Notice of the Final Oral Examination
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

of

REGAN BURLES

MA (University of Victoria, 2014)
BA Honours (University of Ottawa, 2012)

“Analogies of the International: System, structure, and world order”

Department of Political Science

Monday, March 22, 2021
10:00 A.M.
Remote Defence

Supervisory Committee:
Dr. Rob Walker, Department of Political Science, University of Victoria (Supervisor)
Dr. Scott Watson, Department of Political Science, UVic (Member)
Dr. Greg Blue, Department of History, UVic (Outside Member)

External Examiner:
Dr. Siba Grovogui, Africana Studies, Cornell University

Chair of Oral Examination:
Dr. Reuben Rose-Redwood, Department of Geography, UVic

Dr. Stephen Evans, Acting Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies
Abstract

This dissertation examines the boundaries of world politics expressed in claims about the ‘global’ character of international order. The presence of a single political order that covers the surface of the globe—the international system—is often treated as axiomatic in international relations. Animated by the tension between this claim to global scope and critiques of world politics in international relations, this study investigates the way discourses of international politics sustain claims to global political unity. I do this through analyses of literatures that chart the past (the globalization of international society), present (theories of structure and the problem of world politics), and future (Kant’s Cosmopolitan Right) of world political order in international relations. I argue that discourses of international politics sustain claims to global political unity through a specific understanding of order: system, understood as an irreducible relation between parts and whole. While descriptions of the international system abound, prevailing theoretical oppositions anarchy and society, hierarchy and equality) in international relations (such as anarchy and society, and hierarchy and equality), presume a particular account of an already present order that they describe. As a result, I argue, these theories of international order provide an implicit answer to some of the most intensely contested questions in world politics, such as the relationship between unity and diversity, that sets boundaries on imagining possibilities for political order on a planetary scale.