

UNIVERSITY OF SWAZILAND
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

FIRST SEMESTER FINAL EXAMINATION

DECEMBER, 2016

COURSE CODE: ENG216 / ENG206
COURSE NAME: A STUDY OF POETRY
DURATION: TWO HOURS

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Answer **Question 1 (A or B)**, plus one other question.
2. Make sure you adhere to poetic and other conventions.
3. Make sure you proofread your work to eliminate grammatical errors which may lead to loss of marks.
4. The paper is 5 pages long, cover page included.

THIS PAPER SHOULD NOT BE OPENED UNTIL PERMISSION HAS BEEN GRANTED
BY THE INVIGILATOR

Question 1 (Compulsory)

Read the poem below and answer **either A or B**:

“Ode to a Nightingale” John Keats

My heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains
My sense, as though of hemlock I had drunk,
Or emptied some dull opiate to the drains
One minute past, and Lethe-wards had sunk:
'Tis not through envy of thy happy lot, 5
But being too happy in thine happiness –
That thou light-winged Dryad of the tress,
In some melodious plot
Of beechen green, and shadows numberless, 10
Singest of summer in full-throated ease.

O, for a draught of vintage! That hath been
Cool'd a long age in the deep-delved earth,
Tasting of Flora and the country green,
Dance, and Provencal song, and sunburnt mirth!
O for a beaker full of the warm South, 15
Full of the true, the blushful Hippocrene,
With beaded bubbles winking at the brim,
And purple-stained mouth,
That I might drink, and leave the world unseen,
And with thee fade away into the forest dim: 20

Fade away, dissolve, and quite forget
What thou among the leaves hast never known,
The weariness, the fever, and the fret
Here, where men sit and hear each other groan;
Where palsy shakes a few, sad, last gray hairs, 25
Where youth grows pale, and spectre-thin, and dies;
Where but to think is to be full of sorrow
And leaden-eyed despairs;
Where Beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes,
Or new Love pine at them beyond tomorrow. 30

...

Darkling I listen; and for many a time
 I have been half in love with easeful Death,
 Call'd him soft names in many a mused rhyme,
 To take into the air my quiet breath;
 Now more than ever seems it rich to die, 35
 To cease upon the midnight with no pain,
 While thou art pouring forth thy soul abroad
 In such an ecstasy!
 Still wouldst thou sing, and I have ears in vain –
 To thy high requiem become a sod. 40

Thou wast not born for death, immortal Bird!
 No hungry generations tread thee down;
 The voice I hear this passing night was heard
 In ancient days by emperor and clown:
 Perhaps the self-same song that found a path 45
 Through the sad heart of Ruth, when, sick for home,
 She stood in tears amid the alien corn;
 The same that oft-times hath
 Charm'd magic casements, opening on the foam
 Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn. 50

Forlorn! The very word is like a bell
 To toll me back from thee to my sole self!
 Adieu! The fancy cannot cheat so well
 As she is fam'd to do, deceiving elf.
 Adieu! Adieu! Thy plaintive anthem fades 55
 Past the near meadows, over the still stream,
 Up the hill-side; and now 'tis buried deep
 In the next valley-glades:
 Was it a vision, or a waking dream?
 Fled is that music: - Do I wake or sleep? 60

- A. With the aid of illustrations from the poem, discuss how Keats uses the Nightingale's song as a backdrop or point of departure to delve into the human condition which is seemingly different from that of the bird. [30]

OR:

- B. Write a critical appreciation of Keats' diction in relation to the poem's central theme by focusing particularly on figurative language, allusion, old English expressions, and word /phrase coinage. [30]

Question 2

Read the poem below and answer the questions that follow it:

"Hunger" Nicolas Guillen

This is hunger. An animal
all fangs and eyes.
It cannot be distracted or deceived.
It is not satisfied with one meal.
It is not content
with a lunch or a dinner.

Always threatens blood.
Roars like a lion, squeezes like a boa,
thinks like a person.

The specimen before you
was captured in India (*outskirts of Bombay*)
but it exists in a more or less savage state in many other places.

Please stand back.

- a) Briefly discuss what the poem is about (its sense) and state its theme. [8]
- b) List the figures of speech used in the poem and the senses to which they appeal and, using three examples, discuss how the figures of speech vivify the poem's meaning. [18]
- c) Is the poem conventional or free verse? [1] Support your response by citing three examples from the poem. [3]

Question 3

Read the sonnet below and answer the questions that follow it:

"A Sonnet" John Milton

When I consider how my light is spent
Ere half my days, in this dark world and wide,
And that one Talent which is death to hide
Lodged with me useless, though my Soul more bent

To serve therewith my Maker, and present
My true account, lest he returning chide,
Doth God exact day-labour, light deny'd
I fondly ask. But Patience to prevent
That murmur, soon replies, God doth not need
Either man's work or his own gifts, who best
Bear his mild yoke, they serve him best, his state
Is kingly. Thousands at his bidding speed,
And post o'er Land and Ocean without rest:
They also serve who only stand and wait.

- a) By quoting relevant words and phrases from the poem, discuss how the sonnet's rhyme scheme has impacted on choice of diction and word order in a line. [10]
- b) In one paragraph, discuss the argument presented by the sonnet. [10]
- c) Identify the sonnet's subgenre and discuss how its argument has been shaped by its (the sonnet's) internal structure. [10]
