

UNIVERSITY OF SWAZILAND

SUPPLEMENTARY EXAMINATION 2008/9

COURSE TITLE: A STUDY OF POETRY

COURSE CODE: ENG 206/IDE-ENG 206

TIME ALLOWED: 2 HOURS

INSTRUCTIONS: 1. This paper consists of TWO sections.

Answer ONE question from each section

2. Correct use of English and literary conventions will be rewarded; grammatical errors and incorrect use of conventions will be penalised.

3. This paper consists of 7 pages, cover page included.

4. Each question carries 30 marks.

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

Section A: Answer ONE question

Question One

Analyse the poem below, following the steps outlined on 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

Read the following poems and answer the questions below:

“Sonnet 116” William Shakespeare

Let me not to the marriage of true minds
Admit impediments. Love is not love
Which alters when it alteration finds,
Or bends with the remover to remove:
O no; it is an ever-fixed mark,
That looks on tempests, and is never shaken;
It is the star to every wandering bark,
Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken.
Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks

Within his bending sickle's compass come;
Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,
But bears it out even to the edge of doom.
If this be error, and upon me prov'd,
I never writ, nor no man ever lov'd.

“Death Be Not Proud” John Donne

Death be not proud, though some have called thee
Mighty and dreadful, for, thou art not so,
For, those, whom thou think'st, thou dost overthrow,
Die not, poor death, nor yet canst thou kill me.
From rest and sleep, which but thy pictures be,
Much pleasure, then from thee, much more must flow,
And soonest out best men with thee do go.
Rest of their bones, and soul's delivery.
Thou art slave to fate, chance, kings, and desperate men,
And dost with poison, war, and sickness dwell,
And poppy, or charms can make us sleep as well,
And better than thy stroke; why swell'st thou then?
One short sleep past, we must have eternally,
And death shall be no more; death, thou shalt die.

- a) Identify the types, structure and rhyme scheme of the two sonnets. [15]
- b) Select one sonnet and discuss the following: its sense, theme, and one aspect of imagery. [15]

Question Three

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.

Section B: Answer ONE question

Question Four

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.

Uncovered?

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 characteristic features of this sub-genre to support your selection above. [12]
- c) Briefly discuss the poem's meaning, form, tone and mood. [15]

Question Five

Basing your illustrations on the following poem, identify and discuss six characteristics of a ballad. [30]

THE KING sits in Dumferling toune,
Drinking the blude-reid wine:
"O whar will I get guid sailor,
To sail this schip of mine?"

Up and spak an eldern knicht,
Sat at the kings richt kne:
"Sir Patrick Spence is the best sailor
That sails upon the se."

The king has written a braid letter,
And signd it wi his hand,
And sent it to Sir Patrick Spence,
Was walking on the sand.

The first line that Sir Patrick red,
A loud lauch lauched he;
The next line that Sir Patrick red,
The teir blinded his ee.

"O wha is this has don this deid,
This ill died don to me,
To send me out this time o' the yeir,
To sail upon the se!

"Mak haste, mak haste, my mirry men all,
Our guid schip sails the morne:"
"O say na sae, my master deir,
For I feir a deadlie storme.

"Late late yestreen I saw the new moone,
Wi the auld moone in her arme,
And I feir, I feir, my deir master,
That we will cum to harme."

O our Scots nobles wer richt laith
To weet their cork-heild schoone;
Bot lang owre a' the play wer play'd,
Thair hats they swam aboone.

O lang, lang may their ladies sit,
Wi thair fans into their hand,

Or eir they se Sir Patrick Spence
Cum sailing to the land.

O lang, lang may the ladies stand,
Wi thair gold kems in their hair,
Waiting for thair ain deir lords,
For they'll se thame na mair.

Haf owre, half owre to Aberdour,
It's fiftie fadom deip,
And thair lies guid Sir Patrick Spence,
Wi the Scots lords at his feit.

Question Six

Read the poem below and answer the questions that follow:

"The Morning Sun Is Shining" Olive Schreiner

The morning sun is shining on
 The green, green willow tree,
And sends a golden sunbeam
 To dance upon my knee.
The fountain bubbles merrily,
 The yellow locusts spring,
Of life and light and sunshine
 The happy brown birds sing.

The earth is clothed with beauty,
 The air is filled with song,
The yellow thorn trees load the wind
 With odours sweet and strong.
There is a hand I never touch
 And a face I never see;
Now what is sunshine, what is song,
 Now what is light to me?

- a) Explain the poem's meaning or sense. [10]
- b) Discuss the use of poetic language to appeal to the different senses. [15]
- c) State the poem's theme. [5]