

UNIVERSITY OF SWAZILAND

SUPPLEMENTARY EXAMINATION 2006

COURSE TITLE: A STUDY OF POETRY

COURSE CODE: ENG206

TIME ALLOWED: 2 HOURS

INSTRUCTIONS: 1. Answer Question One plus ONE other question.

2. Correct use of English and literary conventions will be rewarded; grammatical errors and incorrect use of conventions will be penalized.
3. This paper consists of 5 pages, cover page included.
4. Each question carries 30 marks.

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

Question One (Compulsory)

Analyse the poem below, following the steps outlined in the course:

“The Song of Sunrise” Mbuyiseni Oswald Mtshali

The sword of daybreak
snips the shroud
of the night from the sky,
and the morning
peeps through the blankets
like a baby rising
from its cot
to listen to the
peal of the bell.

Arise! Arise!
All Workers!
To work! To work!
You must go!

Buses rumble,
Trains rattle,
Taxis hoot.

I shuffle in the queue
with feet that patter
on the station platform,
and stumble into the coach
that squeezes me like a lemon
of all the juice of my life.

Question Two

Write everything you know about poetic form using ONE or TWO or ALL the poems below for illustration:

“Talking in Bed” Philip Larkin

Talking in bed ought to be easiest,
Lying together there goes back so far,
An emblem of two people being honest.

Yet more and more time passes silently.
Outside, the wind’s incomplete unrest

Builds and disperses clouds about the sky,
And dark towns heap up on the horizon.
None of this cares for us. Nothing shows why
At this unique distance from isolation

It becomes still more difficult to find
Words at once true and kind,
Or not untrue and not unkind.

“Poem for My Mother” Jennifer Davids

That isn't everything, you said
on the afternoon I brought a poem
to you hunched over the washtub
with your hands
the shrivelled
burnt granadilla
skin of your hands
covered by foam.

And my words
slid like a ball
of hard blue soap
into the tub
to be grabbed and used by you
to rub the clothes.

A poem isn't all
there is to life, you said
with your blue-ringed gaze
scanning the page
once looking over my shoulder
and back at the immediate
dirty water

and my words
being clenched
smaller and
smaller.

“Poetry” Cathal Lagan

“This whole business
Of writing poetry”, I said,

“Is like leaving a window open
For the cat”.
You pounced on this remark
And chuckled at the thought.
I said “Goodnight”,
Went to bed
And that was that.

All through the night
Darkness has rubbed about my room,
A reassuring purr of presence
Encircling my body,
And has woven a deep contentment
Of pure poem.

Question Three

Read the poem below and answer the questions that follow:

“To an Athlete Dying Young” A.E. Housman

The time you won your town the race
We chaired you through the market-place;
Man and boy stood cheering by,
And home we brought you shoulder-high.

Today, the road all runners come,
Shoulder-high we bring you home,
And set you at your threshold down,
Townsmen of a stiller town.

Smart lad, to slip betimes away
From fields where glory does not stay
And early though the laurel grows
It withers quicker than the rose.

Eyes the shady night has shut
Cannot see the record cut,
And silence sounds no worse than cheers
After earth has stopped the cheers:

Now you will not swell the rout
Of lads that wore their honours out,
Runners whom renown outran
And the name died before the man.

So set, before its echoes fade,
The fleet foot on the sill of shade,
And hold to the low lintel up
And still-defended challenge-cup.

And round that early-laurelled head
Will flock to gaze the strength-less dead,
And find un-withered on its curls
The garland briefer than a girl's.

- a) Identify the poem's sub-genre. [2]
- b) From the poem, cite and discuss three characteristics features of this subgenre to support your selection above. [12]
- c) Briefly discuss the poem's meaning, form, tone and mood. [15]

Question 4

- a) With the aid of illustrations from the poems studied on this course, justify the classification of poems into: lyrical, dramatic and narrative. [20]
- b) How rigid is this classification? Discuss with examples. [10]