POLITICS AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS:
PhD COMPREHENSIVE EXAM POLICY

Additions to Policy Approved May 2009

I. Add text below to existing section

Examination Structure

The purpose of comprehensive examinations is to determine whether students have achieved the competencies required to initiate a dissertation research project. Comprehensive examinations test for these competencies by requiring students to produce original answers to field-related questions within a specified timeframe.

II. Add new sections

Graduate Courses

To sustain a high standard of fairness and consistency, the department requires that all written assignments in graduate classes be submitted using SafeAssign.

Written Exams

To encourage a high standard of original analysis and writing, it is highly recommended that an answer to each comprehensive examination question be limited to 10-12 pages.

Academic Integrity

A. The department abides by all provisions of the NAU Academic Dishonesty Policy. Students are advised to read this policy and become totally familiar with all facets of Academic Dishonesty <http://nau.edu/uploadedFiles/Administrative/EMSA_Sites/Folder_Templates/_Forms/Academic_Dishonesty.pdf>. N.B. A new Graduate Student Dismissal Policy will be vetted this fall, 2013 by the University Graduate Committee.

B. Academic dishonesty of any kind is absolutely forbidden. Dishonesty includes engaging in complete or partial plagiarism, improper paraphrasing, and providing insufficient

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1 Approved unanimously by the PIA Faculty, 4 September 2013, to clarify policy before the October 2013 Comprehensive Exams. The candidates taking the comprehensive exams this academic year (2013-2014) will not be held to all the new requirements (e.g., page limit), but will be notified that all exam answers will be submitted to SafeAssign, from October 2013.
citations. Students are forbidden from engaging in self-plagiarism including use of material submitted for previous course assignments without proper attribution. An example of citing one’s writing for submitted course materials is the following:


C. While students are allowed to use properly cited material when answering examination questions, a reasonable use standard applies. Under the reasonable use standard, only a limited (reasonable) percentage of no more than 15 percent of a student’s answer can consist of quoted material drawn from previously published work or from one’s own cited (see A above) work. Given that SafeAssign, or any electronic tracing tool, is not perfect, anything above 15 percent will be considered a signal, for the Comprehensive Exam Board to evaluate the paper in order to make a judgment as to whether plagiarism occurred.

D. Students engaging in academic dishonesty will be recommended for dismissal from the PhD program according to standard university procedures. If an appeal of academic dishonesty is made by the student, the written appeal will go to the Graduate Program Committee (GPC). The final avenue of the appeal within the department will be to the Department Chair, after which appeal can continue to the Dean of SBS and further, to the Associate Dean of the Graduate College, following university policies. All appeals must be made in writing according to the University Graduate College rules for non-grade appeals.

To implement this policy, it is important that the Graduate Program Coordinator not serve as a member of the Comprehensive Exam Board. If a member of the exam board is on the GPC, then s/he will be asked to recuse her/himself. If the advisor of the student in question is on the GPC, that faculty member will also be asked to recuse her/himself. The Graduate Program Coordinator will then appoint faculty to replace those recused from the GPC for the appeal process. Finally, if the department chair is serving as advisor to the student, the department chair will also be asked to recuse her/himself from involvement in the appeals process.