

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON

University of London

EXAMINATION FOR INTERNAL STUDENTS

For the following qualifications :-

B.A.

The Modern Period I (1890-1930)

COURSE CODE : ENGLN12

DATE : 03-MAY-02

TIME : 14.30

TIME ALLOWED : 3 hours

02-N0103-3-70

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TURN OVER

Answer three questions, one question from Section A and two from Section B. In Section B ‘work’ and ‘works’ include drama and film as well as fiction and other varieties of prose and poetry; ‘authors’ includes those producing works in all these forms; and ‘the period’ means 1890 to 1930. If an author of the period produced significant works before or after the period, you may discuss those works, but should base your answers on works produced within the period.

Candidates must not present substantially the same material in any two answers, whether on this paper or in other parts of the examination.

SECTION A

1. Discuss the treatment of the passage of time in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. You may, if you wish, extend your discussion to Joyce’s other writings.

2. Assess Alvarez’s opinion that Pound:

needs the framework of translation...As a poet he moves, thinks and feels with the greatest ease and strength in other men’s clothes.

3. Leslie Fiedler writes of Hemingway’s protagonists:

Such anti-heroes demand anti-rhetoric since for them there are no viable, new, noble phrases to replace the outworn old ones.

Use this remark as a basis for an essay on Hemingway’s work. You may, if you wish, limit your answer to *In Our Time*.

4. This is going to be fairly short: to have father’s character done complete in it; and mother’s; and St. Ives and childhood; and all the usual things I try to put in—life, death, etc. But the centre is father’s character, sitting in a boat reciting *We perish each alone while he crushes a dying mackerel—*

(Virginia Woolf writing about *To the Lighthouse* in her diary)

Either: (a) What do you see as the centre of *To the Lighthouse*?

Or: (b) What ‘usual things’ do you find in Woolf’s work?

SECTION B

5. ‘To reveal art and conceal the artist is art’s aim’ (Oscar Wilde). Discuss this epigram in relation to Wilde’s work, or in relation to the work of any other author of the period.

TURN OVER

6. Hardy's poems are full of casual, circumstantial stuff: place, time, clothes, furniture, what was said, what was done, eaten or played on the piano.

(Catherine Koralek)

Write about the significance of 'circumstantial stuff' in Hardy's poetry or in the work of any other poet of the period.

7. Henry James spoke of:

the note I wanted; that of the strange and sinister embroidered into the very type of the normal and easy.

Write an essay on an author of the period who achieves this note.

8. The disposition of the times is curiously confused, a compound of feverish restlessness and blunted discouragement, of fearful presage and hang-dog renunciation.

(Max Nordau, *Degeneration*)

What 'curious confusions' do you find reflected in the literature of the 1890s?

9. Myth is highly ambivalent in its relation to history: it may be a way of acting purposefully *within* history or a way of transcending, which is to say withdrawing *from* it.

(Michael Bell)

Use this remark as a basis for an essay on the relationship between Yeats's politics and his poetry.

10. Conrad cited *Heart of Darkness* as an example of his method in which the ending of a novel made 'the whole story in all its descriptive detail...fall into place and acquire its value and significance'. How important are Conrad's endings?
11. In what ways and to what extent does British colonial literature show the empire striking back?
12. 'The idea of England has been more revealing when it has remained problematic' (David Gervais). Does your reading for this course support this contention?
13. Do you agree with Noel Annan that 'at the root of every assessment of Kipling lies the problem of his morality'?
14. Bernard Bergonzi has remarked that in writing about the First World War 'cherished ideals of English rural life were held in nostalgic tension with the grim actuality of trench warfare'. Assess the importance of such 'ideals' in some of the writing about the 'actuality' of the First World War.

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15. 'If only someone would say that the book was so damned funny' (James Joyce, in response to reviews of *Ulysses*). Write about the comedy of *Ulysses* or of Joyce's work more generally.
16. Qualities in the cultural air, the 'données' of the American scene, force the poet to turn towards high seriousness and unhumorous dedication. In Stevens's very playfulness there is something artificial; the incredible dexterity is part of the *persona*. The American literary artist is indeed a masked man.

