

Final Exam Study Questions

The final exam will consist of two parts: SEVEN short essay questions and ONE long essay question. In Part One, I will give you ten short essay questions; you will choose seven to answer. In Part Two, I will give you three long essay questions; you will answer one. The exam questions will be taken from the questions below. There will be no questions on the exam that do not appear below. Since you have the questions *ahead of time*, I expect that you will be able to answer them with more than just a superficial response. Be sure to include as much specific evidence as possible to explain and support what you assert. The best answers will draw on class discussion and information in the readings.

1. How did the United States first become involved in Indochina? Explain how the policies the Roosevelt and Truman administrations pursued led to U.S. involvement.
2. How did concerns about France affect the Truman administration's decision whether to support Ho Chi Minh?
3. How did economic considerations *indirectly* influence the Truman administration's decision to side with the French in Vietnam?
4. Why did U.S. support for South Vietnamese leader Ngo Dinh Diem prove problematic?
5. How did Vietnam's history affect the way the Vietnamese – both North and South – perceived U.S. intervention in their country? Why did the Vietnamese see the nature of the conflict differently than did the Americans?
6. Why did Ho Chi Minh embrace Leninism? Why did he believe that it was useful in the Vietnamese context?
7. What role did the NLF ("Viet Cong") play in the Vietnamese struggle for reunification and independence? Why is it misleading to characterize the NLF as simply a puppet of the North Vietnamese government?
8. Beginning on page 78, Hunt discusses "four key decisions" Johnson made on Vietnam. What were they and why were they significant?
9. Beginning on page 99, Hunt reviews the four major criticisms of Johnson's conduct of the war. What are they and to what extent are they justified?
10. Why was the 1968 Tet Offensive a significant benchmark in the Vietnam War?
11. What were the United States' three broad objectives in the Middle East during the 1960s and why was it so difficult to achieve (or even to pursue) all three simultaneously?
12. What issues put a strain on US-Israeli relations during the 1960s? What issues put a strain on US-Arab relations?
13. How did Israel's victory in the Six Day War end up producing unintended consequences? Why, arguably, had maintaining its own security become more difficult for Israel after the Six Day War?

14. Why did Arabs and Israelis interpret UN Resolution 242 differently? Why did Arabs and Israelis interpret it differently?
15. Why did President Anwar Sadat of Egypt initiate the 1973 war against Israel? Did he achieve his purpose?
16. What factors led to the Iranian Revolution of 1978? Why was the Shah's rule resented by so many different groups in Iran?
17. Why was the Carter administration unprepared for the Iranian Revolution and indecisive in its response to it?
18. Why was Afghanistan so politically unstable in the 1970s? What roles did Amin, Daoud, Karmal, and Taraki play in creating this instability?
19. How did the US perception of Soviet motives for invading Afghanistan differ from what in fact were the Soviet motives for doing so?
20. Why was the situation in Afghanistan so challenging for the Soviet government to handle?
21. Why were the Soviets reluctant to send troops into Afghanistan? Why was the Politburo so concerned about the Afghan insurgency?
22. In the 1970s and 1980s, how did liberals and conservatives differ in their views of what America's role in the world should be?
23. What were Reagan's overarching principles in his conduct of foreign affairs? How do we see him pursuing (and sometimes compromising) these principles as he dealt with the Soviet Union and other specific diplomatic crises during his two terms in office?
24. What was Reagan's strategy for hastening the collapse of Communism? What specific steps did he take to shove the Soviet Union into the "dustbin of history"?
25. How did Cold War anti-communism shape (and, arguably, distort) American policy in Central America? How did both internal instability and years of American intervention contribute to the suffering of average people in the region?
26. What was the Iran-Contra Affair and why did it undermine the credibility of the Reagan administration?
27. How did Ronald Reagan's view of the Cold War differ fundamentally from the more traditional balance of power view espoused by Nixon, Kissinger, and others in the "foreign policy establishment"?
28. What roles did Reagan and Gorbachev play in bringing the cold war to an end "without a shot being fired"? What fundamental beliefs did each eventually have to abandon in order to reach an agreement?
29. Why did a crisis in Yugoslavia break out in 1991-1992? Why did the crisis grow especially acute in Bosnia?
30. Why was the United States initially hesitant to intervene in Bosnia? Why did President Clinton ultimately change his mind and, once he did, how did the U.S. play a leading role in brokering a cease fire in the region?
31. What caused the Rwandan genocide and why did the Western nations fail to prevent it?
32. According to Kaplan, how had the end of the Cold War changed America's place in the world and made it more difficult to project its power? Why does he believe the Bush administration's "go it alone" policies failed to comprehend the realities of the post-Cold War world?

33. What was the “revolution in military affairs”? (Kaplan, 16) How did it employ new technology to change the U.S. military strategy?
34. What were the pros and cons of the new style of warfare associated with the “revolution in military affairs”? What did it do well? What did it not do well?
35. How did the Clinton administration deal with North Korea? Why does the author consider Clinton’s diplomacy relatively effective (as opposed to George W. Bush’s)?
36. What were some of the key mistakes the United States made in the early days of the Iraq occupation that led to the subsequent violent insurgency?
37. President Bush equated the holding of free elections with “democracy.” Why does Kaplan argue that the two were not synonymous? How could free elections actually undermine the development of democracy?
38. What influence did Natan Sharansky have on George W. Bush’s thinking and policy making?
39. Why did Arab leaders resent Bush’s calls for reform and democracy?
40. Sharansky and other pro-democracy advocates pointed out that Reagan and Gorbachev had worked together to end the authoritarian system in the USSR and that the same could be done in the Middle East. Why does Kaplan believe that the comparison is a false one?
41. How did Realists and neoconservatives differ in their views of how to conduct foreign policy? What was most important to Realists? What was most important to neoconservatives?
42. Why does Kaplan argue that policymakers in the Bush administration were “fantasists”? Why does he believe Bush’s ideas about freedom violate historical reality and even common sense?
43. Kaplan concludes (p. 159): “As Bush’s second term began, the problem wasn’t that he and Rumsfeld had won the war [in Iraq] but not the peace; it was that they had not yet won the war, in part because they hadn’t understood the war or what they needed to do to win it.” What does he mean by this statement and what evidence does he cite to support it?
44. In his conclusion, what alternative guiding principles for foreign policy does Kaplan offer? Why, in particular, does he believe American foreign policy should focus on cultivating alliances with other nations?
45. Why are Randolph Bourne’s criticisms of the progressives who supported World War I also applicable to “left Wilsonians” or liberals who supported the Iraq War in 2003?