



SREENARAYANAGURU OPEN UNIVERSITY

The State University for Education, Training and Research in Blended Format, Kerala

University Building, Kureepuzha, Kollam, Kerala-691601 | www.sgou.ac.in

M.A. English Language and Literature

Discipline Core

Semester III

Literary Theory- M21EG09DC

Instructions for Writing Assignments

Descriptive:

- *Clearly outline the key elements or aspects that need to be described, such as features, characteristics, or events.*
- *Employ descriptive language that can engage the senses and ensure vivid pictures, enhancing the richness of descriptions.*
- *Organise the assignment in a coherent sequence to guarantee clarity and facilitate the smooth conveyance of ideas.*
- *Minimum Pages: 7*

Analytical:

- *Clearly articulate your main argument in a concise manner at the beginning of your answer. This sets the tone for your analysis and helps the reader understand the central point you are trying to convey.*
- *Support your analysis with specific examples and quotes from the literature. Use direct textual evidence to illustrate and reinforce your points.*
- *Move beyond mere summary and engage in critical analysis. Interpret the significance of the literary elements, such as themes, characters, and symbols.*
- *Minimum Pages: 7*

SET 1 (Descriptive)

1. Discuss the contributions of Ferdinand de Saussure to structural linguistics and demonstrate how his ideas influenced the development of structuralism in various academic disciplines.
2. Explain the tripartite model of the mind (id, ego, and superego) as introduced by Freud in *The Ego and the Id*. How does this model contribute to our understanding of human personality and behaviour?
3. Evaluate Elaine Showalter's contributions to feminist literary theory, focusing on her concept of the "gynocritics" and its impact on literary analysis.

4. In what ways does new historicism examine the significance of historical context in interpreting literary texts?
5. Investigate the intersection of gender and ecology through an ecofeminist framework, examining how ecofeminist perspectives challenge and redefine traditional environmental discourse and practices.

SET II (Analytical)

1. How does the deconstructive approach challenge traditional notions of language and meaning in a specific literary work, and what implications does this challenge have for our understanding of the text's structure, authorial intent, and cultural context?
2. In Lacan's mirror stage, he argues that the formation of the 'I' involves a complex interplay between the imaginary, symbolic, and real registers. Analyse and discuss the significance of these three registers in the context of the mirror stage. How do they contribute to the development of the 'I' and the subject's sense of identity?
3. Discuss the concept of *Écriture Féminine* in French feminist literary theory. Explore how this approach challenges traditional forms of writing and language, particularly in the context of gender and power dynamics. Provide examples from relevant literary texts to illustrate the ways in which they subvert or redefine linguistic and narrative conventions.
4. In what ways do the material and economic conditions of a society shape its cultural productions, and how does Cultural Materialism analyse the relationships between material practices and cultural texts?
5. Examine the role of nature and the environment in two selected literary works of your choice. Analyse how the authors employ ecocritical principles to depict the relationship between humans and the natural world. Consider the use of symbolism, language, and narrative techniques to explore the ecological themes within the texts.



M.A. English Language and Literature

Discipline Core

Semester III

English Literature from 1946 to the Present

(M21EG10DC)

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- *Organise the assignment in a coherent sequence to guarantee clarity and facilitate the smooth conveyance of ideas.*
- *Minimum Pages: 7*

Analytical:

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- *Support your analysis with specific examples and quotes from the literature. Use direct textual evidence to illustrate and reinforce your points.*
- *Move beyond mere summary and engage in critical analysis. Interpret the significance of the literary elements, such as themes, characters, and symbols.*
- *Minimum Pages: 7*

SET 1 (Descriptive)

1. Considering the intricate dynamics of global politics and the aftermath of World War II, explore the factors that led to the decline of political power in Britain.
2. How did post-war playwrights respond to the existential anxiety and absurdity of the years following World War II by incorporating absurd elements into their dramas? Provide examples from specific plays and discuss the significance of using illogical situations as a theatrical tool to highlight the perceived pointlessness of human existence in a world seemingly devoid of reason.