(Geoffrey Moore)

With reference to the poetry of Stevens or any other American poet of the period, write about 'high seriousness' and 'playfulness'.

17. John Fuller notes the 'conflation of spiritual with sexual failure' in Eliot's poetry. Explore this 'conflation'.
18. The point is that Lawrence started life wholly free from any restriction of tradition, that he had no guidance except the Inner Light, the most untrustworthy and deceitful guide that ever offered itself to humanity.

(T. S. Eliot)

Consider Lawrence's work with this remark in mind.

19. Early cinema involved an 'aesthetic of attractions' in which visual curiosity was aroused and satisfied by novelty, surprise, even shock.

(Pam Cook)

With reference to this quotation discuss the aesthetic of early cinema.

20. Either: (a) How radical are the plays of Ibsen, Chekhov, or Strindberg? You may confine your answer to one writer.
- Or: (b) Write on the uses of wit in the English language drama of the period.

21. Fitzgerald wrote that:

the test of a first-rate intelligence is the ability to hold two opposed ideas in mind at the same time, and still retain the ability to function.

To what extent does his writing display this kind of intelligence?

22. Frost's benign calm, the comic mask of a whittling rustic, is designed for gazing—without dizziness—into a tragic abyss of desperation.

(Peter Viereck)

How desperate is Frost's poetry?

TURN OVER

23. This is the mountain standing in the way of any true Negro art in America—this urge within the race towards whiteness, the desire to pour racial individuality into the mould of American standardization, and to be as little Negro and as much American as possible.

(Langston Hughes)

To what extent do the writers of the Harlem Renaissance attempt to create a 'true Negro art in America'?

24. Waste, deadness, come from the inclusion of things that don't belong to the moment; this appalling narrative business of the realist: getting on from lunch to dinner: it is false, unreal, merely conventional.

(Virginia Woolf)

Discuss the ways in which Woolf or any other author of the period deals with 'this appalling narrative business of the realist'.

25. Write an essay on the relationship between the sacred and the profane in the work of one or more authors of the period.
26. The relation between man and woman will change for ever, and will for ever be the new central clue to human life.

(D. H. Lawrence)

Use this quotation as a basis for an essay on relations between the sexes in the work of at least two authors of the period.

27. 'Why are you Ernest in the town and Jack in the country?' (Algernon to Jack in Oscar Wilde, *The Importance of Being Earnest*). Write an essay on the relationship between identity and mobility in the literature of the period.
28. Consider some of the ways in which at least two novels of the period resist closure.
29. William Carlos Williams once said that 'a poet should take his inspiration from other arts too'. What evidence do you find in Williams's work, or in the work of any other writer or writers of the period, of inspiration taken from other art forms?
30. 'It is part of morality not to be at home in one's home' (Theodor Adorno). Use this remark as the basis for an essay on alienation or expatriation in the work of one or more authors of the period.
31. Write a list of things which everybody thinks and nobody says; and a list of things that everybody says and nobody thinks.

(Thomas Hardy)

Write an essay on hypocrisy, or censorship, or both, in some works of the period.

CONTINUED

32. The tremendous and complicated development of our material civilization, the multiplicity and variety of our social forms, the depth, subtlety, and sophistry of our imaginative impressions...and, in short, the whole machinery of social intercourse—these elements of existence combine to produce what may be termed a kaleidoscopic glitter, a dazzling and confusing phantasmagoria of life that wearies and stultifies the mental and moral nature.

(Theodore Dreiser)

Consider the effects of this 'kaleidoscopic glitter' in the work of one or more American authors of the period.

33. With reference to at least two works, write about the treatment of one of the following topics: narcissism, doubling, marriage, children, money, houses.
34. Characterize the distinctive achievement of any author or group of authors of the period not mentioned in this examination paper.

END OF PAPER