

UNIVERSITY OF SWAZILAND

SUPPLEMENTARY EXAMINATION 2009/10

COURSE TITLE: COMPARATIVE LITERATURE

COURSE CODE: ENG 405 / IDE-ENG 405 / E4P4

TIME ALLOWED: ENG 405 / IDE-ENG 405: 2 HOURS

E4P4: 3 HOURS

INSTRUCTIONS: 1. ENG 405 / IDE-ENG 405:

ANSWER 2 QUESTIONS, ONE FROM EACH SECTION

**2. E4P4: ANSWER THREE QUESTIONS, AT
LEAST ONE FROM EACH SECTION**

**3. DO NOT REPEAT MATERIAL OR WRITE
ABOUT THE SAME TEXT MORE THAN
ONCE**

**4. GOOD EXPRESSION AND ADHERENCE TO
LITERARY CONVENTIONS WILL COUNT**

5. ALL QUESTIONS CARRY EQUAL MARKS

**6. THIS PAPER CONSISTS OF 5 PAGES,
COVER PAGE INCLUDED.**

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

SECTION A: POETRY

Question One

- a) In not more than 1 ½ pages, discuss how the theme of girlhood is depicted in such poems as “Red Silk Stockings”, “Ruby Brown”, “The Scarlet Woman” and “Harlem Shadows”. [12]
- b) In not more than a page, discuss how the depiction of girlhood in the above poems differs from such poems as “To a Brown Girl” and “The Harlem Dancer”. [10]
- c) Discuss the indictment on America advanced through the theme of girlhood. [8]

Question Two

Read the poems below and answer the questions that follow:

“Bye Bye Overcoat” Mutiswayo Shandu

The day before yesterday Mr Straun
gives me this overcoat. Today I catch
this train to my stepmother’s, wearing it.
It is a splendid coat, fawn, almost new
- just this small gap in the seam of one sleeve.

It is past midday, the train not crowded
with mostly shoppers and half-day meisies.
Still, I am standing, strap-hanging, swaying
but I prefer it: such a cool garment
of such swaggering cut should not be creased.

Comes payday: a good hat –maybe a fine
Snap-brim fedora, perhaps from PATEL’S
is quite definitely indicated.
Stepmama has a Singer at her place...
The air around me goes into deep-freeze.

Turning I see at the far end: Main Ou
has joined us, accompanied by a pair
of tough-looking tsotsis. Over dozens
of heads his eyes meet mine. He is staring
at my new overcoat. Tixo! Such luck!

They start working the silent, sullen folks,
towards me: peering in wallets, purses,
emptying handbags; some men have to stand
to have their back-pockets patted. Main Ou

does not work or hang-on. His legs are braced.

He hardly moves with the train's rock and roll.
He taps a bicycle-spoke with a stained
wood handle, coolly, on his left thumbnail.
His two thugs work quietly and quickly:
it is nearly all money and trinkets...

But one man has already lost his fine
leather jacket. Bruce Lee, where are you now!
There are dozens of us, just three of them.
As usual, each of us is alone
against the predator, the oppressor...

For once, even the SAP would do!
When I reach stepmama's distinctive house
I am too sad to speak, and she sees it.
She serves me tea, strokes my defeated neck.
Her Singer stays, unused, under her bed.

"Painful Good Friday" Marumo Molusi

Life is a battle against the forces of evil.
In 1978 on a Good Friday,
I was bedded in a hospital ward
With pains like knives cutting into my knee:
Multiple fractures of the legs
Made me call out for help in a sea of anguish.
I was nailed in the darkness of the Golden City ...

I cried like a madman for the nurses and medical people
To help relieve the pain in my hour of need.
Pain like a dragon's teeth bit persistently, endlessly
Through the entrails of my black body.
Pain
Pain
And more pain, biting like a dragon ...

My face was drowned in waves of sweat,
No one answered my plea for help;
Why are men silent when their brothers suffer?
In that dense forest, my roar was not of power but of weakness.
Hunger and agony live in a black man's forest.
Other patients, riddled by their own maladies,
Listened and nodded.

Listened and nodded.
Pain is personal.

Yes, waves of pain commanding and controlling the
ship of my body,
Waves beating and bashing me for more days than I
could count
... Were these the same pains felt by the Son of Man?

By Jesus Christ ...?
Pain is personal ...

I rolled in the bed of endless days that came,
Into dark nights where angels fear to tread.

They told me to go home.
I was unwell,
But they told me to go.
Where ...?

I limped to the place where I stay which is not home.
A home is something else,
A home is people.

For me, there was nobody.
No friends,
Just a Native Shelter,
Just Soweto
Far away ...

Pain is indeed a lonely and personal thing.

- a) Briefly, in not more than 1 ½ pages, summarise the situations presented by the two poems. [12]
- b) State the poems' setting in time and place as well as identify and briefly discuss their themes. [12]
- c) In a paragraph briefly comment on the social commentary presented by each poem. [6]

SECTION B: PROSE

Question Three

Manchild in the Promised Land Claude Brown
Coconut Kopano Matlwa

Focusing on specific scenes and pronouncements by Sonny in Manchild and Tshepo in Coconut, comparatively discuss the treatment of the theme of identity in the two texts. [30]

Question Four

The Madonna of Excelsior Zakes Mda
In My Father's House Ernest Gaines

Select **four** characters (two per novel) from the list: Sekahle, Johannes Smit and Cornelia Cronje in The Madonna; Alma, Howard Mills and Jonathan Robillard in In My Father's House, and:

- a) In not more than a page briefly discuss their respective roles. [8]
- b) Name and discuss the themes advanced by each character. [12]
- c) Comparatively discuss the social indictment advanced through the characters' roles. [10]

Question Five

In My Father's House Ernest Gaines
A Lesson Before Dying Ernest Gaines

Focusing on specific male characters discuss how Gaines in his two novels portrays the male as a threatened 'specie' in racist America. [30]