

(For Roll numbers starting with 19)  
THE ENGLISH AND FOREIGN LANGUAGES UNIVERSITY  
HYDERABAD 500 007



SCHOOL OF DISTANCE EDUCATION  
M.A. English Part I  
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 studied 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 write in your own words and acknowledge sources referred to 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](mailto:lavanya@efluniversity.ac.in) (Dr. K. Lavanya).

**Assignment 1 (Based on Block I)**

- I. In Unit 1 of this Block, you were given an overview of the term “Renaissance” (see Section 1.1.1 and Section 1.2). Based on this, answer the following:  
(about 500 words each)
- a) What does the term ‘Renaissance’ mean as employed in cultural history?
  - b) What is the philosophy that embodies Renaissance art and literature?
  - c) What were the effects of the Renaissance on England?
- II. What do you understand by the term ‘the Reformation’? How did the Reformation affect the social and political life of England? (700-800 words)
- III. What is a sonnet? How do the Italian and the English sonnets differ? Read the following sonnet, identify the poet and explain its formal and thematic features. (1000-1500 words)

Shall I compare thee to a summer’s day?  
Thou art more lovely and more temperate.  
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,  
And summer’s lease hath all too short a date.  
Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,  
And often is his gold complexion dimmed;  
And every fair from fair sometime declines,  
By chance, or nature’s changing course, untrimmed;

But thy eternal summer shall not fade,  
Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow'st,  
Nor shall death brag thou wand'rest in his shade,  
When in eternal lines to Time thou grow'st.  
So long as men can breathe, or eyes can see,  
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.

IV. According to Grierson, the metaphysical poet George Herbert “transferred to religious poetry the subtler analysis and record of moods which have been Donne’s great contribution to love poetry” (see Section 3.3.1, Unit 3). Explain and illustrate this statement with the help of **any one** the two poems by Herbert that you have studied in Unit 3 of this Block. (750-1000 words)

V. Write short notes on the following: (300-400 words each)

- a) Pastoral
- b) Metaphysical conceit
- c) Courtly love
- d) Epic features in *Paradise Lost*

VI. Read the following extract and then answer the questions that follow.

She gave him of that fair enticing fruit  
With liberal hand: he scrupled not to eat,  
Against his better knowledge; not deceived,  
But fondly overcome with female charm.  
Earth trembled from her entrails, as again  
In pangs; and Nature gave a second groan;  
Sky loured; and, muttering thunder, some sad drops  
Wept at completing of the mortal sin  
Original:

**Questions-**

- a) Identify the text from which these lines are taken.
- b) Who are the characters referred to as ‘she’ and ‘he’ in the extract?
- c) What is the ‘mortal sin’ referred to in the 8<sup>th</sup> line of the extract? Why is it called a sin?
- d) “and Nature gave a second groan” Why is Nature said to be emitting a second groan in this line? What is the first groan?
- e) Explain the significance of the event described in the extract.

VII. Critically examine Milton’s portrayal of the relationship between Adam and Eve as seen in Book IX, *Paradise Lost*, with adequate illustrations and references from the text. (1000 words)

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

- I. Drama is usually considered the pre-eminent literary genre of the English Renaissance/ Elizabethan period. In this connection briefly explain:  
(500 words each)
- the theatre conventions prevalent during the time;
  - popular genres and themes in Elizabethan drama; and
  - how Shakespeare changed the face of drama in England.
- II. Examine the use of animal imagery in Ben Jonson's *Volpone, or The Fox*. Can the play be read as an animal fable, a moral tale? Why or why not?  
(750—1000 words)
- III. Compare the characters of Bel-Imperia (from *The Spanish Tragedy*) and the Duchess (from *The Duchess of Malfi*) in the light of the theme of "women and agency" in the two plays.  
(1000-1500 words)
- IV. In Unit 1 of Block III, you read that the Shakespearean Age witnessed a change in the nature of the family and marriage, particularly in terms of the subordinate position of women in the family (see Section 1.1.2). Examine this aspect in the play *As You Like It*. How are families and family power structures portrayed in the play? And what is the position of women in these families? (1000-1500 words)
- V. Read the following extract, identify the play it is taken from, and explain the context. What important theme of the play does the extract reflect? Explain.
- Our revels now are ended. These our actors,  
As I foretold you, were all spirits, and  
Are melted into air, into thin air;  
And, like the baseless fabric of this vision,  
The cloud-capped towers, the gorgeous palaces,  
The solemn temples, the great globe itself,  
Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve;  
And, like this insubstantial pageant faded,  
Leave not a rack behind. We are such stuff  
As dreams are made on, and our little life  
Is rounded with a sleep.
- VI. Write short notes on the following: (400-500 words each)
- Shakespearean history plays
  - Gaveston
  - Character-based criticism
  - The Monstrous in *Othello*

