

**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 (2017– 2018)**

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

**Instructions**

- Answers should be suitably and adequately illustrated with references to the texts studied 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 acknowledge them in your assignments.
- 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) [lavanya at efluniversity dot ac dot in]

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

I. “The questions posed by the Classical masters are as relevant now as they were in the past” (Page 5, Unit 1, Block I). Do you agree with this statement? Explain your answer with reference to the ideas of Plato and Aristotle that you have studied in Unit 1 of this block. (1000 words)

II. Explain how the concepts of Individualism and Humanism contributed to the cultural ethos of the Renaissance. What was the role of translation in the Renaissance? (750 words)

III. Read the following extract and then answer the questions that follow.

A little learning is a dang'rous thing;  
Drink deep, or taste not the Pierian spring:  
There shallow draughts intoxicate the brain,  
And drinking largely sobers us again.

1. Identify the text from which the extract is taken, as well as the author.
2. What is the “little learning” referred to in the extract? Why is it described as “dangerous”? (300-350 words)
3. Comment on the form and style of the text that the extract belongs to. (300 words)

- IV. What is the contribution of Dr. Samuel Johnson to the field of English Literary Criticism? Why do you think Dr. Johnson—the man and his views—constitutes a towering presence in the history of this discipline? Explain with reference to his works that you have studied. (500 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: (300-350 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. (500 words)
- V. What according to Mathew Arnold are the fallacies that influence our evaluation of poetry? Explain. (500 words)

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

- I. Write short notes on the following: (300-350 words each)
- a. "Poetry for Poetry's Sake"
  - b. The Impersonal Theory of Art
  - 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. (300 words)  
b. Explain the critical approach that this text represents. What are its shortcomings? (400-500 words)
- III. What is T.S. Eliot’s notion of the past or tradition in art? Do you think this notion is similar to or differs from the Neoclassical view of modelling/ imitating the ancient, Classical masters? Explain. (750–1000 words)
- IV. How did Cleanth Brooks revolutionize the classroom teaching of literature? What, if any, are the drawbacks of Brooks’ method of analyzing poetry? (750–1000 words)
- V. Why were the New Critics and T.S Eliot generally regarded as anti-Romantic? Explain. (500-750 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. (750-1000 words)
- III. How did Derrida contribute to the breaking up of Eurocentric notions? Explain. (500-750 words)
- IV. Do you think Feminism and Postcolonialism are distinctly related in their claims about the rights of marginalized groups? Discuss with reference to one Feminist and one Postcolonial critic. (500-750 words)
- V. Has Postcolonial criticism offered us a path of liberation from Eurocentric ideas? Discuss. (500 words)
- VI. Write short notes on the following: (300-350 words each)
- a. Cultural Materialism
  - b. Differance
  - c. Feminist criticism