3. Describe the character of Godot in Samuel Beckett's play, *Waiting for Godot*. How does Beckett use descriptive details and dialogue to create a sense of mystery around Godot, and what does Godot symbolize in the context of the play?
4. Discuss the role of literature in shaping cultural narratives, as presented by Zadie Smith in "Outside the Whale" and Salman Rushdie in "Speaking in Tongues."
5. Compare the depiction of nature and dominance in Hughes' "Hawk Roosting" and Heaney's "Punishment."

SET II (Analytical)

1. Examine the impact of the economic crisis and widespread unemployment, the implementation of austerity policies, and the emergence of resilient community efforts such as soup kitchens and mutual aid organizations in the 20th century. Assess how these experiences influenced the reevaluation of economic and social policies, ultimately shaping the course of Britain's response to the impending World War II.
2. Critically assess the role of Neo-Romantic poets in revitalizing the Romantic movement within the context of 20th-century British poetry. Explore how these poets, such as Dylan Thomas and the poets of The Apocalypse, navigate the tension between traditional Romantic values and contemporary themes.
3. In what ways do Carol Ann Duffy and Seamus Heaney employ historical and mythological references to enhance the meaning and depth of their poems, "Anne Hathaway" and "Punishment"?
4. Conduct a detailed character analysis of Jimmy Porter in John Osborne's play, *Look Back in Anger*. Examine his complexities, motivations, and the factors that contribute to his anger. Discuss how Osborne uses Jimmy as a representative of a generation and a voice of dissent, citing textual evidence to support your analysis.
5. Explore the role of gender and feminism in Angela Carter's *Nights at the Circus*. How does Carter challenge traditional gender roles and norms through the characters of Fevvers and Lizzie?



M.A. English Language and Literature
Discipline Specific Elective Course
Semester III
African and Caribbean Literatures
(M21EG01DE)

Instructions for Writing Assignments

Descriptive:

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- *Organise the assignment in a coherent sequence to guarantee clarity and facilitate the smooth conveyance of ideas.*
- *Minimum Pages: 7*

Analytical:

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- *Support your analysis with specific examples and quotes from the literature. Use direct textual evidence to illustrate and reinforce your points.*
- *Move beyond mere summary and engage in critical analysis. Interpret the significance of the literary elements, such as themes, characters, and symbols.*
- *Minimum Pages: 7*

Topics:

SET 1 (Descriptive)

1. Examine the impact of colonialism on the linguistic and cultural landscape of African and Caribbean regions. How did the introduction of European languages influence the indigenous oral and written traditions?
2. Describe the emotional tone established in Chinua Achebe's "Refugee Mother and Child." How does the poet use vivid imagery to convey the impact of war on maternal love?
3. Explore Nelson Mandela's early involvement in the African National Congress (ANC) and the ideological influences that shaped his commitment to fighting against apartheid. How did his interactions with Anton Lembede and the formation of the Youth League contribute to his evolving perspective on African nationalism?

4. Explore the theme of displacement and nostalgia in Edward Kamau Brathwaite's poem "South," examining how the poet conveys the complexities of identity and the experience of being uprooted from one's homeland.
5. Explore the theme of nationalism and independence in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's novel *Half of a Yellow Sun*, focusing on how characters like Olanna represent different aspects of Nigeria's struggle for independence. How does Adichie weave a multifaceted national allegory through her characters in the backdrop of the Nigerian Civil War?

SET II (Analytical)

1. Critically evaluate the impact of colonialism on the themes, storytelling techniques, and sense of identity in African and Caribbean literature, emphasising the nuances of each.
2. Compare and contrast the themes of maternal love in Chinua Achebe's "Refugee Mother and Child" and Lorna Goodison's "I Am Becoming My Mother." How do these poems depict the complexities of motherhood in the face of adversity?
3. Evaluate the effectiveness of Senghor's poem "Black Woman" and David Diop's "Africa" as tools of resistance against colonial objectification and exploitation. How does the poem contribute to the wider postcolonial discourse on autonomy and cultural pride?
4. Critically assess the exploration of toxic masculinity and power dynamics in J.M. Coetzee's novel *Disgrace*, focusing on the character of David Lurie and his actions that result in consequences for both himself and others.
5. Critique the portrayal of power dynamics and postcolonial governance in Wole Soyinka's play *Kongi's Harvest*. How does the play explore the concept of self-colonisation and the perpetuation of oppressive systems by postcolonial leaders?

