

UNIVERSITY OF SWAZILAND
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES
DEPARTMENT OF AFRICAN LANGUAGES AND LITERATURE
FIRST SEMESTER EXAMINATION
DECEMBER 2015

COURSE NAME: THEMATIC STUDIES IN THE AFRICAN NOVEL AND BIOGRAPHY/AUTOBIOGRAPHY

COURSE CODE: AL 414 / IDE AL 414

TIME ALLOWED: THREE (3) HOURS

INSTRUCTIONS:

- 1. ANSWER ANY THREE (3) QUESTIONS, ONE FROM EACH SECTION. EACH QUESTION CARRIES 20 MARKS.**
- 2. EACH ANSWER SHOULD COMMENCE ON A SEPARATE SHEET.**
- 3. DO NOT REPEAT MATERIAL OR WRITE ABOUT THE SAME TEXT AT LENGTH MORE THAN ONCE.**
- 4. CANDIDATES ARE NOT ALLOWED TO BRING ANY READING MATERIAL INTO THE EXAMINATION HALL.**
- 5. IN THE ASSESSMENT OF THIS PAPER, CORRECT USAGE OF ENGLISH, THE QUALITY OF EXPRESSIONS AND THE PRESENTATION OF ANSWERS WILL BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT.**

THIS PAPER IS NOT TO BE OPENED UNTIL PERMISSION HAS BEEN GRANTED BY THE INVIGILATOR.

SECTION – A

PROSE FICTION: NOVEL

QUESTION ONE

Ama Ata Aidoo: Changes: A Love Story

“Why have we got so used to describing our cultural dynamics with the condemnatory tone of our masters’ voices? We have got marriage in Africa, Esi ... and in our marriages a man has a choice – to have one or more wives.”

The above quotation (spoken by Ali, the male protagonist in the novel) may hold good for traditional African society, but does it hold good for Esi and Ali, who are “modern Western-educated Africans”? Give your answer with relevant textual illustrations.

QUESTION TWO

Buchi Emecheta: A Slave Girl

“Denied both personal identity and self-determination, the nameless slave girl who was buried with her mistress and Ojebeta are literally and metaphorically buried alive in the patriarchal polity of their societies.” Discuss.

QUESTION THREE

Nawal el Saadawi: Woman at Point Zero

Discuss Firdaus' ability to inhabit her own story and to become the subject of her own history as an act of rebellion.

SECTION – B

PROSE FICTION: SHORT STORY

QUESTION FOUR

Nadine Gordimer: "Is there Somewhere Else Where We can Meet?"

"In the dark room of fear, one sees only the images of one's own nightmares and those images may or may not be truly embodied in some external reality". Discuss the given statement in relation to Gordimer's short story.

QUESTION FIVE

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie: "Transition to Glory"

"A cross- generational relationship creates power imbalance and personality shift between the concerned individuals." Do you agree or disagree? Give reasons with illustrations from Adichie's short story.

SECTION - C

PROSE NON-FICTION: BIOGRAPHY / AUTOBIOGRAPHY

QUESTION SIX

Buchi Emecheta: Head Above Water

“Here was I in England thinking that the African woman had really progressed, but had she? Then the voice of my Chi came and said to me, “of course she has progressed a great deal. When your mother’s bride price was paid she was happy because she was pleased to be owned. When it came to your turn, you were crying because you valued your independence.”

Discuss the relevance of bride price in African culture and show how Emecheta looks at this custom compared to her mother. Take your cue from the above quotation.

QUESTION SEVEN

Bessie Head: A Woman Alone

“I spent a whole portion of my life in a country where it was impossible for black people to dream, so I know what that’s like. I spent another portion in a country where it is possible to dream and I have combined these two different experiences in my writing.”

Substantiate the above statement with illustrations from Head’s essay, “Social and Political Pressures that Shape Writing in Southern Africa.”