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

- I. The period between the years 1660 to 1780 in English literary history has several names. What are these names and what do they tell you about this period or Age in English Literature? (700-800 words)
- II. What do you understand by the term “mock-heroic style” as used by the Augustan poets? What purpose, or effect, does this style achieve? Explain with reference to the context and theme of Pope’s *The Rape of the Lock*. (1000-1500 words)
- III. Read the following extract and answer the questions that follow:  
 No Persian carpets spread th'imperial way,  
 But scatter'd limbs of mangled poets lay:  
 From dusty shops neglected authors come,  
 Martyrs of pies, and reliques of the bum.  
 Much Heywood, Shirley, Ogleby there lay,  
 But loads of Sh----- almost chok'd the way.
  - a) Identify the text from which this extract is taken, as well as its author.
  - b) What is described in the extract? What is the context?
  - c) What kinds of images do you find in the extract? Explain their purpose.
- IV. Examine William Wycherly’s *The Country Wife* as a social commentary on men and masculinity, using three male characters from the play for illustration. (around 1000 words)
- V. Read the following extract from Act, Scene 5 (called ‘the proviso scene’) in *The Way of the World*.
  - a) Identify the characters in the scene and explain the context in which this scene occurs
  - b) Explain their conversation and comment on its significance to the theme of ‘marriage and identity’ in the play.

MILLAMANT And d'ye hear, I won't be called names after I'm married; positively I won't be called names.

MIRABELL. Names?

MILLAMANT. Ay, as wife, spouse, my dear, joy, jewel, love, sweet-heart, and the rest of that nauseous cant, in which men and their wives are so fulsomely familiar — I shall never bear that. Good Mirabell, don't let us be familiar or fond, nor kiss before folks, like my Lady Fadler and Sir Francis; nor go to Hyde Park together the first Sunday in a new chariot, to provoke eyes and whispers, and then never be seen there together again, as if we were proud of one another the first week, and ashamed of one another ever after. Let us never visit together, nor go to a play together, but let us be very strange and well-bred. Let us be as strange as if we had been married a great while, and as well-bred as if we were not married at all.

MIRABELL. Have you any more conditions to offer? Hitherto your demands are pretty reasonable.

MILLAMANT. Trifles; as liberty to pay and receive visits to and from whom I please; to write and receive letters, without interrogatories or wry faces on your part;

to wear what I please, and choose conversation with regard only to my own taste; to have no obligation upon me to converse with wits that I don't like, because they are your acquaintance, or to be intimate with fools, because they may be your relations. Come to dinner when I please, dine in my dressing- room when I'm out of humour, without giving a reason. To have my closet inviolate; to be sole empress of my tea-table, which you must never presume to approach without first asking leave. And lastly, wherever I am, you shall always knock at the door before you come in. These articles subscribed, if I continue to endure you a little longer, I may by degrees dwindle into a wife.

Assignment IV (Based on Block V)

- I. What does the portrayal of the eponymous heroine in Richardson's *Pamela* imply about the condition of women in 18<sup>th</sup> century England, and about the institutions of marriage and family? Explain with adequate references to the text.  
(around 1000 words)

- II. Read the following extract and then answer the questions that follow:

My Island was now peopled, and I thought my self very rich in Subjects; and it was a merry Reflection which I frequently made, How like a King I look'd. First of all, the whole Country was my own mere Property; so that I had an undoubted Right of Dominion. *Secondly*, My People were perfectly subjected: I was absolute Lord and Law-giver; they all owed their Lives to me, and were ready to lay down their Lives, if there had been Occasion of it, for me.

**Questions**

- a) Identify the text from which this extract is taken, and its author.
  - b) Who is the speaker in this extract? What is the 'Country' and who are the 'Subjects' that the speaker refers to in the extract?
  - c) What important theme is reflected in this extract? Explain.
- III. Discuss the form and style employed in *Joseph Andrews*. (around 1000 words)
- IV. Analyze *Gulliver's Travels* as satire and allegory. (around 1000 words)
- V. Write short notes on the following: (around 500 words each)
- a) Verisimilitude
  - b) The theme of 'travel as self-discovery' in the 18<sup>th</sup> century English novel
  - c) The picaresque novel
  - d) The novel and individualism