



INSTITUTE OF DISTANCE AND OPEN LEARNING

Gauhati University

HOME ASSIGNMENT

M. A. in English

(3rd Semester)

Session: 2011-2012

Guidelines For Submissions:

1. Write your essay within the given word-limit (600 words for 16 marks, 300 words for 8 marks) on clean sheets of foolscap paper, or paper of A-4 size. Write in neat and legible handwriting.
2. Your name, the semester, roll number in full, the name and number of the paper (course), and the topic (or the question) must be mentioned clearly on the cover-page of your assignment.
3. Keep a margin of at least one-and-a-half inches on all four sides of the page.
4. The last date of submission of these assignments is **31st October, 2012**.
5. Your essay must be written in the original and should not be a copy of anything commercially available.
6. If you submit a typed assignment, make sure that typing errors have been taken care of otherwise they will be regarded as your linguistic failures.

Paper XI : Fiction III – The Twentieth Century

“Forthwith a change came over the waters, and the serenity became less brilliant but more profound. 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. We looked at the venerable stream not in the vivid flush of a short day that comes and departs for ever, but in the august light of abiding memories. And indeed nothing is easier for a man who has, as the phrase goes, “followed the sea” with reverence and affection, than to evoke the great spirit of the past upon the lower reaches of the Thames. The tidal current runs to and fro in its unceasing service, crowded with memories of men and ships it had borne to the rest of home or to the battles of the sea. It had known and served all the men of whom the nation is proud, from Sir Francis Drake to Sir John Franklin, knights all, titled and untitled—the great knights-errant of the sea. It had borne all the ships whose names are like jewels flashing in the night of time, from the Golden Hind returning with her round flanks full of treasure, to be visited by the Queen's Highness and thus pass out of the gigantic tale, to the Erebus and Terror, bound on other conquests—and that never returned. It had known the ships and the men. They had sailed from Deptford, from Greenwich, from Erith—the adventurers and the settlers; kings' ships and the ships of men on 'Change; captains, admirals, the dark “interlopers” of the Eastern trade, and the commissioned “generals” of East India fleets. Hunters for gold or pursuers of fame, they all had gone out on that stream, bearing the sword, and often the torch, messengers of the might within the land, bearers of a spark from the sacred fire. What greatness had not floated on the ebb of that river into the mystery of an unknown earth! . . . The dreams of men, the seed of commonwealths, the germs of empires.

The sun set; the dusk fell on the stream, and lights began to appear along the shore. The Chapman lighthouse, a three-legged thing erect on a mud-flat, shone strongly. Lights of ships moved in the fairway—a great stir of lights going up and going down. And farther west on the upper reaches the place of the monstrous town was still marked ominously on the sky, a brooding gloom in sunshine, a lurid glare under the stars.

“And this also,” said Marlow suddenly, “has been one of the dark places of the earth.”

1. Explain the significance of Marlow’s remark . Does it provide a thematic link with the paragraphs preceding it? (4 marks)
2. Why is the historical recapitulation so important here? (4 marks)
3. How is the reader persuaded to take an heroic view of English conquests? (4 marks)
4. Attempt a postcolonial reading of the extract. (4 marks)

Paper XII : Drama II – Modern Drama

“ESTRAGON: (*giving up again*). Nothing to be done.

VLADIMIR: (*advancing with short, stiff strides, legs wide apart*). I'm beginning to come round to that opinion. All my life I've tried to put it from me, saying Vladimir, be reasonable, you haven't yet tried everything. And I resumed the struggle. (*He broods, musing on the struggle. Turning to Estragon.*) So there you are again.

ESTRAGON: Am I?

VLADIMIR: I'm glad to see you back. I thought you were gone forever.

ESTRAGON: Me too.

VLADIMIR: Together again at last! We'll have to celebrate this. But how? (*He reflects.*) Get up till I embrace you.

ESTRAGON: (*irritably*). Not now, not now.

VLADIMIR: (*hurt, coldly*). May one inquire where His Highness spent the night?

ESTRAGON: In a ditch.”

- 1) Comment on the language. (4 marks)
- 2) How do the lines prepare us for the rest of the play? (4 marks)
- 3) Explain the significance of “Nothing to be done.” (4 marks)
- 4) Relate this extract to the central ideas of Absurd drama. (4 marks)

Paper XIII : Theory III – Twentieth Century Criticism

- 1) Explain the origins of the nomenclature ‘Russian Formalism’. (4 marks)
- 2) Are the concerns of the critics of this school purely formalist? Elucidate. (4 marks)
- 3) How does the concept of ‘defamiliarization’ help to explain the theory that the Russian Formalists uphold? (4 marks)
- 4) Briefly state the Russian Formalist conception of language. (4 marks)

Paper XIV : Poetry III – Victorian Poetry

The blessed damozel leaned out
 From the gold bar of Heaven;
 Her eyes were deeper than the depth
 Of waters stilled at even;
 She had three lilies in her hand,
 And the stars in her hair were seven.
 Her robe, ungirt from clasp to hem,
 No wrought flowers did adorn,
 But a white rose of Mary's gift,
 For service meetly worn;
 Her hair that lay along her back
 Was yellow like ripe corn.
 Herseemed she scarce had been a day
 One of God's choristers;
 The wonder was not yet quite gone
 From that still look of hers;
 Albeit, to them she left, her day
 Had counted as ten years.

- 1) Identify the lines which would lead us to consider that Rossetti’s depiction of the damozel is ironical. (4 marks)
- 2) Explain the “medievalism” in the extract given here. (4 marks)
- 3) Would you consider this poem to be typically ‘Victorian’? Give two reasons for your opinion. (4 marks)
- 4) How and why does Rossetti undercut the spiritual element in the poem? (4 marks)

Paper XV : Poetry IV – Modern Poetry

“Lifeless in appearance, sluggish
 dazed spring approaches-

They enter the new world naked,
 cold, uncertain of all
 save that they enter. All about them
 the cold, familiar wind-

Now the grass, tomorrow
 the stiff curl of wildcarrot leaf
 One by one objects are defined-
 It quickens: clarity, outline of leaf

But now the stark dignity of
 entrance-Still, the profound change
 has come upon them: rooted, they
 grip down and begin to awaken”

- 1) Explain the lines given above with reference to context. (4 marks)
- 2) Does ‘spring’ appear with conventional associations ? (4 marks)
- 3) Explain the use of : “the stark dignity of / entrance”. (4 marks)
- 4) Comment on the style of the poet with particular reference to last stanza. (4 marks)