

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 4 pages.)

Instructions:

1. Each Assignment is based on one Block of the course material; so read the Block, and the texts discussed in it, before attempting the Assignments for that Block.
2. Answers should be suitably and adequately illustrated with references to the texts discussed in the Blocks.
3. Answers copied verbatim from the course material, the internet, or other sources, will be awarded poor grades.
4. Acknowledge any sources that you refer to, either by citing them within your answers, or by listing them at the end.
5. Please write to the Instructor for this course if you have any queries: lavanya@efluniversity.ac.in

Assignment 1 (Based on Block I)

Attempt all of the following questions.

- I. In Unit I of this Block, you read about two important movements that marked the beginning of the Modern era in European history —Renaissance and Reformation. Now, explain how these two movements developed and were manifested in England. In other words, what were the features of the English Renaissance and the English Reformation? Also mention some significant literary figures and works associated with these movements in England. **(around 1000 words)**
- II. Read Andrew Marvell’s poem “To his Coy Mistress”, provided in the appendix at the end of this Block, and comment on the use of hyperbole in the poem. **(500-750 words)**
- III. ‘The central theme of love in Shakespeare’s sonnets is depicted in varying shades and moods.’ Explain this statement illustrating your answer with reference to at least two or three of his sonnets that bring out the contrasting moods. **(around 1000 words)**
- IV. Explain how *Paradise Lost* derives as well as departs from the classical epic tradition. **(500-750 words)**

- V. Read the following extract from Book IX of *Paradise Lost* and comment on the description of Eve it provides, paying particular attention to the style and the comparisons. **(500-750 words)**

Thus saying, from her Husbands hand her hand [385]
Soft she withdrew, and like a Wood-Nymph light
Oread or Dryad, or of Delia's Traine,
Betook her to the Groves, but Delia's self
In gate surpass'd and Goddess-like deport,
Though not as shee with Bow and Quiver armd, [390]
But with such Gardning Tools as Art yet rude,
Guiltless of fire had formd, or Angels brought.
To Pales, or Pomona, thus adornd,
Likeliest she seemd, Pomona when she fled
Vertumnus, or to Ceres in her Prime, [395]
Yet Virgin of Proserpina from Jove.

Assignment 2 (Based on Block II)

Attempt all of the following questions.

- I. What were the main reasons for the outpouring or burst of literary activity during the English Renaissance? Explain. **(500-750 words)**
- II. Explain how the themes of greed and deception are reinforced in the play *Volpone* through the use of theatrical illusions (plays within the play). **(around 1000 words)**
- III. In Unit 3 of this Block, you learned that homosexuality, kingship and nobility, and love and suffering are the central themes of Marlowe's play *Edward II*. Now, based on your own reading of the play, say what *you* think is the reason for the cruel death meted out to Edward II at the end. Is it his homosexual leanings, or his failure as a king? Support your answer with references to the play. **(around 1000 words)**
- IV. Examine the portrayal of the character of Bel-Imperia in *The Spanish Tragedy* in the light of the status of women in Elizabethan England. **(around 1000 words)**
- V. Read Act I, Scene I of the play *The Duchess of Malfi* paying close attention to the conversations between Cariola and the Duchess on the one hand, and between the Duchess and Antonio on the other. What do these conversations tell you about the social relationships of the Duchess with Antonio and Cariola? What is the thematic significance of these relationships? **(500-750 words)**

Assignment 3 (Based on Block III)

Attempt all of the following questions.

- I. In what ways did the age of Shakespeare change the face of drama in England? Explain. **(500-750 words)**

- II. In Unit 1 of this Block, 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. 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? Explain with adequate illustrations from the play.
(around 1500 words)
- III. In the discussion on *Othello* in Unit 2 of this Block, you read about the “bestial rhetoric of Iago” and the “stately grandeur of Othello’s speech” (Section 3.4.1.2). Now read the text of the play and choose one sample each of Iago’s and Othello’s speech to illustrate this contrast in speech styles. You must provide the entire speech, give its location in the play, and also explain it.
(around 1500 words)
- IV. In Unit 1 of this Block you read that Shakespeare’s history plays create and reinforce a sense of English identity. Explain how this identity is developed and portrayed in the history play that you have read in the Block, i.e., *Henry V*. (around 1000 words)
- V. Read the following extract, identify the play it is taken from, and explain the context. Also explain the extract in terms of the important theme that it highlights.
(500-750 words)

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.

Assignment 4 (Based on Block IV)

Attempt all of the following questions.

- I. What do you understand by the term ‘Restoration’? Which is the most well-known literary genre of the Restoration? And what are the significant features of this genre?
(500-750 words)
- II. Describe and explain the images that Dryden uses to satirize Shadwell in *Mac Flecknoe*.
(around 1000 words)
- III. What do you understand by the term ‘satire’? To what purposes did Augustan poets like Pope and Dryden use satire? Illustrate your answer with examples from their poems that you have studied.
(around 1500 words)
- IV. Compare and contrast *The Country Wife* and *The Way of the World* as examples of the genre of “comedy of manners”.
(around 1500 words)

Assignment 5 (Based on Block V)

Attempt all of the following questions.

- I. Explain how the novel differs from the romance, the allegory and the epic.
(500-750 words)
- II. Comment on the form and style of Richardson's novel *Pamela*. (around 1000 words)
- III. Unit 3 of this Block provides a discussion of *Robinson Crusoe* in terms of three themes — Politics, Religion, and Individualism. Which of these do you find the most convincing and why?
(around 1000 words)
- IV. What aspects of English society does *Joseph Andrews* satirize? Explain.
(around 1000 words)
- V. How does Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* function as an allegory? Explain.
(around 1000 words)

* * * * *