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M.A. English Language and Literature
Discipline Specific Elective Course
Semester III
Canadian and Australian Literatures
(M21EG02DE)

Instructions for Writing Assignments

Descriptive:

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- *Support your analysis with specific examples and quotes from the literature. Use direct textual evidence to illustrate and reinforce your points.*
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- *Minimum Pages: 7*

Topics:

SET 1 (Descriptive)

1. Describe the key events and factors that shaped the development of Australian literature from early Aboriginal oral traditions to the present stage.
2. Discuss the key events in Blackfoot history and culture that provide context for understanding the spiritual beliefs, values, and connection to nature expressed in the “Great Spirit Prayer.”
3. Describe the plot events depicted in Act Two of the play *No Sugar*. Discuss in detail what happens to key characters like Joe, Mary, and Jimmy in this section’s major scenes at Moore River Native Settlement.

4. Discuss the key events, settings, and characters depicted in Patrick White's novel *Voss*.
5. Outline the key life events and memories described in Gabrielle Roy's memoir *Enchantment and Sorrow*, spanning her French Canadian girlhood through to early adulthood and her shift to a literary career.

SET II (Analytical)

1. Analyse how Canadian literature explores the themes of identity, belonging, and displacement in the context of immigration and multiculturalism. Refer to specific examples from the works of Margaret Atwood, Thomas King, and other relevant Canadian writers.
2. Analyse how Margaret Atwood's poem "Notes Towards a Poem That Can Never Be Written" explores the power and limitations of language and poetic expression. Refer to specific details and literary devices from the poem to support your analysis.
3. Analyse how David Malouf employs vivid imagery and symbolism in his poem "The Year of the Foxes" to subtly critique materialism, loss of innocence, and complex moral stances towards nature.
4. Analyse the dramatisation of historical figures like William Hopkinson and Gurdit Singh in the play *The Komagata Maru Incident*. How does the portrayal of these two characters serve Pollock's artistic purpose of moral self-reckoning regarding injustice?
5. Analyse the themes of gender roles and societal limitations in Gabrielle Roy's memoir *Enchantment and Sorrow*. Discuss specific examples Roy provides of barriers or biases she encountered and how these shaped her development as a writer.

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M.A. English Language and Literature
Semester III
Discipline Specific Elective Course
M21EG03DE: European Literature

Instructions for Writing Assignments

Descriptive:

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Analytical:

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- *Minimum Pages: 7*

Topics

SET 1 (Descriptive)

1. Write a critical essay on the development of European Literature from antiquity to the Enlightenment era, emphasising its historical stages as well as the socio-political events that influenced its emergence.

2. Examine Milan Kundera's personal conception of the 'European novel' and its broad history across four centuries in "The Depreciated Legacy of Cervantes," critically summarising the key themes of the essay.
3. Discuss Charles Baudelaire and Stephane Mallarme as modern poets who contested the traditional practices in poetry in all its forms, drawing ideas from Helen Abbott's essay "Between Baudelaire and Mallarme: Voice, Conversation and Music,"
4. Present a detailed account of the various literary movements that shaped European literature.
5. Provide your perspective on how the narrative and themes of the modernist fiction "Metamorphosis" reflects various aspects of contemporary society.

SET II (Analytical)

1. The central conflict portrayed in *Antigone* may be understood as a contest between fate and free will, natural laws and human rule, and citizenship and family loyalty. Comment on the struggle between these dualities as seen in the characterisation of Antigone and Creon.
2. The short story "How Much Land Does a Man Need" by Leo Tolstoy ends in the sentence: "Six feet from his head to his heels was all he needed". How does this ending connect to the narrative's thematic portrayal of materialism and greed?
3. Charles Baudelaire, Maria Rainer Rilke and Anna Akhmatova paved the way for a transformation of poetic expression, structure, and content in modern European poetry. Write a critical essay discussing their innovative poetic styles.
4. Provide a critical analysis of Nikos Kazantzakis's *Zorba The Greek* as a work that captures the profound dichotomies of the human condition in his novel.
5. Explore Bertolt Brecht's *Mother Courage and Her Children* as a powerful dramatic message about war, human conflict, and human nature, delivered through the medium of the Epic Theatre (Dialectical Theatre).



