

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON

University of London

EXAMINATION FOR INTERNAL STUDENTS

For The Following Qualification:–

B.A.

French F3400: French Texts IV

COURSE CODE : FREN3400

UNIT VALUE : 0.50

DATE : 12-MAY-05

TIME : 10.00

TIME ALLOWED : 3 Hours

BALZAC'S COMÉDIE HUMAINE AND FRENCH SOCIETY

Answer TWO questions, ONE from EACH section. Use a separate answer book for each question.

You may answer in English or in French, but no special credit will be given for answering in French rather than English.

Please note that AT LEAST ONE option paper MUST be written in English.

DO NOT BASE BOTH ANSWERS IN THIS PAPER, OR AN ANSWER IN THIS PAPER AND ONE IN ANOTHER OPTION PAPER, ON THE SAME TEXT OR ON SUBSTANTIALLY THE SAME MATERIAL.

SECTION A

PLEASE USE A SEPARATE ANSWER BOOK FOR EACH QUESTION.

1. *'Le Médecin de campagne* is at once a piece of political propaganda, an apology for Catholicism as a socialising force, and a treatise of rural economy.' Discuss.
2. *'Eugénie Grandet* is a case study of melancholia.' To what extent would you agree with this judgement of the novel?
3. To what extent, in your view, is it possible to read *Histoire de la grandeur et de la décadence de César Birotteau* as an illustration of Balzac's claim to write 'à la lueur de deux vérités éternelles: la Religion, la Monarchie, deux nécessités [...] vers lesquelles tout écrivain de bon sens doit essayer de ramener notre pays'?
4. To what extent, in your opinion, can *La Rabouilleuse* be read as a political novel?
5. 'Problems of the artist and artistic creativity in *Illusions perdues* are presented as distinct from the world of politics.' Discuss.
6. *'La Cousine Bette* is a novel of melodrama with a political agenda.' Discuss.
7. Analyse and discuss the significance of prostitution in *Splendeurs et misères des courtisanes*.
8. 'La charité telle qu'on la voit dans l'œuvre de Balzac n'est plus une vertu religieuse, mais prend place parmi les vertus politiques et aboutit seulement à introduire une parcelle de justice dans l'organisation sociale.' Discuss this comment in the light of your reading of *L'Envers de l'histoire contemporaine*.

TURN OVER

SECTION B

PLEASE USE A SEPARATE ANSWER BOOK FOR EACH QUESTION.

9. Analyse and discuss the importance of 'le hasard' in TWO or MORE novels you have studied on this course.
10. In the 'Avant-propos à la *Comédie humaine*' Balzac states his intention of writing 'l'histoire oubliée par tant d'historiens, celle des mœurs'. To what extent is this intention fulfilled, according to your reading of TWO or MORE novels you have studied on this course?
11. To what extent, in your view, is it appropriate to call Balzac a 'revolutionary' writer? Your answer should refer to TWO or MORE novels you have studied on this course.
12. 'Dans son univers romanesque, Balzac a édifié une mythologie de l'homme.' Discuss this statement with reference to TWO or MORE novels you have studied on this course.
13. 'Balzac's use of description is excessive, tedious and unnecessary.' Discuss with reference to TWO or MORE novels you have studied on this course.
14. 'In *La Comédie humaine* we see a psychological determinism at work, in that the characters are presented as having no genuine freedom of choice, no alternative to the actions that they take.' Discuss this judgement with reference to TWO or MORE novels you have studied on this course.

END OF PAPER