

NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SINGAPORE
Department of English Language and Literature

Semester I: 2013/2014

EN 1101E /GEK 1000: Introduction to Literary Studies

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Time Allowed: 2 hours

INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

1. This paper contains **SIXTEEN (16)** questions and comprises **SIX (6)** printed pages. Check that your paper is complete.
2. The question paper is divided into **FOUR (4) Sections**.
3. You should **CHOOSE THREE (3) SECTIONS** and answer the required question(s), as indicated, in each chosen.
4. **Section A** requires you to comment critically on a poem. **Section B** asks you to comment critically on a passage, either from one of the plays or from one of the novels. **Section C** requires you to give short responses to specific aspects of the texts. **Section D** requires you to write a response/short essay on a more general topic.
5. Each SECTION is worth equal marks. You should therefore spend an equal amount of time (around forty minutes) on each.
6. It is unnecessary to use separate answer books for each section.
7. Avoid repeating your material in the course of the paper.
8. This is an **OPEN BOOK examination**. You can bring in printed copies of the texts, lecture notes and other materials in hard copy format.

SECTION A

Answer **ONE (1)** question from this section.

EITHER

1. Critically assess the relationship between the form of the following poem and the major *motif* of the “chase” (hunt).

Sonnet 67 from Edmund Spenser’s *Amoretti* (1595)

Like as a huntsman after weary chase,
 Seeing the game from him escap'd away,
 Sits down to rest him in some shady place,
 With panting hounds beguiled of their prey:
 So after long pursuit and vain assay,
 When I all weary had the chase forsook,
 The gentle deer return'd the self-same way,
 Thinking to quench her thirst at the next brook.
 There she beholding me with milder look,
 Sought not to fly, but fearless still did bide:
 Till I in hand her yet half trembling took,
 And with her own goodwill her firmly tied.
 Strange thing, me seem'd, to see a beast so wild,
 So goodly won, with her own will beguil'd.

OR

2. Critically assess the relationship between the movement of the following poem and the major *motif* of climbing.

Kenneth Rexroth “On What Planet” (c. 1940)

Uniformly over the whole countryside
 The warm air flows imperceptibly seaward;
 The autumn haze drifts in deep bands
 Over the pale water;
 White egrets stand in the blue marshes;
 Tamalpais, Diablo, St. Helena
 Float in the air.
 Climbing on the cliffs of Hunter’s Hill
 We look out over fifty miles of sinuous
 Interpenetration of mountains and sea.

Leading up a twisted chimney,
 Just as my eyes rise to the level
 Of a small cave, two white owls
 Fly out, silent, close to my face.
 They hover, confused in the sunlight,
 And disappear into the recesses of the cliff.

All day I have been watching a new climber,
 A young girl with ash blonde hair
 And gentle confident eyes.
 She climbs slowly, precisely,
 With unwasted grace.

While I am coiling the ropes,
 Watching the spectacular sunset,
 She turns to me and says, quietly,
 “It must be very beautiful, the sunset,
 On Saturn, with the rings and all the moons.”

Notes: Tamalpais, Diablo, St. Helena: mountains on the west coast of the US, the first two in California, the last in Washington State.
 Hunter’s Hill: presumably Hunters Hill, a boulder/canyon climbing spot near Vallejo, California

SECTION B

Answer **ONE (1)** question from this section.

3. What does this extract, from the final scene of *Volpone*, tell us about social regulation and role-playing in the play?

1 AVOCATORE

..... first the parasite: You appear
 To have been the chiefest minister, if not plotter,
 In all these lewd impostures; and now, lastly,
 Have with your impudence abused the court,
 And habit of a gentleman of Venice,
 Being a fellow of no birth or blood;
 For which our sentence is, first, thou be whipped;
 Then live perpetual prisoner in our galleys.

VOLPONE

I thank you for him.

MOSCA

Bane to thy wolfish nature!

1 AVOCATORE

Deliver him to the *Saffi*. Thou, Volpone,
By blood and rank a gentleman, canst not fall
Under like censure; but our judgment on thee
Is, that thy substance all be straight confiscate
To the hospital of the *Incurabili*:
And, since the most was gotten by imposture,
By feigning lame, gout, palsy, and such diseases,
Thou art to lie in prison, cramp'd with irons,
Till thou be'st sick, and lame indeed. Remove him.

