

ENTRANCE EXAMINATION, 2013

M.A. ENGLISH

[Field of Study Code : ENGM (215)]

Time Allowed : 3 hours

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Maximum Marks : 100

Question No. 1 is compulsory. It carries 40 marks.
Answer any other two questions, each carries 30 marks.

1. Write your critical response to the following poem by Emily Dickinson, addressing its title, form and content : www.jnuueqp.com

A Route of Evanescence

A Route of Evanescence,
With a revolving Wheel—
A Resonance of Emerald
A Rush of Cochineal—
And every Blossom on the Bush
Adjusts its tumbled Head—
The Mail from Tunis—probably,
An easy Morning's Ride—

2. Critically enumerate the relevance of classical Indian texts such as the *Natyashastra* to the study of contemporary Indian literature and culture.

Or

How relevant is the study of classical Indian theories, like the Rasa theory, to the understanding of contemporary Indian literature and culture? Answer with reference to any literary text of your choice.

3. Take up a realist novel from the 19th century and a modernist one from the early 20th century. Discuss these two texts in terms of their different approaches to the relationship between reality and fiction.

Or

Take up a novel by Jane Austen or someone else from the same period and show how such a canonical text can be studied from a post-colonial perspective.

4. Choose a literary text or any other cultural product—films, advertisements, fashion, or a sports programme—and offer a semiotic analysis of it.

Or

How relevant is 'culture studies' to the understanding and critique of the contemporary cultural world? Do you think 'culture studies', as it is practised today in our academic context, can indeed offer us possibilities of a radical rethinking of 'culture'? Discuss the basic premises of today's 'culture studies' in the history of its institutional foundations and show what form of 'culture studies' can be relevant to our contemporary Indian context.

5. What does the term 'Romantic' mean? Is it more justifiable to speak of 'Romanticisms' in the plural? Choose two poets or more who are normally referred to as 'Romantic' and show how justified it is to use the term 'Romantic' for them.

Or

How useful is it to pursue inter-textual study of literary texts? Choose more than one text of your choice and offer an inter-textual study of these texts.

6. How important, in today's world of globalization, are concepts like 'nation' and 'nationalism' to understand literary texts? Write an essay supporting your argument.

Or

What does the term 'Post-Structuralism' mean? Take a theorist/thinker/writer whom you like and discuss the basic problematic of any of his works in the light of what you understand of the term 'Post-Structuralism'. www.jnuueqp.com

Or

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ENTRANCE EXAMINATION, 2012

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001

M.A. ENGLISH

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[Field of Study Code : ENGM (215)]

Time Allowed : 3 hours

Maximum Marks : 100

Question No. 1 is compulsory. It carries 40 marks.
Answer any other two questions, each carries 30 marks.

1. Write your critical response to the following poem by Vikram Seth, addressing its title, form and content :

OAK

Last night a storm raged round the bare oak tree.
A cold, sharp rain fell; wild in pace
The ice-fed air swirled free.
Now in this place
I see
No trace
Of wind or lee,
No grass, no earth—the space
Is a clear lake, deep as my knee.
I reach its edge and view, far down, my face.
I wade out to the bench, set down my wine,
My bread and cheese, and like some sage
Of old, sit down to dine.
I do not rage
Or pine
At age,
For youth once mine.
This pool, this plate, this page,
This tree whose roots are branch and tine
Holds me in its still hourglass, its free cage.

2. How useful is the study of non-literary cultural forms—films, advertisements, television programmes, internet sites, etc.—to our understanding of the literary process? Elaborate.

Or

“Literature does not only reflect but also shapes socio-politico-economic relations.” Do you agree? Elaborate with reference to theoretical positions concerning literature that you are familiar with.

3. What does the term ‘Renaissance’ mean? Discuss, with detailed reference to any one play pertaining to the period normally referred to by this term, how justified it is to retain this label.

Or

It is no longer unusual to read Shakespeare through a postcolonial lens. Choose one Shakespeare play, offer a postcolonial reading of it, and address why such a reading is productive.

