

(For Roll numbers starting with 18)
THE ENGLISH AND FOREIGN LANGUAGES UNIVERSITY
HYDERABAD 500 007



SCHOOL OF DISTANCE EDUCATION
M.A. English
COURSE III BRITISH LITERATURE — I

(This set of assignments is printed on 6 pages.)

Instructions

- Answers should be suitably and adequately illustrated with references to the texts discussed in the Units.
- Answers lifted verbatim from the course material, the internet, or other sources will be awarded poor grades. You may refer to these sources, but you must acknowledge them in your assignments.
- Proof-read your answers for spelling and grammatical errors before submitting them.
- The word limit suggested for each question is meant only to guide you. Try not to *greatly exceed* or *fall greatly below* the word limit.
- For any queries, relating to this course and its assignments, please write to: lavanya@efluniversity.ac.in (Dr. K. Lavanya).

Assignment 1 (Based on Block I)

- I. In Unit 1 of this Block, you learned that the English court during the Renaissance was the arena not only of political decision-making but also of literary activity. Explain, with suitable examples, how the English court influenced the creation and reception of poetry during this age. (about 500 words)
- II. Given below is Sonnet 13 from Philip Sidney's *Astrophel and Stella*. Analyze it in terms of what you have learned about the Elizabethan sonnet (structure, themes and conventions), in Unit 2 of this Block. (500 -750 words)

Phoebus was judge between Jove, Mars, and Love,
Of those three gods whose arms the fairest were
Jove's golden shield did eagles sable bear,
Whose talons held young Ganymede above:
But in vert field Mars bore a golden spear,
Which through a bleeding heart his point did shove.
Each had his crest; Mars carried Venus' glove,
Jove on his helm the thunder-bolt did rear.
Cupid then smiles: see! on his crest there lies
Stella's fair hair; her face he makes his shield,
Whose roses gules are borne in silver field.
Phoebus drew wide the curtains of the skies
To blaze these last, and sware devoutly then
The first thus match'd, were scantly gentlemen.

- III. “Love for Donne is an experience, not an ideal.” Explain and illustrate this statement with the help of **any one** of the poems of John Donne that you have studied in Unit 3 of this Block. (about 800 words)
- IV. Read the following extract from Book IX of *Paradise Lost*. Identify the speaker and the context and explain the lines. What does the extract tell you about the characterization of the speaker? (500 to 750 words)

som cursed fraud
 Of Enemie hath beguil'd thee, yet unknown,
 And mee with thee hath ruind, for with thee
 Certain my resolution is to Die;
 How can I live without thee, how forgoe
 Thy sweet Converse and Love so dearly joyn'd,
 To live again in these wilde Woods forlorn?
 Should God create another Eve, and I
 Another Rib afford, yet loss of thee
 Would never from my heart; no no, I feel
 The Link of Nature draw me: Flesh of Flesh,
 Bone of my Bone thou art, and from thy State
 Mine never shall be parted, bliss or woe

- V. In Section 5.5.4 of Unit 5 in this Block, you were given an overview of the different critical perspectives on *Paradise Lost* over the ages. In the light of this, how would *you* interpret the portrayal of the crucial climax in Book IX? (Do not simply summarize the views presented in the Section; try and present your own perspective. Or make an attempt to argue for /against any one perspective.) (750-1000 words)

Assignment 2 (Based on Block II)

- I. In Unit 1 of this Block, you learned that English drama of the Renaissance is generally considered the supreme example of the entire range of Renaissance concerns. In this context, identify and explain the chief thematic concerns of Renaissance drama. What aspects of the socio-political background of the age do these themes reflect? (Refer to Sections 1.1.2 and 1.4 in Unit 1 for this answer.) (about 500 words)
- II. The characters who people Ben Jonson's plays are usually seen as types, each representing a virtue or a vice (humour), and therefore remain more or less unchanging. Explain this statement with respect to **at least two** characters in the play *Volpone, or the Fox*. (around 800 words)
- III. In Unit 1 of this Block, Section 1.1.2.1 “The Crown and the Church”, you were given a brief introduction to the nature of Elizabethan society with respect to the monarchy and its powers. Now, examine how this institution of monarchy is reflected in Marlowe's eponymous play by analyzing the portrayal of kingship in the character of Edward II. (about 1000 words)

- IV. You have studied two revenge tragedies in this Block: *The Spanish Tragedy* and *The Duchess of Malfi*. Now, answer the following:
- What do you understand by the term 'revenge tragedy'? What are its characteristic features? Explain these features with reference to the two plays in the genre that you have studied. (about 500 words)
 - How was the theme of personal vengeance viewed by the English audience of this age? How would you account for its popularity at the time? (about 300 words)
- V. Read the following extract and identify (i) the play it is taken from, (ii) the context, (iii) the speaker, and (iv) the person referred to as 'she' What does the extract tell you about the relationship between the speaker and the 'young widow'? What aspect of the society of the time does this extract throw light on? Explain (500 -750 words)

... she's a young widow –
 I would not have her marry again (. . .)
 Do not you ask the reason: but be satisfied,
 I say I would not

Assignment 3 (Based on Block III)

