

THE ENGLISH AND FOREIGN LANGUAGES UNIVERSITY  
HYDERABAD 500 007



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

COURSE II: LITERARY CRITICISM AND THEORY  
ASSIGNMENTS 2020

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

**Instructions**

- Each Assignment is based on one of the Blocks of the course material, as indicated at the top of the Assignments. Please read the Block thoroughly before attempting the Assignment based on it.
- Answers in each Assignment should be suitably and adequately illustrated with references to the texts discussed in the Blocks.
- 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 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 to adhere to it.
- For any queries, please write to the Course Instructor: [lavanya@efluniversity.ac.in](mailto:lavanya@efluniversity.ac.in) (Dr. K. Lavanya).

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

- I. Read Parts I to IV of Aristotle's *Poetics* and explain his views on the nature and purpose of poetry. Compare his views to that of Plato.  
(You can read the text online here: <http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/poetics.mb.txt>)  
(1500 words)
- II. Discuss Alexander Pope's *Essay on Criticism* as a manifesto for the Augustan Age, reflecting its literary tastes. (The text is available online here: <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/articles/69379/an-essay-on-criticism>) (1000 words)
- III. Write short notes on the following: (500 words each)
  - a. "Ut pictura poesis"
  - b. The English literary Renaissance and the sense of Englishness
  - c. Aphra Behn

- IV. 'Morality is the most important theme that dominates Dr. Johnson's writing in its entirety.' Explain this statement with illustrations and references from his critical works that you have studied in this Block. (800 - 1000 words)

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

- I. Explain and then comment on Wordsworth's definition of poetry as "the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings [which] takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquility." What is *your* view regarding the nature of poetry? (750-1000 words)
- II. Write short notes on the following: (500 words each)
- a. Fancy and Imagination
  - b. Coleridge's idea of the Sublime
  - c. The role of the poet according to Shelley
- III. Identify the author and the text from which the following extract is taken. What observation about women does this extract make? Explain. (500 words)

Pleasure is the business of woman's life, according to the present modification of society, and while it continues to be so, little can be expected from such weak beings. Inheriting, in a lineal descent from the first fair defect in nature, the sovereignty of beauty, they have, to maintain their power, resigned the natural rights, which the exercise of reason might have procured them, and chosen rather to be short-lived queens than labour to obtain the sober pleasures that arise from equality. Exalted by their inferiority (this sounds like a contradiction) they constantly demand homage as women, though experience should teach them that the men who pride themselves upon paying this arbitrary insolent respect to the sex, with the most scrupulous exactness, are most inclined to tyrannize over, and despise, the very weakness they cherish.

- IV. Why, according to Charles Lamb, are Shakespearean tragedies not 'actable' or 'stageable'? Do you agree? Give reasons for your answer. (1000 words)

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

- I. Write short notes on the following: (500 words each)
- a. "Poetry for Poetry's Sake"
  - b. I A Richards' four kinds of meaning
  - c. Close reading

II. Read the following extract and answer the questions given below:

“This character is so noble, Othello’s feelings and actions follow so inevitably from it and from the forces brought to bear upon it, and his sufferings are so heart-rending, that he stirs, I believe, in most readers a passion of mingled love and pity which they feel for no other hero in Shakespeare, and to which not even Mr. Swinburne can do more than justice.”

- a. Identify the extract — the text and the author— and explain it. (500 words)
- b. Explain the critical approach that this text represents. What are its shortcomings? (1000 words)

III. Critically examine Eliot’s notion of ‘Tradition’. How is it related to the notion of ‘individual talent’? Would you characterize Eliot’s stance as ‘anti-Romantic’? Explain. (1500 words)

IV. Describe the major influences on Cleanth Brooks as a critic. How did Brooks’ contribution to literary criticism revolutionize classroom teaching of literary texts? Explain. (1000 words)

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

I. What are the salient features of Marxist criticism? How does it signal a break from the Formalist notions of art? (1000 words)

II. What is the fundamental difference between a Formalist understanding of a text and a Historicist reading of it? Discuss with reference to at least one major New Historicist critic that you have studied in this course. (1000 words)

III. How did Derrida contribute to the breaking up of Eurocentric notions? Explain. (1000 words)

IV. Do you think Feminism and Postcolonialism are distinctly related in their claim to the rights of marginalized groups? Discuss with reference to one Feminist and one Postcolonial critic. (1500 words)

V. Has Postcolonial criticism offered us a path of liberation from Eurocentric ideas? Discuss. (1000 words)

VI. Write short notes on the following: (500 words each)

- a. Cultural Materialism
- b. Differance
- c. Feminist criticism

