

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



***SCHOOL OF DISTANCE EDUCATION***

**POST-GRADUATE CERTIFICATE IN THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH**

**INTERPRETATION OF LITERATURE**

**ASSIGNMENTS (2016--2017)**

**(This set of assignment consists of 8 printed pages.)**

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

- I. In Unit 1 of this Block, you read about different definitions of literature as well as the features that make a work ‘literary’. Now, based on this, attempt a definition of literature *in your own words* (do not simply repeat what is in the Unit). What features would look you for in a text to describe it as ‘literary’? Explain your answer. (500 words)**
- II. Based on your answer to Q I above, explain whether or not you would describe the following piece as ‘literary’, supporting your answer with adequate illustrations from the text. (750 words)**

The life cycle of our people, their customs and very existence are bound to the earth. This is more so than in any other society. When projects are designed without any link to this bond, our people suffer. This may be wrong if looked at from the point of view of civil society. But it is self-evident when we go to the newly formed colonies.

We who dug the earth and found water at will are now reduced to agitating for drinking water supplied through pipes. We created a system of life for ourselves through centuries of direct observation of the earth and Nature. We never had a problem creating a place for cultivation for ourselves, the implements, the vessels, a hut to live in and such. Though it did not conform to the needs of civil society, it was a system of life that was complete in itself. We could predict when winds would blow, when it would rain and when it would grow cold. We had the tradition of preserving food and drink for long time consumption, by watching when the leaves began to fall and when there were changes happening to Nature. All these were closely related to the forest, the earth and Nature. But civil society and parties looking for power had to cook up projects apparently for our people, but actually to fulfil the needs of civil society, siphoning off all that money and transforming our people into good-for-nothings. So they transplant us to where there is no space even to stand up straight. Without drinking water or a place to relieve themselves, the image of a group of unclean people was slowly being created. They took our girls saying they wanted to educate them, and put them into hostels where the very people responsible for them misused them for power and money. Their greedy, fear-inspiring, powerful hands forced our girls into doing wrong things. They imbibed

only the wrong aspects of civil society. The way they spoke and the way they behaved became a matter of shame and degeneration. The way they dressed invited lewd comments. Unable to study or to pass the tests in the new syllabi they lost their balance. They had to go for the cities to get their menial jobs. They became good-for-nothings by writing competitive tests and failing miserably in them. And the government ridiculed us further with figures that proved that our people were in a condition to compete with people from civil society. Certain ruling forces and power centers emerged who could stamp this society underfoot as a group of people who always failed.

- C.K. Janu

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

- I. Read the poem given below and arrive at an interpretation of it based on an analysis of its imagery, syntax and rhythm. (1000 words)**

**African Thunderstorm**

—David Rabadiri

From the west  
Clouds come hurrying with the wind  
Turning  
Sharply  
Here and there  
Like a plague of locusts  
Whirling  
Tossing up things on its tail  
Like a madman chasing nothing.  
Pregnant clouds  
Ride stately on its back  
Gathering to perch on hills  
Like dark sinister wings:  
The wind whistles by  
And trees bend to let it pass.  
In the village  
Screams of delighted children  
Toss and turn  
In the din of whirling wind,  
Women-  
Babies clinging on their backs-  
Dart about  
In and out  
Madly  
The wind whistles by  
Whilst trees bend to let it pass  
Clothes wave like tattered flags  
Flying off  
To expose their dangling breasts

As jagged, blinding flashes  
Rumble, tremble and crack  
Amidst the smell of fired smoke  
And the pelting march of the storm.

**II. The contexts in which a text is produced often influence and shape our interpretation of it. Read the following poem and identify the contextual aspects that you think are relevant to its interpretation. (750 words)**

