

MS in National Security Affairs and International Relations

Comprehensive Exam Guidelinesⁱ

Format:

The comprehensive examination is designed to assess whether students have reached a sufficient level of understanding of core concepts and frameworks of analysis emphasized in National Security Affairs and International Relations to graduate from the program. Answers must be well thought out and organized, and rooted in material from appropriate core and elective courses in the program. Students are expected to demonstrate familiarity with and understanding of appropriate scholarship in the field of National Security Affairs and International Relations.

The examination is divided into two-sections, each to be completed in separate twenty-four hour periods. Section one contains a tabletop exercise involving a national security challenge faced by the United States, which students will address in a three-part, sequenced essay format. Section two contains a tabletop exercise involving some aspect of international relations, which once again students will address in a three-part, sequenced essay format. Depending on the nature of the scenario, students will employ appropriate reasoning and analysis from a range of disciplines employed in core and elective courses in the program (e.g. ethics, history, cyber security, international law, civil liberties, etc.).

Parameters of the Exam:

Comprehensive exams for graduating students are held on designated weekends at the end of each semester. The two-part exam will be taken electronically in distance format through Canvas, and each part will be administered on first two consecutive Saturdays after classes end. Section One will open at 9 a.m. on the first Saturday and students will have twenty-four hours to complete it. Section Two will open at 9 a.m. on the following Saturday, and students will have twenty-four hours to complete it. Students may complete and turn in either section any time prior to the next day deadline. Students **must** submit all work before the appropriate deadline, whether complete or not. Once the exam begins students must refrain from all contact with other students in the program. All exams must be submitted in MS Word format.

Grading:

The three faculty members of the Comprehensive Exam Committee will grade all exams. Students are assigned an examination number so the grading faculty do not know whose answers they are reviewing. The exam is pass/fail. Two of the three faculty examiners must award a passing grade in order for the student to pass the exam.

Receiving Exam Results:

Students will receive written email notification of results via their **NSU** email account.

Examination Eligibility:

Students in their final semester of coursework will be invited to sit the exam. Only eligible students will be permitted to sit the exam. Eligibility is determined both academically and financially.

Academic Eligibility:

All coursework must be satisfactorily completed before the examination and you must be in good academic standing. (See the CAHSS handbook.)

- You may not be on academic probation and sit for the exam.
- You may not have more than one C without having retaken the course and earned a satisfactory grade.
- You must have a B average (3.0 or higher.)
- If you have any outstanding "Incomplete" grades from previous semesters, you will not be eligible to take the examination.

Financial eligibility:

- You must have met all your financial obligations to the University and may not have a Bursar Hold on your account. If you have any outstanding financial issues, please contact the Bursar's Office to make the appropriate arrangements well in advance of the exam date.

It is your responsibility to ensure that your grades are complete and that all financial obligations have been satisfied.

ⁱ Students who choose the Thesis Option are not required to take the Comprehensive Exams.