6.1 Theories of Global Politics

EDEXCEL 9PL0 · about 60 minutes

Total Marks

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / _____

Answer all 12 questions. Allow 60 minutes. This topic practice pack is not a complete examination paper.

1 State two realist assumptions about the role and priorities of states in global politics.

(Total for Question 1 is 2 marks)

2 Explain why international anarchy does not mean that all states are continually at war.

(Total for Question 2 is 3 marks)

3 Explain two features of complex interdependence that challenge a purely military account of relations between states.

(Total for Question 3 is 4 marks)

4 Explain how society-of-states arguments reconcile international anarchy with some international order.

(Total for Question 4 is 4 marks)

5 The Paris climate agreement was reached in 2015. Explain how a liberal could use this dated development to support the possibility of cooperation, and identify one limit to that inference.

(Total for Question 5 is 5 marks)

6 Analyse the differences between realism and liberalism in explaining why states sometimes cooperate despite international anarchy. Use dated developments since 2000 and make a synoptic connection to core political ideas studied in Component 1.

(Total for Question 6 is 12 marks)

7 Evaluate the extent to which realism provides a more convincing explanation than liberalism of conflict and cooperation in global politics since 2000. Use dated evidence and consider society-of-states arguments in reaching your judgement.

(Total for Question 7 is 30 marks)

Mark scheme · 6.1 Theories of Global Politics

Question 1

Identifies any one accurate realist assumption about states: for example, states are principal actors, prioritise survival or security, pursue power or national interests, rely on self-help, or attend to relative gains. No particular example is compulsory. **B1**

Identifies a second distinct accurate realist assumption about states from these examples or another valid assumption; award independently of the first choice. Do not credit a restatement twice. **B1**

Answer: States are the principal actors; survival and security are central priorities.

Question 2

Defines anarchy as absence of overarching authority. **B1**

Identifies a reason for peace, such as mutual benefit, diplomacy, deterrence or shared rules. **B1**

Connects that mechanism to restraint despite the absence of world government. **B1**

Answer: There is no supreme authority, but states can still follow rules and cooperate when interests overlap. Anarchy permits war without making every relationship continuously violent.

Question 3

Identifies any one valid feature of complex interdependence: for example, multiple channels linking societies, no fixed hierarchy placing military security above other issues, or the limited usefulness of military force in many relations between interdependent states. No particular feature is compulsory. **B1**

Explains how the first feature challenges a purely military account: for example, non-state links complicate exclusive state control, economic or environmental priorities can rival security, or force cannot resolve many shared problems. Accept any accurate development of the chosen feature. **B1**

Identifies a second distinct valid feature of complex interdependence from these examples or another valid feature; award independently of the first choice. Do not credit a restatement twice. **B1**

Explains how the second feature challenges a purely military account. Award each feature and its explanation independently, up to two marks per feature. An explained absence of an issue hierarchy and explained limits to military force can earn all four marks without mentioning multiple channels. **B1**

Answer: Multiple channels connect governments, firms and societies, so states do not control every interaction. Economic and environmental links create mutual costs, so military power alone cannot secure all important objectives.

Question 4

Recognises absence of overarching authority. **B1**

Identifies shared rules, norms or informal understandings among states. **B1**

Explains how shared rules can sustain order, for example through reciprocity, trust, diplomacy, international law or recognition of sovereignty; accept another accurate mechanism. **B1**

Explains that this produces some order without creating a world government; compliance need not be universal. **B1**

Answer: States lack a common superior but recognise shared rules and norms. Reciprocity and expectations of continued relations can sustain cooperation. Rules can be breached because international society does not remove sovereignty.

Question 5

Identifies the 2015 agreement as a negotiated cooperative response. **B1**

Links climate cooperation to shared interests or mutual gains. **B1**

Identifies a liberal mechanism, such as negotiation, information exchange, repeated contact, reasoned recognition of a common problem or interdependence; an institutional explanation is not compulsory. **B1**

Explains how the mechanism can facilitate coordination despite anarchy. **B1**

Distinguishes reaching agreement from delivering its goals; accept another relevant limit. **B1**

Answer: Paris in 2015 shows states negotiating a shared response to a common environmental problem. Institutions allow repeated contact and agreed expectations, helping coordinate action. Agreement does not by itself demonstrate effective implementation or the disappearance of conflicting interests.