- In Unit I of this Block, you were given a brief introduction to the Shakespearean genres 'romantic comedies' and 'tragedies'. Based on this, answer the following questions:
 - What characteristics of Shakespearean romantic comedies do you find in *As You Like It*? (about 300 words)
 - What characteristics of Shakespearean tragedies do you find in *Othello*? (about 300 words)
- Read the mock-wooing scenes (III ii and IV i) of *As You Like It* carefully. And then read Activity D and the Discussion that follows it in Unit 2. Now explain, with specific quotations from the scenes, how romantic love is treated with humour and irony as well as self-awareness on the part of the characters. (about 500 words)
- In the Early Modern period, the reputation of women was considered integral to the honour of their menfolk. Explain, with relevant textual references, how this is reflected in the portrayal of the two main female characters in *Othello* — Emilia and Desdemona. (500 -750 words)

- IV. Read the following extract from William Shakespeare's *Henry V* (Act V Sc ii). Identify and describe the context, and then explain what perspective on war this scene presents, relating it to the overall perception of war that the play offers.
(500-750 words)

KATHARINE

Is it possible dat I sould love de enemy of France?

KING HENRY V

No; it is not possible you should love the enemy of France, Kate: but, in loving me, you should love the friend of France; for I love France so well that I will not part with a village of it; I will have it all mine: and, Kate, when France is mine and I am yours, then yours is France and you are mine.

KATHARINE

I cannot tell vat is dat.

KING HENRY V

No, Kate? I will tell thee in French; which I am sure will hang upon my tongue like a new-married wife about her husband's neck, hardly to be shook off. Je quand sur le possession de France, et quand vous avez le possession de moi,--let me see, what then? Saint Denis be my speed!--donc votre est France et vous etes mienne. It is as easy for me, Kate, to conquer the kingdom as to speak so much more French: I shall never move thee in French, unless it be to laugh at me.

- V. Explain how *The Tempest* can be read as a "prototypical colonial narrative". Why do you think this has become the dominant reading of the play today? (1000 words)

Assignment 4 (Based on Block IV)

- I. 'The period from the Restoration to the 18th century in English literary history is characterized by the opposites of Reason and Sentiment, Mind and Feeling.' Explain.
(about 500 words)
- II. Write brief explanatory notes on **any three** of the following:
(about 300 words each)
- a) Comedy of manners
 - b) Caricature
 - c) Millamant
 - d) Neoclassicism
 - e) William Congreve
- III. Explain how Dryden satirizes the notion of 'legacy' in *MacFlecknoe*. Support your answer with adequate textual references.
(600-700 words)

- IV. Read the following extract from *The Rape of the Lock*. Identify the context and say what the extract describes. Comment on the style and the images used. (500-750 words)

And now, unveil'd, the toilet stands display'd,
Each silver vase in mystic order laid.
First, robed in white, the nymph intent adores,
With head uncover'd, the cosmetic powers.
A heav'nly image in the glass appears;
To that she bends, to that her eyes she rears.
Th' inferior priestess, at her altar's side,
Trembling begins the sacred rites of Pride.
Unnumber'd treasures ope at once, and here
The various offerings of the world appear;
From each she nicely culls with curious toil,
And decks the goddess with the glitt'ring spoil.

- V. Women are central to both *The Way of the World* and *The Country Wife*. Compare the portrayal of the primary female characters in both these plays in terms of their depiction of love, sexuality and female independence. (about 1000 words)

Assignment 5 (Based on Block V)

- I. In Unit 1 of this Block, you were given an introduction to the rise of the novel as a genre, and to the different forms of the 18th century novel. Now, answer the following:
- Explain the role played by ideology and gender in the development of the novel as a genre. (300 words)
 - Describe the features of the realist novel in terms of its readership, form and content. (300 words)
 - Explain how the gothic novel is related to the sentimental novel. (200 words)
- II. Identify the extract given below (author, text, and context) and explain the significance of the situation depicted in it. (500-750 words)

He came up to me, and took me by the Hand, and said, Whose pretty Maiden are you?—I dare say you are Pamela's Sister, you are so like her. So neat, so clean, so pretty! Why, Child, you far surpass your Sister Pamela!

I was all Confusion, and would have spoken; but he took me about the Neck; Why, said he, you are very pretty, Child; I would not be so free with your Sister, you may believe; but I must kiss you. O Sir, said I, I am Pamela, indeed I am: Indeed I am Pamela, her own self! He kissed me for all I could do; and

said, Impossible! you are a lovelier Girl by half than Pamela; and sure I may be innocently free with you, tho' I would not do her so much Favour.

- III. The 18th century in England was a time of expanding geography when travel and voyages to different parts of the world were broadening the Englishman's vision of the earth and of himself. Travel was seen as a means of self-discovery. Compare the depiction of this motif of travel and self-discovery in *Robinson Crusoe* and *Gulliver's Travels* — both novels written in the first quarter of the 18th century.
(1000 words)
- IV. In Unit 4 of this Block, we discussed Fielding's *Joseph Andrews* as a novel that departs from the picaresque tradition it belongs to. Based on this, explain how the protagonist Andrews is not just a traditional 'picaro'. Select and explain incidents from the novel which show that he is both hero and anti-hero. (700 -800 words)
- V. Write brief explanatory notes on **any three** of the following terms:
(about 250 words each)
- a) Verisimilitude
 - b) Allegory
 - c) Utopia
 - d) Epistolatory novel
 - e) Parson Adams
-