VOLPONE

This is call'd mortifying of a Fox.

4. In the following passage we discover some things about Holly's past. Discuss possible readers' reactions to these revelations.

Hamburg Heaven was empty. Nevertheless, he took a seat right beside me at the long counter. He smelled of tobacco and sweat. He ordered a cup of coffee, but when it came he didn't touch it. Instead, he chewed on a toothpick and studied me in the wall mirror facing us.

"Excuse me," I said, speaking to him via the mirror, "but what do you want?"

The question didn't embarrass him; he seemed relieved to have had it asked. "Son," he said, "I need a friend."

He brought out a wallet. It was as worn as his leathery hands, almost falling to pieces; and so was the brittle, cracked, blurred snapshot he handed me. There were seven people in the picture, all grouped together on the sagging porch of a stark wooden house, and all children, except for the man himself, who had his arm around the waist of a plump blonde little girl with a hand shading her eyes against the sun.

"That's me," he said, pointing at himself. "That's her . . ." he tapped the plump girl. "And this one over here," he added, indicating a tow-headed beanpole, "that's her brother, Fred."

I looked at "her" again: and yes, now I can see it, an embryonic resemblance to Holly in the squinting, fat-cheeked child. At the same moment, I realized who the man must be.

"You're Holly's *father*."

He blinked, he frowned. "Her name's not Holly. She was a Lulamae Barnes. Was," he said, shifting the toothpick in his mouth, "till she married me. I'm her husband. Doc Golightly. I'm a horse doctor, animal man. Do some farming, too. Near Tulip, Texas. Son, why are you laughin'?"

It wasn't real laughter: it was nerves.

5. Critically evaluate the presentation of gender roles in the following extract from *Northanger Abbey*.

Catherine did not know her own advantages — did not know that a good-looking girl, with an affectionate heart and a very ignorant mind, cannot fail of attracting a clever young man, unless circumstances are particularly untoward. In the present instance, she confessed and lamented her want of knowledge; declared that she would give any thing in the world to be able to draw; and a lecture on the picturesque immediately followed, in which his instructions were so clear that she soon began to see beauty in every thing admired by him, and her attention was so earnest that he became perfectly satisfied of her having a great deal of natural taste. He talked of foregrounds, distances, and second distances — side-screens and perspectives — lights and shades; and Catherine was so hopeful a scholar that when they gained the top of Beechen Cliff, she voluntarily rejected the whole city of Bath as unworthy to make part of a landscape. Delighted with her progress, and fearful of wearying her with too much wisdom at once, Henry suffered the subject to decline, and by an easy transition from a piece of rocky fragment and the withered oak which he had placed near its summit, to oaks in general, to forests, the enclosure of them, waste lands, crown lands and government, he shortly found himself arrived at politics; and from politics, it was an easy step to silence.

SECTION C

Answer **TWO (2)** questions from this section.

6. Walter Lee asks his mother: “Why can’t there never be no peace in this house then?” What does this question tell us about him, and the development of *A Raisin in the Sun*?
7. What happens to a raisin in the sun and why is this important in Hansberry’s play?
8. What does Holly’s notion of the “mean reds” tell us about her?
9. What, is *Northanger Abbey*, might be the main benefit men can derive from reading novels?
10. Does Celia seem to “fit” with the other characters in *Volpone*?

SECTION D

Answer **ONE (1)** question from this section.

11. “A woman especially, if she have the misfortune of knowing any thing, should conceal it as well as she can.” Does Jane Austen take her own advice in *Northanger Abbey*?
12. Discuss the joys and fears of property ownership in ONE of the following: *A Raisin in the Sun*, *Volpone*, *Breakfast at Tiffany's*.
13. Discuss the thematic use of the visionary (which may include dreams, visions and illusions) in EITHER *A Raisin in the Sun* OR *Breakfast at Tiffany's*.
14. What, most of all, makes *Volpone* an instructive play?
15. How compelling is Austen's critique of reading in *Northanger Abbey*?
16. “Jane Austen has so written her novel that readers cannot ‘identify’ with any of the characters.” Discuss.