a war was "inadvertent" if the decisions or policies that produced the war were adopted by governments or societies that **did not expect or desire** that these policies would produce war.

9. Consider three possible future international nuclear orders: (1) Nuclear weapons are banned. No states have any nuclear weapons. (2) A few states--perhaps 5-8--maintain nuclear arsenals. All other states have no nuclear weapons. (3) Nuclear weapons spread to many more states than possess them today, until scores of states have nuclear arsenals. Which of these nuclear orders would be best for the United States? Which would be best for the world? Is your preferred nuclear order feasible to achieve? Could it be sustained? What means would best achieve and sustain your preferred nuclear order?

10. Some scholars view the Arab-Israeli conflict as a tragedy that stems from the security dilemma. In this view neither side can secure itself without making the other insecure, creating an endless struggle for safety. In a second view the conflict stems from an inexorable clash of two nationalist movements who both claim the same land and whose claims cannot be reconciled. In a third view the conflict stems from historical myths and illusions that fuel hatred, fear and arrogance on one or both sides. In this view the conflict could be dampened by new historical narratives. Still others blame European colonialism, Arab anti-semitism, Jewish religious extremism, or European anti-semitism. Which explanation is strongest? What prescriptions for ending the conflict follow from your answer? Please offer evidence for your argument.

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