

**THE ENGLISH AND FOREIGN LANGUAGES UNIVERSITY
HYDERABAD 500 007**



**SCHOOL OF DISTANCE EDUCATION
M.A. English Semester I**

COURSE IV BRITISH DRAMA

(This set of assignments is printed on 3 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. Read the plays discussed in the Units along with the Units.**
- **Answers in each assignment should be suitably and adequately illustrated with references to the plays 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 submission.**
- **The word limit suggested for each question is meant only to guide you, not an exact requirement.**
- **For any queries, relating to this course and its assignments, please write to: upenderg@efluniversity.ac.in (Dr. Upender Gundala).**

Assignment I (Based on Block I and Block II)

- I. In Blocks I and II, you learned about English Renaissance drama, considered the crowning literary achievement of the Elizabethan Age. Now, answer the following questions.
 1. What factors led to the growth and popularity of this literary form?
(500-700 words)
 2. Explain the significant developments in the theatre and stage during the Elizabethan Age.
(500 words)
 3. What were the popular themes in English drama of the Renaissance period?
(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. Elucidate 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. (around 1000 words)

IV. You have studied two revenge tragedies in Block I: *The Spanish Tragedy* and *The Duchess of Malfi*. Now, answer the following:

1. What do you understand by the term 'revenge tragedy'? What are its characteristic features? Explain with reference to the two plays in the genre that you have studied. (800-1000 words)

2. How would you account for the popularity of the theme of personal vengeance for the English audience of this age? (500 words)

3. Compare the portrayal of the two women protagonists of the two plays with regard to the theme of agency. (800-1000 words)

V. Explain how Shakespeare's *Henry V* develops and reinforces a sense of English identity. (around 1000 words)

VI. Read the following extract, identify the play (along with the Act and Scene) it is taken from, and explain the context. Also explain the extract in terms of the important theme that it highlights.

(800-1000 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 II (Based on Block III)

- I. Describe the main features of Restoration drama. (500 - 700 words)
- II. What changes in thinking and learning occurred during the Age of Reason? Elucidate (500 -700 words words)
- III. Examine the characters of Mirabell in *The Way of the World* and Horner in *The Country Wife* to evaluate the ways in which these two characters portray the theme of immorality, popular in Restoration comedy. (around 1500 words)
- IV. Explain how Congreve's *Way of the World* functions as a satire on urban culture and morals of 18th century England. (around 1500 words)

Assignment III (Based on Block IV)

- I. Write short notes on the following: (around 500 words each)
 - i. Symbolism
 - ii. Expressionist plays
 - iii. Epic theatre
- II. Comment on the nature of the characters that you find in Absurd drama with special reference to Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* and Ionesco's *Rhinoceros*. (around 1500 words)
- III. Discuss the theme of suffering and transcendence in T. S Eliot's *Murder in the Cathedral*. (around 1000 words)
- IV. Write a note on the portrayal of anger, ennui, apathy and identity crisis in John Osborne's play *Look Back in Anger*. (around 1000 words)
- V. List and explain the features of a one-act play. (around 750 words)
