Summer Examinations 2016

LIT203616N

Module Title: Eighteenth Century Literature
Level: Five
Time Allowed: Two hours

Instructions to students:

- Enter your student number **not** your name on all answer books.
- Answer **two** questions: the **compulsory** question in **Section A** and **one** question from **Section B**.
- The same material should not constitute a substantial part of more than one question.
- You should not make substantial reference to material used in other assignments.
- You should divide your time equally between **Section A** and **Section B**.
- **Section A** carries 50% of the overall marks (25% for each extract).
- **Section B** carries 50% of the overall marks.
- Begin each answer in a separate answer book; label each answer book clearly with the number of the question you are answering.
- Neither books nor notes may be taken into the examination.
- Students are **not** permitted to remove this examination paper from the examination room. For all purposes the examination paper remains the property of the University of Northampton.
Section A – This section carries 50% of the overall marks (25% for each extract)

Compulsory Question (one hour).

1. Write a commentary on two of the following three passages, commenting on and comparing:

- their language and form.
- their literary and historical contexts.
- their thematic and/or formal significance in the text from which they are taken.

N.B. Ensure that your analysis focuses closely upon the passage you have chosen; do not waste words in discussing the general background or the entire text without relating them to the extract.

Passage One

MILLAMANT. Mirabell, did you take exceptions last night? Oh, ay, and went away. Now I think on’t I’m angry—no, now I think on’t I’m pleased:—for I believe I gave you some pain.

MIRABELL. Does that please you?

MILLAMANT. Infinitely; I love to give pain.

MIRABELL. You would affect a cruelty which is not in your nature; your true vanity is in the power of pleasing.

MILLAMANT. Oh, I ask your pardon for that. One’s cruelty is one’s power, and when one parts with one’s cruelty one parts with one’s power, and when one has parted with that, I fancy one’s old and ugly.

MIRABELL. Ay, ay; suffer your cruelty to ruin the object of your power, to destroy your lover—and then how vain, how lost a thing you’ll be! Nay, ’tis true; you are no longer handsome when you’ve lost your lover: your beauty dies upon the instant. For beauty is the lover’s gift: ’tis he bestows your charms:—your glass is all a cheat. The ugly and the old, whom the looking-glass mortifies, yet after commendation can be flattered by it, and discover beauties in it: for that reflects our praises rather than your face.

MILLAMANT. Oh, the vanity of these men! Fainall, d’ye hear him? If they did not commend us, we were not handsome! Now you must know they could not commend one if one was not handsome. Beauty the lover’s gift! Lord, what is a lover, that it can give? Why, one makes lovers as fast as one pleases, and they live as long as one pleases, and they die as soon as one pleases; and then, if one pleases, one makes more.
WITWOUD. Very pretty. Why, you make no more of making of lovers, madam, than of making so many card-matches.

MILLAMANT. One no more owes one’s beauty to a lover than one’s wit to an echo. They can but reflect what we look and say: vain empty things if we are silent or unseen, and want a being.

MIRABELL. Yet, to those two vain empty things, you owe two the greatest pleasures of your life.

MILLAMANT. How so?

MIRABELL. To your lover you owe the pleasure of hearing yourselves praised, and to an echo the pleasure of hearing yourselves talk.

WITWOUD. But I know a lady that loves talking so incessantly, she won’t give an echo fair play; she has that everlasting rotation of tongue that an echo must wait till she dies before it can catch her last words.

MILLAMANT. Oh, fiction; Fainall, let us leave these men.

MIRABELL. Draw off Witwoud. [Aside to Mrs. Fainall.]

MRS. FAINALL. Immediately; I have a word or two for Mr. Witwoud.

Passage Two

Curst be the verse, how well soe'er it flow,
That tends to make one worthy man my foe,
Give Virtue scandal, Innocence a fear,
Or from the soft-eyed Virgin steal a tear!
But he who hurts a harmless neighbour's peace,
Insults fall'n worth, or Beauty in distress,
Who loves a Lie, lame slander helps about,
Who writes a Libel, or who copies out:
That Fop, whose pride affects a patron's name,
Yet absent, wounds an author's honest fame:
Who can your merit selfishly approve.
And show the sense of it without the love;
Who has the vanity to call you friend,
Yet wants the honour, injur'd, to defend;
Who tells whate'er you think, whate'er you say,
And, if he lie not, must at least betray:
Who to the Dean, and silver bell can swear,
And sees at Canons what was never there;
Who reads, but with a lust to misapply,
Make Satire a Lampoon, and Fiction, Lie.
A lash like mine no honest man shall dread,
But all such babbling blockheads in his stead.

