

COVENANT UNIVERSITY
NIGERIA

TUTORIAL KIT
OMEGA SEMESTER

PROGRAMME: LANGUAGES

COURSE: ENG 426

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ENG 426: CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN LITERATURES

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1. Discuss the major trends or developments in American literature from its early period to the present and highlight the major schools and writers especially in the poetic and dramatic genres. (30mks)
2. Discuss how the Slavery experience has impacted on contemporary American literatures.
3. Discuss the major thematic concerns of the following poems and explain how they reflect contemporary American society.
 - (a) Adrienne Rich's 'The Tree'.
 - (b) Sharon Old's 'His Costume'.
 - (c) Robert Hass' 'A Story about the Body'.
 - (d) Amiri Baraka's 'Babylon Revisited'.(20 marks)
4. Using the works of at least three American writers, discuss protest in contemporary American literature.
5. "American literature reflects America's quest to understand and define itself." Examine this view with themes explored in Sherman Alexie's *The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven* and Steven Milhauser's *Cat 'n' Mouse*. (20 marks)
6. Critically evaluate how contemporary American literatures have advanced or strengthened multiculturalism in American literary canon.
7. Critically examine how August Wilson's *The Piano Lesson* reflects slavery and black experience in American society. (20mks)
8. Compare and contrast the stylistic features of early and contemporary American poetry.
9. With close attention to the text, critically examine the themes of slavery and self-alienation in Toni Morrison's *Beloved*. (20 marks)
10. Discuss the view that American literature is an embodiment of divergent and conflicting cultures.
11. Discuss the following short stories and explain elements of contemporary American society reflected in them:
 - (i) ZZ Parker's "Brownies"
 - (ii) Susan Straight's "Mines"
 - (iii) Steven Milhauser's "Cat 'n' Mouse" (30mks)
12. Identify and discuss five vital features of contemporary American literature.
13. Identify and discuss three themes each that highlight common trends in contemporary America in Robert Hass' "A Story about the Body" and Amiri Baraka's "Babylon Revisited" (20mks)

14. Discuss three major themes that encapsulate the condition of African Americans in Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*.
15. Discuss elements of religion and the supernatural in August Wilson's *The Piano Lesson* and Arthur Miller's *The Crucible* and explain their significance in the plays. (20mks)
16. Analyze *The Exes* as a Post-modern text.
17. Write a detailed analysis of the four major characters in Pagan Kennedy's *The Exes* and explain the significance of the narrative technique used in the novel. (20mks)
18. "The argument that contemporary American literature negates the concept of the American dream is true." Discuss.
19. Justify Pagan Kennedy's *The Exes* as a classic contemporary American novel. (20mks)
20. Discuss scepticism and atheism in Tony Kushner's *Angels in America*.

1. Answer should focus on:

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|---|---|--------------|
| i. Definition of American literature | = | 3mks. |
| ii. Identification of puritan influences and their impact | = | 2mks. |
| iii. Influence of English writers | = | 2mks |
| iv. Influence of Whitman, Dickinson and the fireside poets | = | 4mks. |
| v. Black voices resulting from the abolition of the slave trade | = | 4mks. |
| vi. Influences of imagists and confessional poets | = | 4mks. |
| vii. The Harlem renaissance and modernist influences | = | 4mks |
| viii. Recent trends and Multiculturalism | = | 4mks. |
| ix. Organization and expression | = | 3mks. |
| | | Total: 30mks |

3. Answer should focus on:

- i. Summary of subject matter of each 1mk x 4 = 4mks
- ii. Identification and summary of at least three themes in each 3mks x 4 = 12mks
- iii. Discussion of poetic techniques or devices in each 1mk x 4 = 4mks.
- Total: = 20mks.**

5. Answer should focus on:

- i. Synopsis of subject matter of each 2mks x 2 = 4mks
- ii. Identification and analysis of at least three themes in each 6mks x 2 = 12mks
- iii. Explication of stories' reflection of contemporary America 1mk x 2 = 2mks
- iv. Organization and expression 1mk x 2 = 2mks

Total = 20mks.

7. Answer should focus on:

- i. Brief synopsis of play = 3mks.
- ii. Explication of theme of slavery = 4mks.
- iii. Explication of black experience = 4mks.
- iv. Discussion of major characters = 4mks
- v. Identification and discussion of additional themes = 3mks
- vi. Organization and expression = 2mks

Total = 20mks

9. Answer should focus on:

- i. Brief synopsis of novel from a historical perspective = 4mks.
- ii. Explication of theme of slavery = 5mks.
- iii. Explication of self-alienation = 5mks.
- iv. Discussion of major characters = 4mks
- v. Organization and expression = 2mks.

Total = 20mks.

11. Answer should focus on:

- i. Synopsis of each story 2mks x 3 = 6mks
- ii. Explication of at relevant elements in each 5mks x 3 = 15mks
- iii. Close reference to text 1mk x 3 = 3mks
- iv. Organization and expression 2mks x 3 = 6mks

Total: 30mks

13. Answer should focus on:

- i. Synopsis of each poem 2mks x 2 = 4mks
- ii. Explication of three themes in each 6mks x 2 = 12mks
- iii. Organization and expression 2mks x 2 = 4mks

Total: 20mks

15. Answer should focus on:

- i. Synopsis of each play 2mks x 2 = 4mks

- ii. Explication of religion and the supernatural 3mks x 2 = 6mks
 - iii. Logical explication of significance 2mks x 2 = 4mks
 - iv. Close textual references 1mk x 2 = 2mks
 - v. Organization and expression 2mks x 2 = 4mks
- Total: 20mks

17. Answers should focus on:

- i. Synopsis of the novel 2mks
 - ii. Detailed analysis of each character 3mks x 4 = 12mks
 - iii. Analysis of narrative technique in the novel 3mks
 - iv. Explication of its significance in the novel 2mks
 - v. Expression 1mk
- Total: 20mks

19. Answer should focus on:

- i. Synopsis of the novel 3mks
 - ii. Analysis of three major issues in the text typical of contemporary America 9mks
 - iii. Analysis of the four major characters showing how they represent contemporary Americans 4mks
 - iv. Justification of the motion 2mks
 - v. Organization and expression 2mks
- Total: **20mks**