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M.A. English Language and Literature
Semester III
Discipline Specific Elective Course
M21EG04DE: Comparative Literature

Instructions for Writing Assignments

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- *Minimum Pages: 7*

Topics

SET 1 (Descriptive)

1. Discuss the historical development of the comparative approach, demonstrating major perspectives and methodologies.
2. Investigate the significance of translating epic works into Malayalam literature. Discuss the impact of these translated epics on the preservation and dissemination of literary heritage within the Malayalam-speaking community.

3. Demonstrate the portrayal and exploration of gender issues in N. Krishna Pillai's work, *Investment*. How does Pillai navigate traditional gender roles and challenge conventional expectations through character interactions and thematic exploration?
4. How does A. Vincent's film, *Bhargavi Nilayam*, address social, cultural, and personal transformations through its characters and themes?
5. Discuss the themes of love, marriage, and social status in O.Chandu Menon's novel, *Indulekha*. How do these themes intersect and contribute to the overall narrative?

SET II (Analytical)

1. Analyse the effectiveness and impact of the "Perspective Writing" technique employed by M.T. Vasudevan Nair in the novel, *The Second Turn*. How does this narrative approach enhance the storytelling and character development in the novel?
2. Assess how G. Aravindan's film *Kanchana Sita* navigates issues of power, voice, and representation for marginalised communities, and what impact does this approach have on the audience's understanding of social dynamics and cultural narratives?
3. Discuss the impact of Romanticism on Malayalam literature, analysing its thematic elements, stylistic techniques, and key figures within a socio-cultural context, emphasising its transformative role in shaping the literary landscape of Kerala.
4. Compare and contrast "The Fallen Flower" by Kumaran Assan and "Kurukshetra" by Ayyappa Paniker as modernist poems by analysing their use of fragmented imagery, modern themes, and innovative narrative techniques.
5. Compare *Investment* by N. Krishna Pillai and *Crime 27 of 1128* by C. J. Thomas, examining their narrative structures, thematic concerns, and character developments.



**M.A. English Language and Literature
Semester III
Skill Enhancement Course
English for Academic Purposes
(M21EG01SE)**

Instructions for Writing Assignments

Descriptive:

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- *Minimum Pages: 7*

Topics:

SET 1 (Descriptive)

1. Explain the main features of academic writing in English. Provide examples to illustrate each feature.

2. Explain the importance of punctuation marks in academic writing. Discuss the specific uses of commas, semi-colons, colons, and apostrophes with examples from the text.
3. Discuss the key components of an effective paragraph structure. Provide examples to illustrate the importance of each component in crafting coherent paragraphs for academic writing.
4. Describe the key characteristics of a good research problem in the field of English language and literature. Discuss the various sources from which students can identify potential research problems, providing relevant examples.
5. Explain the key techniques for formulating insightful research questions that can lead to impactful academic writing. Provide examples to illustrate how each technique aids in identifying compelling areas for original research.

SET II (Analytical)

1. Critically evaluate the effectiveness of the techniques and strategies for developing strong academic writing skills. Propose alternative approaches or additional strategies that could enhance the development of academic writing skills.
2. Critically analyse the elements given in the Learning Material for establishing the appropriate tone and style in academic writing. Evaluate the effectiveness of the suggested strategies and provide your perspectives on maintaining the right balance between formality and readability.
3. Evaluate the strengths and limitations of inductive and deductive reasoning in academic writing. Discuss the effectiveness of these reasoning methods in different contexts and disciplines.
4. Plagiarism remains a persistent challenge in academic research writing. Critically examine the various types of plagiarism discussed in the material, providing relevant examples from your own experience or observations.
5. Choose one of the sample essay topics provided at the end of Block 2, Unit 2 of the Self Learning Material. Provide a detailed walkthrough of how you would apply the various pre-writing strategies, such as brainstorming, concept mapping, and outlining, for developing the essay.