

**UNIVERSITY OF SWAZILAND**  
**DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE**  
**FIRST SEMESTER FINAL EXAMINATION**  
**DECEMBER, 2015**

**COURSE CODE:**      ENG405 / IDE-ENG 405  
**COURSE NAME:**     COMPARATIVE LITERATURE  
**TIME ALLOWED:**    TWO HOURS

**INSTRUCTIONS:**

1. Answer TWO questions, one from each section.
2. Make sure you proofread your work to eliminate grammatical and other errors and thus avoid losing marks.
3. This paper is 5 pages, cover page included.

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

## SECTION A: POETRY

### Question 1

Read the poem below and answer the questions that follow it:

#### **“Dignity Spills” Makhosazana Xaba**

There is a war going on, South Africa.  
Declare a state of emergency.

The war is undeclared.  
So, the other side is caught off guard, unarmed.

The war of sons on daughters,  
brothers on sisters,  
uncles on aunts,  
fathers on mothers,  
grandfathers on grandmothers.

It's a war of men on women,  
of boys on girls.

The war is undeclared,  
so statistics cannot be collected properly.  
The war is denied by its perpetrators.  
Its soldiers do not wear uniforms.  
They parade in camouflage –  
as loving grandfathers, fathers, uncles, brothers and sons.

Grandmothers, mothers, aunts, sisters and daughters  
are caught in the intricate web of the camouflage.  
The camouflage of trust,  
of belief in the goodness of human nature.  
The camouflage of love.

Only to be reminded  
that our grandfathers, fathers, uncles, brothers and sons  
are none other than soldiers of war  
with hatred in their hearts,  
planning to pounce at any moment  
to attack, destroy, maim and kill.  
The commanders behave like agents.  
They wear different masks,

saying one thing in public,  
joining the soldiers in secret.

The war zone is not demarcated  
so, the victims do not know where not to go.  
The war is everywhere –  
in private and public spaces,  
in individual and communal places,  
in sacred and unholy spaces,  
in clean and dirty places.  
It goes on relentlessly, unabated.  
Like blood, dignity spills.  
Unlike blood, dignity is unmeasured.  
Wounds gape,  
limbs break,  
souls split.  
As the war is undeclared,  
the zone is not demarcated,  
the anti-war volunteers – too few – know not where to go.

The latest victims: infants, children.  
The “ordinary” victims: girls, women.  
Even the elderly, our pensioners, do not escape.  
Rape rips lives apart.  
Incest rips lives apart.  
Violence rips lives apart.

The war is on, South Africa.  
Declare a state of emergency.  
The war zone is you.

- a) Identify the poem’s *subject* and give a 15 line summary of the *situation* it mirrors. [8]
- b) Discuss the shift in focus or thematic concerns between apartheid poetry (cite any 2 poems) and this poem and the reasons for this shift. [22]

## Question 2

Read the two poems below and answer the questions that follow them:

“**Black Warrior**” Norman Jordan (US)

At night while  
whitey sleeps

the heat of a  
thousand African fires  
burns across my chest

I hear the beat  
of a war drum  
dancing from a distant  
land  
dancing across a mighty  
water  
telling me to strike

Enchanted by this  
wild call  
I hurl a brick through  
a store front window  
and disappear.

**“To a Brown Girl” Ossie Davis**

Since I care naught for what is pale and cold,  
My heart must hunger when the snows are down  
For dearer climates, where the sun, of old,  
Taught us that love is something warm and brown.

Here, like a stranger, stranded in the north,  
I dream the scarlet dream of purple skies,  
And strain for glimpses, as I hurry forth,  
Of shy reports: rich-black, and passion-wise.

And laugh to plumb the deep-remembered flood  
of tropic heats, where winter cannot come.  
And feel within the pulses of my blood  
The white-eyed throbbings of some ancient drum.

And I can treasure this: to catch a trace,  
Still burning hot and bright beneath the chill –  
Beneath the bosom of your brown embrace  
Hot suns of Africa are burning still.

- a) Summarise the situation presented by each poem. [10]
- b) Comparatively discuss the images of Africa projected by the poems and the techniques the poets used to achieve their thematic aim. [20]

## SECTION B: PROSE AND DRAMA

### Question 3

#### Coconut Kopano Matlwa

- a) Comparatively discuss the circumstances which propel Ofilwe and Fikile to aspire to whiteness in Coconut. [20]
- b) What is Matlwa's message to the new South Africa in relation to the two characters' aspirations? [10]

### Question 4

#### Dog Eat Dog Niq Mhlongo

#### A Raisin in the Sun Lorraine Hansberry

- a) Both Dingamanzi in Dog Eat Dog and Walter Lee Jr. in A Raisin in the Sun are on a quest. Identify and discuss each character's quest and how he tries to achieve it. [20]
- b) Comparatively discuss the way(s) in which each character's quest mirrors the challenges he faces in his country. [10]

### Question 5

#### A Lesson Before Dying Ernest Gaines

#### Dog Eat Dog

Discuss the contrasting images of defeat and aggression in the portrayal of Jefferson in A Lesson Before Dying and Dingamanzi in Dog and account for the reasons behind the defeat and aggression. [30]