I don't know politics but I know the names  
Of those in power, and can repeat them like  
Days of week, or names of months, beginning with Nehru.  
I am Indian, very brown, born in Malabar,  
I speak three languages, write in  
Two, dream in one.  
Don't write in English, they said, English is  
Not your mother-tongue. Why not leave  
Me alone, critics, friends, visiting cousins,  
Every one of you? Why not let me speak in  
Any language I like? The language I speak,  
Becomes mine, its distortions, its queernesses  
All mine, mine alone.  
It is half English, half Indian, funny perhaps, but it is honest,  
It is as human as I am human, don't  
You see? It voices my joys, my longings, my  
Hopes, and it is useful to me as cawing  
Is to crows or roaring to the lions, it  
Is human speech, the speech of the mind that is  
Here and not there, a mind that sees and hears and  
Is aware. Not the deaf, blind speech  
Of trees in storm or of monsoon clouds or of rain or the  
Incoherent mutterings of the blazing  
Funeral pyre. I was child, and later they  
Told me I grew, for I became tall, my limbs  
Swelled and one or two places sprouted hair.  
When I asked for love, not knowing what else to ask  
For, he drew a youth of sixteen into the  
Bedroom and closed the door, He did not beat me  
But my sad woman-body felt so beaten.  
The weight of my breasts and womb crushed me.  
I shrank Pitifully.  
Then ... I wore a shirt and my  
Brother's trousers, cut my hair short and ignored  
My womanliness. Dress in sarees, be girl  
Be wife, they said. Be embroiderer, be cook,  
Be a quarreller with servants. Fit in. Oh,  
Belong, cried the categorizers. Don't sit  
On walls or peep in through our lace-draped windows.  
Be Amy, or be Kamala. Or, better

Still, be Madhavikutty. It is time to  
Choose a name, a role. Don't play pretending games.  
Don't play at schizophrenia or be a  
Nympho. Don't cry embarrassingly loud when  
Jilted in love ... I met a man, loved him. Call  
Him not by any name, he is every man  
Who wants. a woman, just as I am every  
Woman who seeks love. In him . . . the hungry haste  
Of rivers, in me . . . the oceans' tireless  
Waiting. Who are you, I ask each and everyone,  
The answer is, it is I. Anywhere and,  
Everywhere, I see the one who calls himself I  
In this world, he is tightly packed like the  
Sword in its sheath. It is I who drink lonely  
Drinks at twelve, midnight, in hotels of strange towns,  
It is I who laugh, it is I who make love  
And then, feel shame, it is I who lie dying  
With a rattle in my throat. I am sinner,  
I am saint. I am the beloved and the  
Betrayed. I have no joys that are not yours, no  
Aches which are not yours. I too call myself I.

—**Kamala Das**

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

- I. What do you understand by the term “mode of theatrical presentation” in drama? What is its role in drama? How does it influence the interpretation of a play? Give examples.  
(500 - 750 words)
- II. What is the mode of presentation used by the playwright in each of the two plays that you have studied in this block— *Death of a Salesman* and *In the Zone*? Explain.  
(800 - 1000 words)
- III. Do you think that any other modes (s) of presentation could have been used in either of the plays? Explain your answer with specific references to the plays.  
(700 - 1000 words)

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

**Read the short story given below and analyze the following aspects of the story:**

(500-750 words each)

- a. Characterization
- b. Setting
- c. Structure
- d. Conclusion

**CAT IN THE RAIN**

**Ernest Hemingway**

There were only two Americans stopping at the hotel. They did not know any of the people they passed on the stairs on their way to and from their room. Their room was on the second floor facing the sea. It also faced the public garden and the war monument. There were big palms and green benches in the public garden. In the good weather there was always an artist with his easel. Artists liked the way the palms grew and the bright colors of the hotels facing the gardens and the sea. Italians came from a long way off to look up at the war monument. It was made of bronze and glistened in the rain. It was raining. The rain dripped from the palm trees. Water stood in pools on the gravel paths. The sea broke in a long line in the rain and slipped back down the beach to come up and break again in a long line in the rain. The motor cars were gone from the square by the war monument. Across the square in the doorway of the café a waiter stood looking out at the empty square.

The American wife stood at the window looking out. Outside right under their window a cat was crouched under one of the dripping green tables. The cat was trying to make herself so compact that she would not be dripped on.

‘I’m going down and get that kitty,’ the American wife said.

‘I’ll do it,’ her husband offered from the bed.

‘No, I’ll get it. The poor kitty out trying to keep dry under a table.’

The husband went on reading, lying propped up with the two pillows at the foot of the bed. ‘Don’t get wet,’ he said.

The wife went downstairs and the hotel owner stood up and bowed to her as she passed the office. His desk was at the far end of the office. He was an old man and very tall.

‘Il piove,’ the wife said. She liked the hotel-keeper.

‘Si, Si, Signora, brutto tempo. It is very bad weather.’

He stood behind his desk in the far end of the dim room. The wife liked him. She liked the deadly serious way he received any complaints. She liked his dignity. She liked the way he wanted to serve her. She liked the way he felt about being a hotel-keeper. She liked his old, heavy face and big hands.