Alexander Pope, 'Epistle to Dr Arbuthnot', lines 284-304
Passage Three

The king was struck with horror at the description I had given him of those terrible engines, and the proposal I had made. He was amazed, how so impotent and grovelling an insect as I (these were his expressions), could entertain such inhuman ideas, and in so familiar a manner, as to appear wholly unmoved at all the scenes of blood and desolation, which I had painted, as the common effects of those destructive machines, whereof, he said, some evil genius, enemy to mankind, must have been the first contriver. As for himself, he protested, that although few things delighted him so much as new discoveries in art or in nature, yet he would rather lose half his kingdom than be privy to such a secret, which he commanded me, as I valued my life, never to mention any more.

A strange effect of narrow principles and short views! that a prince possessed of every quality which procures veneration, love, and esteem; of strong parts, great wisdom, and profound learning, endowed with admirable talents for government, and almost adored by his subjects, should, from a nice unnecessary scruple, whereof in Europe we can have no conception, let slip an opportunity put into his hands, that would have made him absolute master of the lives, the liberties, and the fortunes of his people. Neither do I say this with the least intention to detract from the many virtues of that excellent king, whose character I am sensible will on this account be very much lessened in the opinion of an English reader; but I take this defect among them to have arisen from their ignorance, by not having hitherto reduced politics into a science, as the more acute wits of Europe have done. For I remember very well, in a discourse one day with the king, when I happened to say there were several thousand books among us, written upon the art of government, it gave him (directly contrary to my intention) a very mean opinion of our understandings. He professed both to abominate and despise all mystery, refinement, and intrigue, either in a prince or a minister. He could not tell what I meant by secrets of state, where an enemy or some rival nation were not in the case. He confined the knowledge of governing within very narrow bounds, to common sense and reason, to justice and lenity, to the speedy determination of civil and criminal causes, with some other obvious topics, which are not worth considering. And he gave it for his opinion, that whoever could make two ears of corn, or two blades of grass to grow upon a spot of ground, where only one grew before, would deserve better of mankind, and do more essential service to his country, than the whole race of politicians put together.

Section B – This section carries 50% of the overall marks

Answer one question (one hour).

2. Mary Wollstonecraft’s *The Wrongs of Woman: or, Maria. A Fragment* “radically challenge[s] eighteenth-century gendered discourses of madness and the accompanying institutions that sequester and silence women.” (Patricia Cove).

   In what ways does Wollstonecraft’s writing address the silencing of women and/or madness in relation to gender?

3. Analyse and discuss how Olaudah Equiano's, *The Life of Olaudah Equiano* can be read as broadening understanding of the inhumanity of the slave trade.

4. Explore the ways in which form and content are inseparable in the literature of the long eighteenth century. In your answer you should refer to at least two texts studied on the module.

5. Discuss and analyse how far the literature of the long eighteenth century depicts an enlightened society. In your answer refer to at least two texts studied on the module.

6. Satire can be defined as the use of “humour, irony, exaggeration, or ridicule to expose and criticize prevailing immorality or foolishness, especially as a form of social or political commentary” (*Oxford English Dictionary*). How do writers in the long eighteenth century use satire and what are they critiquing? In your answer you should refer to two texts studied on the module.

7. Discuss and analyse how in Daniel Defoe’s *Moll Flanders* the story of Moll’s life and her struggle to find a family can be read as a metaphor for the failings of the society around her.

8. Discuss and analyse the use of experimental techniques in Laurence Sterne’s *Tristram Shandy*. Your analysis should include a commentary on the use of the black page, the blank page, the marbled page and the notion of the narrative line and progression as highlighted by the narrator.

9. Discuss the reasons for the emergence of the novel form in the eighteenth century and the way in which these shape the texts of the period. Your answer should refer to two novels studied on the module.
10. In what way does religion come under attack in the literature of the long eighteenth century? Your answer should refer to two texts studied on the module.