Questions at the final state exam valid since the summer semester of 2025/2026

M.A. programme International Relations

For the students who enrolled in the AY 2020/2021 or earlier, the final state exam consists of the following parts:

1) Master's thesis defense

2) Oral examination:
Mandatory parts:
a) International relations (1 question)
b) European studies (1 question)
An elective part, which a student chooses in his/her registration form for the final state exam:
c) International economic relations, International organizations, or International law (1 question)

For the students who enrolled in the AY 2021/2022 or later, the final state exam consists of the following parts:

1) Master's thesis defense

2) Oral examination:
Mandatory part:
a) International relations (1 question)
An elective part, which a student chooses in his/her registration form for the final state exam:
b) European Union, International economic relations, International institutions, or International law (1 question)

To prepare for the final state exam, use the mandatory literature assigned in the mandatory courses of the International Relations programme.

International relations

1. Explain the main concepts and arguments of the realist school of thought in IR theory. Provide a taxonomy of realist approaches and briefly outline the main differences between them.
2. What is the security dilemma? Explain the significance of this concept for realist IR theory. Provide examples from the past or present.
3. Describe the main tenets of neorealism (structural realism). Identify the strong and weak sides of this approach using an example of your choice.
4. Compare and contrast structural and neoclassical realism. Explain how neoclassical realism understands the role of domestic politics in balancing, and the significance of domestic politics for underbalancing and overbalancing.

5. What is the prisoner's dilemma? Explain the game and its significance for realist and liberal-institutionalist theories. Provide examples of how it can be applied to analyze international relations.
6. Discuss deterrence theory, the role of rationality, and the problems of commitment and credibility. Provide examples. Explain how you understand "equilibrium" in a deterrence game.
7. Discuss liberal theory of international relations and unpack some of its central arguments, including "republican," commercial," and "regulatory" liberalism.
8. Explain the collective action problem, the free-rider problem, and the concept of collective (public) goods.
9. Explain the "democratic peace thesis" and demonstrate how it can be connected to theories of IR such as liberalism or realism. Discuss possible counterexamples from history and potentially problematic aspects of the "democratic peace thesis."
10. Explain the logic of appropriateness and the logic of expected consequences. Discuss ways in which the two logics can be related.
11. Explain the consequential and appropriate decision-making processes as seen from the perspective of neo-institutionalist organizational theory. How can these models be applied to understanding international NGOs and other global actors?
12. Discuss the social constructivist thought on international anarchy. How is it different from the assumptions made by neorealist and liberal-institutionalist theories?
13. Explain how social constructivism understands the origin, evolution, and role of norms in IR.
14. Compare and contrast the understanding of "national interest" developed by realist, liberal, and social constructivist approaches in IR.
15. Explain the "narrative theory of action" and how it understands the relationship between interest and identity. Provide your own examples to support the explanation.
16. Explain and connect the key concepts of securitization theory. Illustrate the explanation with your own examples.
17. Discuss critical geopolitics and its relationship to "classical" geopolitics. Explain what "social construction" of space and geography means and provide empirical examples.
18. Typology of military conflicts
19. Causes of military conflicts
20. Origin and evolution of conflicts – the conflict cycle
21. Instruments of conflict prevention
22. Instruments of conflict management

<u>European studies/European union</u>

1. EU as a political system - can the EU be characterised as a political system and why? What are other alternatives to the characterisation of the EU?
2. Neofunctionalism vs liberal intergovernmentalism – alternative explanations of developments in European integration; applied to economic governance reforms after 2008.
3. Why do states transfer competencies to the EU/supranational institutions? Alternative theoretical explanations.
4. Constructivism – changes in norms as the reason for a change in the EC/EU policies.
5. Supranational vs intergovernmental approach: the developments of institutional balance between the Member States and supranational institutions of the EC/EU, their context and manifestations in decision-making mechanisms.
6. EC/EU enlargements – historical contexts, impacts of enlargements on decision-making processes and policy changes.

7. Development of competencies of the European Parliament, its explanation in historical context and relation to the democratic deficit debate.
8. Constitutionalisation of the EU as a source of democratic legitimacy and institutional reform.
9. Agenda-setting in the EU – competencies and practice, specific examples in the last ten years.
10. The ordinary legislative procedure – developments, treaty provisions, decision-making within institutions and in inter-institutional relations.
11. Principles of the Internal Market and their historical development.
12. Persisting obstacles to the Internal Market and their causes.
13. Development of the European budget – reasons for and impacts of new resources and multiannual financial frameworks.
14. Common Agricultural Policy – reforms, their causes and impacts.
15. Common Agricultural Policy – differences in priorities of the Member States, current debates, differences in application, budgetary issues and preferences
16. Provisions of the Economic and Monetary Union and their application and enforcement as a possible cause for the economic crisis of 2008-2010.
17. Reforms of economic governance as a consequence of the economic crisis of 2008-2010.
18. Area of freedom, security and justice – a shift from intergovernmental to supranational decision-making logic.
19. Reactions to the migration crisis of 2015 – reforms of migration and asylum policies, obstacles to further reform.
20. British EC/EU membership – history, (non)participation in specific policies and reasons behind them, causes of Brexit.
21. EU's climate policy, its development and future outlook.
22. EU's external relations – institutional and decision-making differences between individual policies.
23. European security – development and future of the Common Security and Defense Policy.

