

# UNIVERSITY OF SWAZILAND

## SUPPLEMENTARY EXAMINATION 2011/12

**COURSE TITLE: A STUDY OF POETRY**

**COURSE CODE: ENG 206/IDE-ENG 206**

**TIME ALLOWED: 2 HOURS**

**INSTRUCTIONS:** 1. Answer Question 1 and one other question – two questions in all.

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 6 pages, cover page included.

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

**Question One** (Compulsory)

Choose one poem below and analyse it following the steps outlined on the course – situation, theme, language use, tone and mood; form, etc.:

**“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.

**“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?

### Question Two

- a) Analyse the form of the sonnet below – stanza division, rhyme, and state its type.  
[15]
- b) Discuss the sonnet's meaning –sense, theme, language use, tone and mood.  
[15]

**“The Soldier”** Rupert Brooke

If I should die, think only this of me:  
 That there's some corner of a foreign field  
 That is for ever England. There shall be  
 In that rich earth a richer dust concealed;  
 A dust whom England bore, shaped, made aware,  
 Gave, once, her flowers to love, her ways to roam,  
 A body of England's, breathing English air,  
 Washed by the rivers, blest by suns of home.

And think, this heart, all evil shed away,  
 A pulse in the eternal mind, no less  
 Gives somewhere back the thoughts by England given;  
 Her sights and sounds; dreams happy as her day;  
 And laughter, learnt of friends; and gentleness,  
 In hearts at peace, under an English heaven.

### Question Three

Using the poem below for illustration, identify and discuss the characteristic features of a ballad – both form and content. [30]

**‘De Titanic’** Anon

De rich folks 'cided to take a trip

On de fines' ship dat was ever built.  
De cap'n persuaded dese peoples to think  
Dis Titanic too safe to sink.

*Chorus:* Out on dat ocean,  
De great wide ocean,  
De Titanic, out on de ocean,  
Sinkin' down!  
De ship lef' de harbour at a rapid speed,  
'Twuz carryin' everythin' dat de peoples need.  
She sailed six-hundred miles away,  
Met an icebug in her way.

De ship lef' de harbour, 'twuz runnin' fas'.  
'Twuz her fus' trip an' her las'.  
Way out on dat ocean wide  
An icebug ripped her in de side.

Up come Bill from de bottom flo'  
Said de water wuz runnin' in de boiler do'.  
Go back, Bill, an' shut yo' mouth,  
Got forty-eight pumps to keep de water out!

Jus' about den de cap'n looked aroun',  
He seed de Titanic wuz a-sinkin' down.  
He gives orders to de mens aroun':  
"Get yo' life-boats an' let 'em down!"

De mens standin' roun' like heroes brave,  
Nothin' but de wimin an' de chillum to save;  
De wimin an' de chillum a-wipin' dere eyes,  
Kissin' dere husbands an' friends goodbye.

On de fifteenth day of May nineteen-twelve,  
De ship wrecked by an icebug out in de ocean dwell.  
De people wuz thinkin' o' Jesus o' Nazaree,  
While de band played "Nearer My God to Thee!"

#### **Question Four**

Using both poems below or just one of them, discuss the poem's meaning and, next, discuss the impact of its tone on its meaning. [20] Comment on the different senses evoked in either or both poems. [10]

**"Before the Sun"** Charles Mungoshi

Intense blue morning  
promising early heat  
and later in the afternoon,  
heavy rain.

The bright chips  
fly from the sharp axe  
for some distance through the air,  
arc,  
and eternities later,  
settle down in showers  
on the dewy grass.

It is a big log:  
but when you are fourteen  
big logs  
are what you want.

The wood gives off  
a sweet nose-cleansing odour  
which (unlike sawdust)  
doesn't make one sneeze.

It sends up a thin spiral  
of smoke which later straightens  
and flutes out  
to the distant sky: a signal  
of some sort,  
or a sacrificial prayer.

The wood hisses,  
The sparks fly.  
And when the sun  
finally shows up  
in the East like some  
latecomer to a feast  
I have got two cobs of maize  
ready for it.

I tell the sun to come share  
with me the roasted maize  
and the sun just winks  
like a grown-up.

So I go ahead, taking big  
alternative bites:

one for the sun,  
one for me.  
This one for the sun,  
this one for me:  
till the cobs  
are just two little skeletons  
in the sun.

**“My Papa’s Waltz” Theodore Roethke**

The whiskey on your breath  
Could make a small boy dizzy;  
But I hung on like death:  
Such waltzing was not easy.

We romped until the pans  
Slid from the kitchen shelf;  
My mother’s countenance  
Could not unfrown itself.

The hand that held my wrist  
Was battered on one buckle;  
And every step you missed  
My right ear scraped a buckle.

You beat time on my head  
With a palm caked hard by dirt,  
Then waltzed me off to bed  
Still clinging to your shirt.

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