4. Choose two novels from postmodern American literature to illustrate Gloria Anzaldúa's observation that, “a minority writer ... when he or she writes, a lot of times it is with the desire, the imperative, the urge, or the need to explain, interpret and present his or her culture against the silencing, the repression, the erasure by the dominant culture” ...

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Or

Is it productive to approach the literatures of the world in terms of their ‘national’ boundaries? Write an essay arguing either in support of or against the understanding of literature as a kind of ‘national’ expression.

5. How has your study of nineteenth century English literature shaped your understanding of ‘reason’, ‘emotion’, ‘imagination’, ‘democracy’, ‘class’, ‘family’ and ‘love’? Answer with reference to the texts written by Samuel Taylor Coleridge, William Wordsworth, Charles Dickens and Thomas Hardy.

Or

Choose two Romantic poets whose work you enjoy particularly. Write an essay addressing their formal experiments with genres as varied as the ballad, the lyric, the epic, etc.

6. How relevant is the study of classical Indian theory, like the Rasa theory, to the understanding of contemporary Indian literature and culture? Answer with reference to any literary text of your choice.

Or

The field of English literary studies, one may argue, is an outmoded discipline. Write an essay examining the discipline of English studies, in a world where the centrality of English no longer obtains.

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ENTRANCE EXAMINATION, 2011

M.A. ENGLISH

1048

[Field of Study Code : ENGM (215)]

Time Allowed : 3 hours

Maximum Marks : 100

Question No. 1 is compulsory. It carries 40 marks.
Answer any two other questions, each worth 30 marks.

1. Write your critical response to the following poem, addressing its title, form and content :

PRESENCES

This night has been so strange that it seemed
As if the hair stood up on my head.
From going-down of the sun I have dreamed
The woman laughing, or timid, or wild,
In rustle of lace or silken stuff,
Climbed up my creaking stair. They had read
All I had rhymed of that monstrous thing
Returned and unrequited love.
They stood in the door and stood in between
My great wood lectern and the fire
Till I could hear their hearts beating :
One is a harlot, and one a child
That never looked upon man with desire,
And one, it may be, a queen

—W. B. Yeats

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2. Define literature, literary theory and literary criticism. Discuss the interdependence of the three with reference to the works of a major author of your choice.

Or

Is it important to foreground the ideological locations of both the author and the reader while interpreting or analyzing a literary work? Is it at all possible for a reader to transcend her or his ideological positions in the acts of reading and then writing about the authors and their works?

Answer with reference to at least two texts.

3. How would you like your postgraduate department to be named : 'Department of English', 'Department of English Studies', 'Department of Literary Studies' or 'Department of Culture Studies'? Would some of these labels overlap, or, conversely, would they mean neat demarcations in terms of selection of language(s), authors and texts, and the critical approaches to study them?

Or

Are classical authors and their texts still relevant to our contemporary situations? Choose any *two* classical authors from Homer, Plato, Aristotle, Dante, Bharata and Vyasa to substantiate your answer.

4. The novel emerged as the dominant literary form in the 18th century under the influence of social, political, economic and cultural factors that helped its growth and dissemination. The novel is still the dominant form in the 21st century. What factors do you think are keeping the novel ahead of other genres like poetry and drama? Discuss with reference to the literatures published since 1980.

Or

How has the study of Indian English, Afro-American, Canadian, African, Australian and other New Literatures influenced your understanding of the relationship between literature and national/culture/political/ethnic identity? Choose any *one* of the New Literatures to write your answer.

5. Write short notes on any *two* of the following movements in British literature :

- (a) Renaissance
- (b) Neoclassicism
- (c) Romanticism
- (d) Modernism

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ENTRANCE EXAMINATION, 2010

M.A. ENGLISH

[Field of Study Code : ENGM (215)]

Time Allowed : 3 hours

Maximum Marks : 100

Question No. 1 is compulsory. It carries 40 marks. Answer any two other questions, each worth 30 marks

1. Respond critically to the following poem, addressing its title, form and content :

AUNT JENNIFER'S TIGERS

Aunt Jennifer's tigers prance across a screen,
Bright topaz denizens of a world of green.
They do not fear the men beneath the tree;
They pace in sleek chivalric certainty.

