

(For Roll numbers starting with 20)  
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 5 pages.)

**Instructions**

- Each Assignment is based on one (or more) Block(s) of the course material, as indicated at the top of each Assignment. Please read the Block thoroughly before attempting the Assignment based on it.
- The Units in each Block are based on specific literary texts (poems or plays or novels.) You must read the text (poem or play or novel) along with the Unit.
- Answers in each Assignment 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 write in your own words and acknowledge the sources referred to in your answers.
- 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 cultural movement called the Renaissance which forms the historical background to the Elizabethan Age and is essential for an understanding of the literature of the age. Now, based on this, answer the following:
  - a) Where and when did the Renaissance begin? What were the key features of this European movement? ( 300 words)
  - b) When did the Renaissance reach England and what were the effects of the Renaissance on literature in England? (around 500 words)
  - c) Explain why the term 'Early Modern' has gained currency over the term 'Renaissance' in referring to this literary age. (300 words)

- II. Write short notes on the following: (300-400 words each)
- English Reformation
  - Pastoral
  - Edmund Spenser
  - Gender relations in the Elizabethan Age
- III. Explain the differences between the Italian and English sonnet forms. (500-700 words)
- IV. In Unit 2 of this Block you learned about the major themes and generic forms of English Renaissance poetry. Now, based on this, read the following poem and identify the poetic form it belongs to. Explain its structure and theme. (1000 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 dimm'd;  
And every fair from fair sometime declines,  
By chance or nature's changing course untrimm'd;  
But thy eternal summer shall not fade  
Nor lose possession of that fair thou owest;  
Nor shall Death brag thou wander'st in his shade,  
When in eternal lines to time thou growest:  
So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,  
So long lives this and this gives life to thee.

- V. "The tone employed in metaphysical poetry is colloquial, conversational and intensely personal." Explain this statement with adequate illustrations from the metaphysical poems that you have studied. Does this tone make metaphysical poetry in any way different from earlier Elizabethan love poetry? Explain. (1000 words)
- VI. Explain how *Paradise Lost* derives as well as departs from the classical epic tradition. (750-850 words)
- VII. Read the following extract from Book IX of *Paradise Lost*. Identify the speaker and the context and then explain the lines, commenting on their style and on the way the speaker is characterized in them. (500-750 words)

O foul descent! that I who erst contended  
With Gods to sit the highest, am now constraind  
Into a Beast, and mixt with bestial slime,  
This essence to incarnate and imbrute,  
That to the hight of Deitie aspir'd;  
But what will not Ambition and Revenge  
Descend to? who aspires must down as low

As high he soard, obnoxious first or last  
To basest things. Revenge, at first though sweet,  
Bitter ere long back on it selfrecoiles;  
Let it; I reck not, so it light well aim'd,  
Since higher I fall short, on him who next  
Provokes my envie, this new Favorite  
Of Heav'n, this Man of Clay, Son of despite,  
Whom us the more to spite his Maker rais'd  
From dust: spite then with spite is best repaid.

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

- I. In Blocks II and III you studied English Renaissance drama, considered the crowning literary achievement of the Elizabethan Age. Now, answer the following:
  1. What factors led to the growth and popularity of this literary form?  
(500 words)
  2. Discuss the important developments in the theatre and stage during the age.  
(500-700 words)
  3. What were the themes popular in English drama of the Renaissance?  
(500-700 words)
- II. Describe the Shakespearean genres and explain how they depart from the formulaic conventions of drama of the Early Modern Age. (750 words)
- III. Discuss Jonson's use of animal imagery in *Volpone, or the Fox*. On the basis of this imagery, can the play be considered an animal fable conveying a simple moral? Explain. (700-800 words)
- IV. Explain how Marlowe's *Edward II* engages with crucial issues of kingship and class. (1000 words)
- V. Read the mock-wooing scenes (Act III Scene ii and Act IV Scene i) of *As You Like It* carefully. And then read Activity D and the Discussion that follows it in Unit 2 of Block III. Now illustrate, 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 1000 words)
- VI. Identify and explain the following extract (name of the play, Act number, Scene number, speaker and context). What important theme of the play does the extract reveal? Explain. (500-700 words)

Good name in man and woman, dear my lord,  
Is the immediate jewel of their souls.  
Who steals my purse steals trash. 'Tis something, nothing:

'Twas mine, 'tis his, and has been slave to thousands.  
But he that filches from me my good name  
Robs me of that which not enriches him  
And makes me poor indeed.

Assignment III (Based on Block IV)

- I. The period between the years 1660 and 1780 is known as the Neoclassical Age as well as the Age of Enlightenment. Explain the meaning and significance of these terms. (about 300 words)
- II. Read Dryden's *MacFlecknoe*, provided for you along with the course material. Identify, cite and explain lines in the poem that contain scatological images. Why does he use such images? How do they fit in with the satirical style of the poem? (750—1000 words)
- III. Identify the following extract (author, text and context) and explain it in terms of its style and relation to the theme of the text. (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.

- IV. Write brief explanatory notes on **any three** of the following terms: (about 300-400 words each)
  - a) Satire
  - b) Mock-heroic mode
  - c) Scatological metaphors in *MacFlecknoe*
  - d) Comedy of manners
  - e) Caricature
- V. William Wycherly's *The Country Wife* is a play not just about cunning men and seduced women, but about the relationship **between men** themselves. Explain this statement with adequate illustrations from the text. (about 1000 words)

- VI. What is the ‘way of the world’ that is described in William Congreve’s play of the same title? Which of the characters seem to follow it and which ones defy it?  
(about 500 words)

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

- I. Explain how the new literacy of the 17<sup>th</sup> and the 18<sup>th</sup> centuries influenced the rise of the English novel. (about 500 words)
- I. Identify the extract given below (author, text, and context) and explain the significance of the situation depicted in it. (700 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.

- II. The realist novels of Defoe, Fielding and Swift offer specificity in descriptions of setting, dialogue, places, atmosphere and incidents. The term used for such description is ‘verisimilitude’ —a startling similarity to life as we see and experience it. Describe, with appropriate quotations two instances of such verisimilitude in *Robinson Crusoe*. (about 1000 words, excluding quotations)
- III. Explain how Fielding inverts stereotypes about women, femininity and feminine innocence in *Joseph Andrews*. Your answer must be supported with relevant illustrations from the text. (about 1000 words)
- IV. What do you understand by the term ‘utopia’? Critically analyze how Swift portrays the idea of ‘utopia’ in *Gulliver’s Travels*. (about 1000 words)

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