

UNIVERSITY OF SWAZILAND  
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES  
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

SUPPLEMENTARY EXAMINATION  
JULY, 2018

**COURSE CODE:** ENG 405 / 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 which may lead to loss of marks.
3. This paper is 6 pages long, cover page included.

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

## SECTION A: POETRY

Answer one question from this section.

Critically examine the role of a poet in an oppressive society, as depicted in the three poems below. Begin your discussion by highlighting the meaning of each poem and its obvious poetic techniques:

### “The Distant Drum” Calvin Hernton

I am not a metaphor or a symbol.  
This you hear is not the wind in the trees.  
Nor a cat being maimed in the street  
It is I who weep, laugh, feel pain or joy.  
Speak this because I exist.  
This is my voice  
These words are my words, my mouth  
Speaks them, my hand writes.  
I am a poet.  
It is my fist you hear beating  
Against your ear.

### “It is Said” James Matthews

It is said  
that poets write of beauty  
of form, of flowers and of love  
but the words I write  
are of pain and of rage

I am no minstrel  
who sings songs of joy  
mine a lament

I wail of a land  
hideous with open graves  
waiting for the slaughtered ones

Balladeers strum their lutes and sing tunes of happy times  
I cannot join in their merriment  
my heart drowned in bitterness  
with the agony of what white man’s law has done

**“Self” Peter Abrahams**

I am a shadow,  
Restless,  
Roving everywhere.  
Dawn greets me  
Sneaking from a park bench  
And a rendezvous with cold and sky,  
I am a bum, hungry and lonely;  
Milk vanishes from doorsteps at dawn  
As I pass.

I am a prostitute,  
Seeking a pick-up from the street.  
I have a kid and it cries for bread.  
I’m a mother,  
Just heard my son died at the front –  
A medal and an empty heart.  
I’m a toiler, sweating all day,  
But somehow I’ve more debts to pay.

I’m in the cold,  
A youngster, hungry and thin,  
My soul cries for love and laughter,  
But I’m on this side of the window;  
In there, there’s fire and laughter  
And the warmth of love.

I’m a poet,  
And through hunger  
And lust for love and laughter  
I have turned myself into a voice,  
Shouting the pain of the People  
And the sunshine that is to be. (1940]

**Question 2**

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

**“Poem at Thirty-Nine” Alice Walker**

How I miss my father.  
I wish he had not been  
so tired  
when I was

born.

Writing deposit slips and checks  
I think of him.  
He taught me how.  
This is the form,  
he must have said:  
the way it is done.  
I learned to see  
bits of paper  
as a way  
to escape  
the life he knew  
and even in high school  
had a savings  
account.

He taught me  
that telling the truth  
did not always mean  
a beating:  
though many of my truths  
must have grieved him  
before the end.

How I miss my father!  
He cooked like a person  
dancing  
in a yoga meditation  
and craved the voluptuous  
sharing  
of good food.

Now I look and cook just like him:  
my brain light;  
tossing this and that  
into the pot;  
seasoning none of my life  
the same way twice; happy to feed  
whoever strays my way.

He would have grown  
to admire  
the woman I've become:  
cooking, writing, chopping wood,  
staring into the fire.

**“A Poem for My Father”** Sonia Sanchez

how sad it must be  
to love so many women  
to need so many black  
perfumed bodies weeping  
underneath you.

                  when i remember all those nights  
i filled my mind with  
long wars between short  
sighted trojans & greeks  
while you slapped some  
wide hips about in  
your private dungeon,  
when i remember your  
deformity i want to  
do something about your  
makeshift manhood.  
i guess

                  that is why  
on meeting your sixth  
wife, i cross myself  
with her confessionals.

- a) Describe the relationship that the two female poets had with their fathers. [10]
- b) Identify and discuss the factors that contributed to the shaping of their respective memories of the fathers. [14]
- c) Comparatively discuss the poems’ form. [8]

**SECTION B: PROSE AND DRAMA**

**Question 3**

Both Tshepo and Fikile’s uncle are in Coconut portrayed as quitters. Respond to this view by:

- a) Briefly mentioning their respective roles in the novel. [5]
- b) Identifying and discussing the dilemma that each of them faces, which leads to his quitting. [15]
- c) Identifying and briefly discussing the themes advanced through the two characters’ dilemmas. [5]

**Question 4**

Comparatively discuss the survival strategies employed by Walter and Dingz in their oppressive societies as depicted in A Raisin in the Sun and Dog Eat Dog. [30]

**Question 5**

Contact with the white establishment or race seems to present some challenges for Dingz in Dog Eat Dog, Fikile's uncle in Coconut, and Walter in A Raisin in the Sun. By focusing on only two texts, discuss:

- a) How each character comes into contact with members of the white race. [10]
- b) What causes the friction and each character deals with the situation. [12]
- c) The themes advanced through these characters. [10]

.....