

**THE ENGLISH AND FOREIGN LANGUAGES UNIVERSITY
HYDERABAD 500 007**



**SCHOOL OF DISTANCE EDUCATION
M.A. ENGLISH – PART II**

**COURSE III: AMERICAN POETRY AND DRAMA
ASSIGNMENTS (2018 – 2019)**

(This set of assignments is printed on 3 pages.)

**Assignment I
(Based on Block I)**

- I. Write a note on the early colonial writings in America — what themes and genres do you find in this body of writing? (600—700 words)
- II. Describe how American English was fashioned into a distinct variety by the early American writers. (300— 400 words)
- III. Write short notes on the following: (300-350 words each)
 - a) The discovery of America
 - b) The American Revolution
 - c) Native American oral tradition
 - d) Knickerbocker writers

**Assignment II
(Based on Block II)**

- I. Ever since its re-evaluation by 20th century feminist critics, Anne Bradstreet's poetry has been acclaimed for its 'insightful exploration of complex personal issues'. In this context, describe how her poetry engages with the issue of the status of women as writers in Puritan, New England society. Illustrate your answer with reference to her poems that are discussed in Unit 1. (about 1000 words)
- II. Write short notes on the following: (300-350 words each)
 - a) Fireside poets
 - b) Dark Romanticism
 - c) American Transcendentalism
 - d) Ralph Waldo Emerson

- III. Identify the following extract (poet and poem) and comment on its characteristic style. (500-750 words)

Like one in danger, Cautious,
I offered him a Crumb,
And he unrolled his feathers,
And rowed him softer Home -

Than Oars divide the Ocean,
Too silver for a seam,
Or Butterflies, off Banks of Noon,
Leap, plashless as they swim.

- IV. Walt Whitman's poetry is characterized by "an organic democracy of all things". Explain this statement referring to the poems by Whitman that you have studied in Unit 2. (1000 -1500 words)

Assignment III (Based on Block III)

- I. Read William Carlos Williams' poem "Spring and All" and discuss the images used in it to describe spring. [You can read the poem online here: <https://www.poets.org/poetsorg/poem/spring-and-all-road-contagious-hospital>]. Compare the poem with any other poem(s) on spring that you may have read, and say what distinctive perspective emerges in Williams' description of spring. (1000-1500 words)
- II. Write short notes on *any three* of the following: (350 words each)
- Imagism
 - American Modernism
 - Marianne Moore
 - Confessional Poetry Movement
 - Eros Turannos
- III. Simplicity —conversational, colloquial speech that is both simple and pleasing— is the hallmark of Robert Frost's poetry. Examine this statement with reference to the two poems by Frost discussed in Unit 2. (about 1000 words)
- IV. Read the following extract and answer the questions that follow: (500-600 words)

I have always been scared of *you*,
With your Luftwaffe, your gobbledygoo.
And your neat mustache
And your Aryan eye, bright blue.
Panzer-man, panzer-man, O You——

- a) Identify the poem and the poet
 - b) Who is the speaker in the extract?
 - c) Comment on the description of the person referred to as ‘you’.
- V. How does Adrienne Rich develop the metaphor of an explorer in the poem “Diving into the Wreck”? Discuss. (700-1000 words)

**Assignment IV
(Based on Block IV)**

- I. What do you understand by the term Expressionism? What are the features of an Expressionist play? Analyze O’Neill’s *The Emperor Jones* as an Expressionist play. What aspects of the play make it suitable for the Expressionist mode of presentation? Explain. (around 1000 words)
- II. Write short notes on **any three** of the following: (300- 350 words each)
- a) Ethos
 - b) Realism
 - c) Comedy
 - d) Symbolism in *The Glass Menagerie*
 - e) Oscar and Felix
- III. Why is the play *You Can’t Take It With You* known as the quintessential American comedy? Explain with adequate references to the elements of the play— its comic elements and the ethos. (800- 1000 words)
- IV. What do you understand by the term ‘Theatre of the Absurd’? Which of the plays that you have studied in this Block belong to this genre? Why? What aspects of these plays makes them ‘Absurd’? Explain with adequate textual references to the plays. (about 1000 words)
- V. Read the following extract from Act One of Arthur Miller’s *Death of a Salesman*, and then answer the questions given below it: (500 – 750 words)

WILLY: You and Hap and I, and I’ll show you all the towns. America is full of beautiful towns and fine, upstanding people. And they know me, boys, they know me up and down New England. The finest people. And when I bring you fellas up, there’ll be open sesame for all of us, ‘cause one thing, boys: I have friends. I can park my car in any street in New England, and the cops protect it like their own. This summer, heh?

- a) Who is the speaker? Who is he speaking to? What is the context of this conversation?
 - b) What is the vision of America that this extract creates?
 - c) What important thematic aspect is suggested in the extract?
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