Aunt Jennifer's finger fluttering through her wool
Find even the ivory needle hard to pull.
The massive weight of Uncle's wedding band
Sits heavily upon Aunt Jennifer's hand.

When Aunt is dead, her terrified hands will lie
Still ringed with ordeals she was mastered by.
The tigers in the panel that she made
Will go on prancing, proud and unafraid.

By Adrienne Rich

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2. Shakespeare's plays often mingle tragedy and comedy, although the two may be regarded as antagonistic to each other. Choose a Shakespearean tragedy and argue for the comic in it or a Shakespearean comedy in which you examine the tragic.

Or

It is no longer unusual to read Shakespeare through a postcolonial lens. Choose one Shakespeare play, offer a postcolonial reading of it, and address why such a reading is productive.

3. Georg Lukács wrote in 1916 that the novel, "the representative art-form of our age," is "the epic of a world that has been abandoned by God." Using at least 3 novels, argue either supporting or not this statement.

Or

Martin Green argues for twin trajectories of the novel initiated by Defoe's *Moll Flanders* and *Robinson Crusoe*. The first is concerned with domesticity and the second with the flight from it. Covering the novels of the 18th and 19th centuries in Britain, write an essay assessing the value of Green's approach for understanding the evolution of the novel.

4. As a student aspiring to a higher degree in English literature, you must have spent some time addressing the place of English studies in India. Write an essay examining what this place may be.

Or

Is it productive to approach the literatures of the world in terms of their 'national' boundaries? Write an essay arguing either in support of or against the understanding of literature as a kind of 'national' expression.

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ENTRANCE EXAMINATION, 2009

M.A. ENGLISH

[Field of Study Code : ENGM (177)]

Time Allowed : 3 hours

Maximum Marks : 100

Question No. 1 is compulsory. It carries **40** marks. Answer *any two* of the remaining questions, each worth **30** marks

1. Respond critically to the following poem, addressing its title, form and content :

ONE ART

The art of losing isn't hard to master;
so many things seem filled with the intent
to be lost that their loss is no disaster.
Lose something every day. Accept the fluster
of lost door keys, the hour badly spent.
The art of losing isn't hard to master.
Then practice losing farther, losing faster :
places, and names, and where it was you meant
to travel. None of these will bring disaster.
I lost my mother's watch. And 'look! my last, or
next-to-last, of three loved houses went.
The art of losing isn't hard to master.
I lost two cities, lovely ones. And, vaster,
some realms I owned, two rivers, a continent.
I miss them, but it wasn't a disaster.
--Even losing you (the joking voice, a gesture
I love) I shan't have lied. It's evident
the art of losing's not too hard to master
though it may look like (*Write it!*) like disaster.

By Elizabeth Bishop

2. (a) Choose one villain from a Shakespearean tragedy you know well and comment on the nature of his villainy and his uses to the plot of the play.

Or

- (b) Choose one 'hero' from a Shakespearean tragedy to examine the qualities that make him 'heroic'.

3. (a) Choose two Romantic poets whose work you enjoy particularly. Write an essay addressing their formal experiments with genres as varied as the ballad, the lyric, the epic, etc.

Or

- (b) Critics have commented on the popularity of the short lyric poem during the Romantic period. Write an essay addressing the features particular to the lyric, which could help to explain its appeal to nineteenth-century British writers.

4. (a) As a student aspiring to a higher degree in English literature, you must have spent some time addressing the place of English studies in India. Write an essay examining what this place may be.

Or

- (b) The field of English literary studies, one may argue, is an outmoded discipline. Write an essay examining the discipline of English studies, in a world where the centrality of England no longer obtains.

5. (a) What's American about American literature? www.jnuueqp.com

Or

- (b) Is it productive to approach the literatures of the world in terms of their 'national' boundaries? Write an essay arguing either in support of or against the understanding of literature as a kind of 'national' expression.