International economic relations

1. Discuss the relationship between power and wealth of nations in international economic relations. Provide examples of mechanisms through which power is projected into economic wealth, and vice versa.
2. Outline and discuss the key tenets of mainstream economic thinking about international economic relations (rational utility maximization, *homo oeconomicus*, market equilibrium).
3. Discuss the core concepts of economic theory (supply and demand curve, indifference curves, market equilibrium). In economic theory, is free exchange among market participants an efficient allocation mechanism?
4. Outline the core cause for free exchange of goods between states in economic theory – why is free international trade, in theory, beneficial?
5. Discuss how institutions of market economy interact with, and rely on, the broader framework of national political and social institutions (John Ruggie and embedded liberalism).
6. Outline the core tenets of the three main theoretical approaches to the relationship between state and economy in international economic relations (mercantilism, liberalism, Marxism).
7. Present the core tenets of the Ricardian model of comparative advantage.
8. What are the key reasons which states typically use to justify protectionist measures in their trade relations towards other countries? Discuss both economic reasons and broader non-trade concerns.
9. Present the Heckscher-Ohlin model and its discussion of the domestic distributive consequences of trade liberalization.

10. Outline the notions of economic interdependence and economic globalization. How do they differ? Discuss the notion of the 'flat world' (Thomas Friedman).
11. Discuss the core concepts and questions in international finance: the key actors, global financial flows, the problem of the balance of payments, and issues connected with states' currencies exchange rates.
12. Discuss the key issues in the history and present of global financial and monetary policies: the Bretton Woods institutions and the gold standard; globalization of finance and the liberalization of financial flows.
13. Discuss the positions and specific characteristics and interests of the so-called emerging powers, e.g. the BRICS countries, in the global economy.
14. Outline the notion of 'state capitalism' and its relationship to the so-called emerging powers. What is the position of rising powers in the current global economy?.
15. Discuss the key features of the 'information age' in relation to international economic relations and politics. Relate the debate to the problems of globalization and technological change.
16. What economic policies, or tools, do states have at their disposal in tackling economic crises, such as that brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic? Present the key elements of the fiscal and monetary policy toolbox.
17. Discuss the key concepts and arguments with regard to the current globalization backlash. What are the key economic causes of the backlash against globalization?
18. In political economic discussions, what are the key reasons for which globalization of the last decades contributes to growing inequality inside states? What models can be used to identify likely "winners" and "losers" of globalization?
19. What do we mean by a divergence of economic and political geography in the globalized world? Present the core argument of Danny Rodrick's 'inescapable trilemma of global political economy'.
20. List and discuss the key ways to assess (and measure) countries' performance in the realm of international economic life and economic development. What are the different characteristics and specific indicators typically used to compare states' economic performance in the global realm?
21. Present the different views on the notion of poverty and its different measures. What are the various approaches taken historically by the international community to address global poverty: SAPs, PRSPs, MDGs, SDGs.
22. Discuss the key theoretical approaches to the problem of development, from the 1960s until the 2000s. What have been the different perspectives on the role of the state in achieving development outcomes?

International institutions/organizations

1) Neoliberal institutionalism and international institutions
2) Realism, constructivism, and international institutions
3) Evolution of international institutions until the mid-20th century
4) Evolution of international institutions from the mid-20th century until nowadays
5) Organizational structure of international institutions
6) Functions of international institutions
7) Global arms control treaties and regimes
8) Global regime of nuclear non-proliferation (Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty)
9) UN Security Council
10) UN peace operations

11) UN sanctions
12) Military operations authorized by the UNSC
13) WTO – goals, norms, institutional structure
14) WTO – global trade negotiations (areas, evolution, current situation)
15) IMF – goals, policy principles, institutional structure
16) IMF – loan provision
17) UN and development policy
18) World Bank
19) UN and environmental protection
20) Global climate regime
21) UN and human rights protection – basic documents and outcomes
22) UN and human rights protection – institutions, their competences, and their activities and outcomes

International law

1. Characteristics of International Law, Comparison with Private International Law and Domestic Law, Enforceability
2. Relationship between International Law and Domestic Legal Systems, e.g. the Czech Constitutional Order
3. Peremptory Norms of International Law – Meaning, List, Consequences
4. Subjects of International Law – Typology, Differences
5. International Intergovernmental Organization as a Subject of International Law – Legal Personality, Establishing Treaty, Rights
6. State as a Subject of International Law – Elements, Current Issues
7. Individual as a Subject of International Law
8. Sources of International Law – List, Characteristics
9. International Treaties – Sources of Regulation, Creation, Invalidation, Termination
10. International Custom as a Source of International Law
11. Territory of a State – Acquisition, Loss, Sovereignty
12. Law of the Sea – Sources of Regulation, Maritime Zones
13. State Responsibility – Basic Characteristics of State Responsibility, Modes of Attribution
14. State Responsibility – Forms of Reparation and Circumstances Precluding Wrongfulness
15. Individual Criminal Responsibility and History of International Criminal Law
16. The International Criminal Court
17. International Peace and Security – System of Chapter VII of the UN Charter
18. Self-defence under the UN Charter and Customary International Law
19. Law of War (Ius in Bello), Humanitarian Law – Sources, System, Principles
20. Victims of War (Geneva Law) – List, Sources of Protection, Definition of an Armed Conflict
21. Universal System of Human Rights Protection
22. Council of Europe System of Human Rights Protection
23. Case-law and Jurisprudence of Human Rights Protecting Bodies – ECtHR, HRC etc.
24. Admissibility Requirements of Individual Complaints to the European Court of Human Rights