

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

COURSE TITLE: THEATRE ARTS

COURSE CODE: ENG 406/ IDE ENG 406

TIME ALLOWED: TWO HOURS

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Answer **TWO** questions, one from each section.
2. Each question carries 30 marks.
3. Do not repeat or write about the same text at length more than once.
4. Correct use of English and literary conventions will be rewarded and the reverse will be penalised.

THIS PAPER IS NOT TO BE OPENED UNTIL PERMISSION HAS BEEN GRANTED BY THE INVIGILATOR.

Section A: Prescribed Texts

1. Discuss how the use of stage properties and costume in the extracts below highlight the political and material conditions that the playwrights explore in their plays. [30]

The Island – Fugard

Centre stage: a raised area representing a cell on Robben Island. Blankets and sleeping-mats—the prisoners sleep on the floor—are neatly folded. In one corner are a bucket of water and two tin mugs.*

The long drawn-out wail of a siren. Stage-lights come up to reveal a moat of harsh, white light around the cell. In it the two prisoners—John stage-right and Winston stage-left—mime the digging of sand. They wear the prison uniform of khaki shirt and short trousers. Their heads are shaven. It is an image of back-breaking and grotesquely futile labour.*

Woza Albert – Ngema and Mtwana

The stage is lit by the house-lights. The set consists of two up-ended tea-chests side by side about centre stage. Further upstage an old wooden plank, about ten feet long, is suspended horizontally on old ropes. From nails in the plank hang the ragged clothes that the actors will use for their transformations. The actors wear grey track-suit bottoms and running shoes. They are bare-chested. Around each actor's neck is a piece of elastic, tied to which is half a squash ball painted pink – a clown's nose, to be placed over his own nose when he plays a white man.

The Coat - Fugard

2. In the New Brighton plays Fugard has made use of amateur township actors and has drawn from their township experiences in writing his plays. Using examples from the play examine this statement. [30]

Section B: Theatre Practice

3. Discuss the role of the stage designer in the production of a play. [30]
4. You wrote and staged a group play. What theatrical skills do you feel you acquired through this exercise? [30]