Liking him she opened the door and looked out. It was raining harder. A man in a rubber cape was crossing the empty square to the café. The cat would be around to the right.

Perhaps she could go along under the eaves. As she stood in the doorway an umbrella opened behind her. It was the maid who looked after their room.

‘You must not get wet,’ she smiled, speaking Italian. Of course, the hotel-keeper had sent her.

With the maid holding the umbrella over her, she walked along the gravel path until she was under their window. The table was there, washed bright green in the rain, but the cat was gone. She was suddenly disappointed. The maid looked up at her.

‘Ha perduto qualche cosa, Signora?’

‘There was a cat,’ said the American girl.

‘A cat?’

‘Si, il gatto.’

‘A cat?’ the maid laughed. ‘A cat in the rain?’

‘Yes, –’ she said, ‘under the table.’ Then, ‘Oh, I wanted it so much. I wanted a kitty.’

When she talked English the maid’s face tightened.

‘Come, Signora,’ she said. ‘We must get back inside. You will be wet.’

‘I suppose so,’ said the American girl.

They went back along the gravel path and passed in the door. The maid stayed outside to close the umbrella. As the American girl passed the office, the padrone bowed from his desk. Something felt very small and tight inside the girl. The padrone made her feel very small and at the same time really important. She had a momentary feeling of being of supreme importance. She went on up the stairs. She opened the door of the room. George was on the bed, reading.

‘Did you get the cat?’ he asked, putting the book down.

‘It was gone.’

‘Wonder where it went to,’ he said, resting his eyes from reading.

She sat down on the bed.

‘I wanted it so much,’ she said. ‘I don’t know why I wanted it so much. I wanted that poor kitty. It isn’t any fun to be a poor kitty out in the rain.’

George was reading again.

She went over and sat in front of the mirror of the dressing table looking at herself with the hand glass. She studied her profile, first one side and then the other. Then she studied the back of her head and her neck.

‘Don’t you think it would be a good idea if I let my hair grow out?’ she asked, looking at her profile again.

George looked up and saw the back of her neck, clipped close like a boy’s.

‘I like it the way it is.’

‘I get so tired of it,’ she said. ‘I get so tired of looking like a boy.’

George shifted his position in the bed. He hadn’t looked away from her since she started to speak. ‘You look pretty darn nice,’ he said.

She laid the mirror down on the dresser and went over to the window and looked out. It was getting dark.

‘I want to pull my hair back tight and smooth and make a big knot at the back that I can feel,’ she said. ‘I want to have a kitty to sit on my lap and purr when I stroke her.’

‘Yeah?’ George said from the bed.

‘And I want to eat at a table with my own silver and I want candles. And I want it to be spring and I want to brush my hair out in front of a mirror and I want a kitty and I want some new clothes.’

‘Oh, shut up and get something to read,’ George said. He was reading again.

His wife was looking out of the window. It was quite dark now and still raining in the palm trees.

‘Anyway, I want a cat,’ she said, ‘I want a cat. I want a cat now. If I can’t have long hair or any fun, I can have a cat.’

George was not listening. He was reading his book. His wife looked out of the window where the light had come on in the square. Someone knocked at the door. ‘Avanti,’ George said. He looked up from his book. In the doorway stood the maid. She held a big tortoise-shell cat pressed tight against her and swung down against her body.

‘Excuse me,’ she said, ‘the padrone asked me to bring this for the Signora’

**Assignment V  
(Based on Block V)**

I. How many narrators do you find in *Heart of Darkness*? What roles/functions do they perform in the novel? And from whose point of view is the story narrated? What do you think Conrad achieves by having more than one narrator? Explain your answer with illustrations from the novel. (1000 words)

II. Read the following two extracts (A and B) from *Heart of Darkness* and answer the questions given below.

(A)

“Going up that river was like travelling back to the earliest beginnings of the world, when vegetation rioted on the earth and the big trees were kings. An empty stream, a great silence, an impenetrable forest.”

(B)

“The old river in its broad reach rested unruffled at the decline of day, after ages of good service done to the race that peopled its banks, spread out in the tranquil dignity of a waterway leading to the uttermost ends of the earth.”

(i) Identify and locate these extracts in the novel. Which river is referred to in each of the extracts?

(ii) Read the paragraph in which each extract is located, as well as the subsequent paragraphs in the novel, and comment on the description they provide of the river(s). What is the significance (of the river and of Conrad’s descriptions) to the overall theme(s) of the novel? Explain (700-900 words)

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