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ENTRANCE EXAMINATION, 2008

M.A. ENGLISH

Time Allowed : 3 hours

Maximum Marks : 100

All questions carry equal marks

Question No. 1 is compulsory. Answer *any three* other questions

1. Critically respond to the following poem, *The Enemies* by Elizabeth Jennings, bringing out its different strands of meaning and commenting on its title :

Last night they came across the river and
Entered the city. Women were awake
With lights and food. They entertained the band,
Not asking what the men had come to take
Or what strange tongue they spoke
Or why they came so suddenly through the land.

Now in the morning all the town is filled
With stories of the swift and dark invasion;
The women say that not one stranger told
A reason for his coming. The intrusion
Was not for devastation :
Peace is apparent still on hearth and field.

Yet all the city is a haunted place.
Man meeting man speaks cautiously. Old friends
Close up the candid looks upon their face.
There is no warmth in hands accepting hands;
Each ponders, 'Better hide myself in case
Those strangers have set up their homes in minds
I used to walk in. Better draw the blinds
Even if the strangers haunt in my own house'.

2. What does the term 'renaissance' mean? Discuss, with detailed reference to any one play pertaining to the period normally referred to by this term, how justified it is to retain this label.

Or

Comment on the merits/demerits of any Indian cinematic adaptation of any one of Shakespeare's plays that you may have seen.

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3. Who is your favourite Romantic poet, and what is so 'romantic' about him/her? Respond with illustrations from poems written by your chosen poet.

Or

"Not equal, as their sex not equal seemed" (*Paradise Lost*). How far does Milton's remark characterize the representation of women in literature before 1700?

4. "Literature does not only reflect but also shapes socio-politico-economic relations." Do you agree? Elaborate with reference to theoretical positions concerning literature that you are familiar with.

Or

Have the technologized mass cultural forms (Cinema, TV, Radio, Advertisements, Internet) enhanced or impeded the scope of literary studies? Give a reasoned answer with examples.

5. Write an essay on the best seller in Indian English fiction.

Or

What does it mean to study English literature in India? Do you learn any skill at all in this course of study? How different would it be to study literature written in an Indian language?

6. Write short notes (within 300 words) on any two of the following :

- (a) The Setting of *Waiting for Godot*
- (b) The 'West' in American Literature
- (c) Magic Realism
- (d) Literature of the Indian Diaspora
- (e) The Metaphysical Conceit

7. Do you agree with Roland Barthes' statement that, "Literature is the question minus the answer"? Substantiate your answer with reference to any one novel. Explain how the author's treatment of the question affects your understanding of the work as a whole. Avoid mere plot summary.

Or

"An understanding of the form in which a poem, narrative or play is written, is the basis of our ability to make sense of its contents." Discuss.

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ENTRANCE EXAMINATION, 2007

M.A. ENGLISH

Time Allowed : 3 hours *Maximum Marks* : 100

Question No. 1 is compulsory. Answer *any three* other questions

All questions carry equal marks

1. Critically respond to the following poem by Agha Shahid Ali :

Postcard from Kashmir
Kashmir shrinks into my mailbox;
My home a neat four by six inches.

I always loved neatness. Now I hold
the half-inch Himalayas in my hand.

This is home. And this is the closest
I'll ever be to home. When I return,
the colours won't be so brilliant,
the Jhelum's water so clean,
So ultramarine. My love
So overexposed.

And my memory will be a little
out of focus, in it
A giant negative, black
and white, still undeveloped.

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2. How useful is the study of non-literary cultural forms—films, advertisements, television programmes, internet sites, etc.—to our understanding of the literary process? Elaborate.

Or

Write a brief essay on the relationship between fiction and socio-political conditions.

3. "The crisis of identity is fundamental to postcolonial literatures." Discuss with examples from any postcolonial literature.
4. Write an essay on the impact of Darwinism on the Victorian novel.
5. Compare the impact of watching a play to reading it in class. Do you agree that watching a play, even in adaptation, is better than only reading the text? Give reasons and examples.
6. Do you agree that African-American writers have introduced new themes, issues and modes of language into American literature? Refer to any texts you have read.
7. Discuss the influence of any philosophy/philosopher on twentieth century literature. Substantiate your answer with reference to literary works.

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