

**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 2021**

Instructions

- Each of the 4 Assignments for this course is based on one Block of the course material, as indicated at the top of each Assignment. 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 assignments for spelling and grammatical errors before submission.
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**Assignment I
(Based on Block I)**

- I. Read Longinus' essay *On the Sublime* and explain what it says about (i) the definition of the sublime, (ii) stylistic vices that are opposed to the sublime, and (iii) the sources of the sublime. (The essay is available online here: <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/17957/17957-h/17957-h.htm>)
(around 1000 words)
- II. Explain Sir Philip Sidney's views on poetry, its purpose, and its effects as described in his *Defence of Poesie* (available online here: <http://www.bartleby.com/27/1.html>) and say how his views reflect the spirit of the English Renaissance.
(around 1000 words)
- III. Neoclassical criticism is a method of evaluating a literary work. Explain this statement with reference to the works by Pope and Dryden that you have studied in this Block.
- IV. Write short notes on: (around 500 words each)
 - a) Plato's views on poetry
 - b) *ut pictura poesis*
 - c) John Dryden as a critic
 - d) *The Lives of the Poets*

Assignment II
(Based on Block II)

- I. Explain how the works of the Romantic poet-critics Wordsworth and Coleridge created a manifesto for the poetry of their age and also radically criticized the views of their predecessors in the Neoclassical age. Support your answer with references to the works of Wordsworth and Coleridge that you have studied in Unit 1 of this Block. (around 1000 words)
- II. Identify the author and the text from which the following extract is taken. Explain the observations about women that the extract makes and relate it to the overall argument of the text. (750 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.”

- III. Evaluate Mathew Arnold's touchstone method as a means of providing a real estimate of great poetry. What are its aims and shortcomings? (750 words)
- IV. Write short notes on: (around 500 words each)
- a) The effects of poetry according to Shelley
 - b) Lamb's criticism of Shakespearean tragedy
 - c) The relation between the creative faculty and criticism according to Arnold

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

- I. Explain Bradley's distinction between Subject, Substance and Form in poetry.
(800 words)

- II. Read the following extract and answer the questions that follow:
"Poetry is not a turning loose of emotion, but an escape from emotion; it is not the expression of personality, but an escape from personality. But, of course, only those who have personality and emotions know what it means to want to escape from these things."
 - a) Identify the text and the author.
 - b) What are the two contrasting views of poetry that the extract refers to?
Explain. (500 words)
 - c) What is the poetic theory advanced by the text the extract belongs to?
Explain. (500 words)

- III. What are the 4 kinds of meaning and their functions according to I.A. Richards?
How does he elucidate the process of meaning production in literary utterances?
(700- 800 words)

- IV. Attempt a Brooksonian analysis of any poem of your choice to demonstrate the principle of paradox as a means of interpreting the poem. (around 1000 words)

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

- I. Which of the theories you have studied in this Block is based on the economic foundation of human activity? Discuss its salient features and mention some of its important theorists.
(around 800 words)

- II. "Deconstruction is a persistent practice of unravelling hierarchies (p 26, Unit 2, Block IV)". What are the 'hierarchies' that Deconstruction unravels and how does it propose to transform them? Explain.
(750-1000 words)

- III. What is the difference between a Cultural Materialist and a Bradleyan analysis of Shakespearean tragedy? Explain illustrating your answer with any Shakespearean tragedy that you have studied
(around 1000 words)

- IV. What are the issues that feminist criticism deals with in interpreting literary texts? Comment on the necessity and desirability of such an approach to literary interpretation. (1000 words)
- V. What does a postcolonial critique of a text involve? Illustrate your answer with reference to at least one postcolonial literary text that you have studied. (1000 words)
- VI. Of the various critical theories discussed in the 6 Units of this Block, which did you personally find appealing and effective for literary interpretation, and why? (700-800 words)