Question 6

Level 0 No rewardable material. **0**

Level 1 Superficial knowledge with limited comparative analysis and weak links between concepts. **1-3**

Level 2 Some accurate knowledge and emerging comparison; some relevant links to core political ideas. **4-6**

Level 3 Mostly accurate knowledge supports focused comparison and logical reasoning; relevant synoptic connections where made. **7-9**

Level 4 Accurate, carefully selected knowledge supports consistent comparison with coherent reasoning and cohesive Component 1 synoptic connections. **10-12**

Indicative content:

- AO1: 6 marks; AO2: 6 marks. Best-fit levels, not a checklist. If only one named theory is discussed, maximum Level 1 (3); without a synoptic connection, maximum Level 3 (9). No AO3 judgement is required.
- Realists emphasise states, power, uncertain intentions and self-help. Cooperation is possible but may be conditional on security interests and concerns about relative gains. Liberals emphasise mutual gains, institutions and complex interdependence, which can make cooperation durable.
- Paris in 2015 can illustrate liberal institutional cooperation over shared interests. A realist can interpret the same agreement as voluntary coordination compatible with state interests. Explain the different causal mechanisms rather than assigning each event exclusively to one theory.
- Ukraine in 2022 illustrates the persistence of force and the limits of institutional restraint. Liberals need not deny war: institutions can reduce risk without guaranteeing peace. A security dilemma is a possible mechanism, not a verified account of motives in this case.
- Component 1 synoptic connection: core liberalism's emphasis on reason and the possibility of cooperation helps explain international liberal optimism. The conservative emphasis on human imperfection offers an analogy for realist caution about unchecked self-interest. Domestic ideologies and international theories are not identical; the link must explain the comparison.
- Society-of-states arguments can qualify the opposition: shared rules and reciprocity create order while overarching authority remains absent. Credit other accurate, developed comparisons and dated evidence; do not require agreement with a preferred interpretation.

Question 7

Level 0 No rewardable material. **0**

Level 1 Basic knowledge with limited analysis; assertions or an unsupported judgement. **1-6**

Level 2 Some accurate knowledge and emerging analysis; limited evaluation and a partly supported conclusion. **7-12**

Level 3 Mostly accurate knowledge and focused analysis of competing arguments; some substantiated evaluation and a reasoned conclusion. **13-18**

Level 4 Accurate, relevant knowledge with developed comparative analysis; sustained evaluation and a well-supported judgement. **19-24**

Level 5 Precise, well-selected knowledge and coherent comparative analysis; sustained weighing of rival explanations leads to a fully justified judgement. **25-30**

Indicative content:

- AO1: 10 marks; AO2: 10 marks; AO3: 10 marks. Use best-fit levels. Indicative content is not exhaustive and no particular conclusion is required.
- Realist case: Ukraine in 2022 demonstrates the continuing use of military force by states. Lack of a supreme enforcing authority makes reliance on institutional protection hazardous. Distinguish evidence of war from proof that war is inevitable in every relationship.
- Liberal response: Paris in 2015 demonstrates negotiated cooperation over a shared problem. Institutions can lower barriers to coordination and repeated interaction can support trust. Agreement alone cannot establish implementation success.
- Realist qualification: Paris may reflect converging interests rather than institutions overcoming state power; cooperation is compatible with realism. Liberal qualification: a theory that predicts reduced risk rather than universal peace is not disproved by a single war.
- Society-of-states arguments explain how common rules, reciprocity and diplomacy can coexist with anarchy. Ukraine exposes the limits of rules, but a violation does not establish that rules never influence behaviour.
- Complex interdependence makes economic and environmental issues significant alongside military security. Mutual costs can encourage restraint but do not guarantee it; compare explanatory reach across policy areas.
- Weigh criteria such as capacity to explain conflict, sustained cooperation and variation across issues. The limited case set cannot by itself establish a universal causal claim. Credit other accurate dated developments since 2000.
- A defensible conclusion can favour realism for security, liberalism for institutional cooperation, society-of-states arguments for coexistence, or one theory overall. Award equally for opposing defensible interpretations when supported by accurate evidence, analysis and reasoned evaluation.