

English Literature I

1. Generically, literary history works as a progressive decline. The romance has already embarked on this degenerative history. The degeneration is evident even in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*: for instance, the Knight's Tale, which is a lesser epic in favor of social order, is defeated by the anarchic individualism represented in such tales as the Miller's and the Reeve's. Write an essay that traces the changing conceptions of the hero from *Beowulf* to *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, and any one of Chaucer's Tales. (台大)
2. How does *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* synthesize pagan and Christian symbolism within the romance form? (台大)
3. Contrast *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* and "the Miller's Tale" in *The Canterbury Tales* in generic terms, i.e., as a romance and a fabliau respectively. (台大)
4. The interaction among the tale tellers is itself a part of the action and the theme of *The Canterbury Tales*. Discuss the interaction of the Canterbury pilgrims. What thematic and psychological insight is gained by Chaucer's method of narration involving interaction among the characters of the "framed" narrative? (清大)
5. A fabliau is limited genre in French literature; it is ordinarily a coarse, anticlerical farce told in bare narrative. What significant contribution had Chaucer made to improve it in "The Miller's Tale"? (台大)
6. Matthew Arnold wrote of Chaucer: "However we may account for its absence, something is wanting, then, to the poetry of Chaucer, which poetry must have before it can be placed in the glorious class of the best. And there is no doubt what that something is. It is... the high and excellent seriousness, which Aristotle assigns as one of the grand virtues of poetry." Do you agree with Arnold? Discuss, and draw evidence from Chaucer's works to support your argument. (政大)
7. Would you consider Chaucer a great narrator and a great commentator on human nature? Describe the major features of *The Canterbury Tales* that defend your argument. (中山)
8. Chaucer tries his hand at a number of genres in *The Canterbury Tales*, including romance and the fabliau. Use the Wife of Bath's tale and the Miller's tale as an example of each genre and discuss their different treatments of courtship and marriage. (台大)
9. Explain in what way the humor of *The Second Shepherds' Play* may be said to differ in its function within the play as a whole from the humor of *The Miller's Tale*. (清大)
10. Define the three kinds of Medieval Drama and then discuss the thematic structure in *The Second Shepherds' Play*. (台大)

11. What are the essential qualities of the heroic character in the epic poem *Beowulf*? Discuss them in relation to the hero's conduct as he underwent the different adventures. (中正)
12. "The Renaissance unleashed new ideas and new social, political, and economic forces that gradually displaced the otherworldly and communal values of the Middle Ages." Use specific examples of medieval literature to comment on the validity of the above statement. (91. 台大)
13. E. T. Donaldson, a renowned medieval scholar, said, "it is well to recall that the missionaries from Rome who initiated the conversion of the English proceeded in a conciliatory manner, not so much uprooting paganism in order to plant Christianity as planting Christianity in the faith that it would ultimately choke out the weeds of paganism." Discuss Donaldson's comments by using examples from *Beowulf*. (91. 師大)
14. How does Chaucer create an accord between the Wife of Bath and the tale she tells? (91. 淡大)
15. Discuss how Chaucer creates relationships between the pilgrims in *The Canterbury Tales*. (92. 台大)
16. The ideal of courtly love sustained literary imagination of love relationship for aristocracy during the Medieval and Renaissance Ages. Describe the characteristics conventionally associated with the "courtly love" and draw on specific examples from literary works of the periods for illustration. (*Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, "The Miller's Tale", Elizabethan sonneteers) (92. 成大)
17. "The entry of the 'feminine' principle can be seen in the romance. The romance, like the epic, tells of males in their social world: to serve their society is the sole object and destiny of these heroes. In the epic, however, women do not figure at all. The romance is a different matter." Use specific examples from medieval to eighteenth-century literature to comment on the statement. (93. 台大)
18. Use specific examples from medieval to eighteenth-century literature to discuss the uses of the sea imagery and their significance. (93. 台大)
19. According to *A Handbook to Literature* (Harmon and Holman, 1996), and epic is "a long narrative poem in elevated style presenting characters of high position in adventures forming an organic whole through their relation to a central heroic figure and through their development of episodes important to the history of a nation or race." Do you agree with the definition? Use textual evidence from *Beowulf* to support your argument. (93. 師大)
20. "Wife of Bath's Tale" is probably the most well-known episode in Geoffrey Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*. In "The Wife of Bath's Prologue", Chaucer seemed to retort misogynist (a hater of women) literature by writing as below:

No scholar ever lived who did not libel
Women, believe me; to speak well of wives
Is quite beyond them, unless it be in lives
Of holy saints; no woman else will do.
Who was it painted the lion, tell me who?
By God, Women had only written stores
Like wits and scholars in their oratories,
They would have pinned on men more wickedness
Than the whole breed of Adam can redress.

Please argue what Chaucer tried to present through the character of The Wife of Bath.

21. Warrior and knight are the two major hero types in the English Literature of the Middle Ages ---respectively for the Anglo-Saxon and for the Anglo-Norman (including the late medieval) periods. Compare between these two character types in terms of the ways each is represented in literary texts of the specific historical period. Support your argument on examples drawn from literary texts. (94. 成大)

English Literature 2

1. Analyze the literary qualities of metaphysical wit in lyrics by Donne or Marvell or Herrick. (台大)
2. The English Renaissance is an age of poetry as well as drama. Use one or two tragedies as example to explain how the writing reflects the spirit of the Renaissance. Does the work bear the mark of medieval dramatic legacy at all? (中山)
3. Compare the subject matter and modes of expression in the Cavalier lyric and the Metaphysical poetry. (政大)
4. John Donne is acclaimed to be the founder of the “Metaphysical School” of English poetry. First describe its features and then use two examples from his poetry to illustrate the anti-Petrarchanism Donne employs. (台大)
5. Thomas More’s *Utopia* ushered into literary history a new mode of writing. Explain some important features of utopian literature established in this work. (台大)
6. The Renaissance men maintained two perspectives: they looked backward and they looked forward. What justice do you find in such a statement when you think of the following works? (Your discussion should include at least two of the following). (政大)
 - a. *Utopia* b. *Dr. Faustus* c. *Macbeth*
7. Write on the quest of (a) Marlowe’s *Dr. Faustus*, or (b) Shakespeare’s *Sir Falstaff*. (中正)
8. Milton intends *Paradise Lost* to be a Christian epic. How does he characterize the epic narrator, Adam, and Eve to achieve this end? (台大)
9. It is pointed out that John Milton’s writings demonstrate the conflicts between heaven and earth, authority and freedom, and good and evil. Discuss the treatment of these conflicts in any Milton’s work(s) of your own choice. Focus your discussion on how and why they are resolved or remain unresolved in the text(s). (中興)
10. In the proem of Book I of *Paradise Lost*, the epic narrator says:

I thence
 Invoke thy aid to my adventurous song,
 That with no middle flight intends to soar
 Above th’Aonian mount, while it pursues
 Things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme.

 Explain the implication of the underlined words of this passage. (台大)
11. Milton wrote *Paradise Lost* purportedly to “assert Eternal Providence, / And justify the ways of God to men.” Blake, however claimed (in *the Marriage of*

Heaven and Hell) that “The reason Milton(in *Paradise Lost*) wrote of Devils & Hell, is because he was a true Poet and of the Devil’s party without knowing it.” Why does Blake make such a comment? Do you think Milton achieved in the poem what he had set out to do? (政大)

12. Just before Adam and Eve are ejected from Eden, Adam says to Michael that he is in doubt whether to repent or to rejoice, now that he has seen a pre-view of the world’s history and its redemption by Christ (*Paradise Lost*, XII, 469-78). Examine how these lines illustrate and expand the idea of a happy fall.

“O goodness infinite, goodness immense!
That all this good of evil shall produce,
And evil turn to good; more wonderful
Than that which by creation first brought forth
Light out of darkness! Full of doubt I stand,
Whether I should repent me now of sin
By me done and occasioned, or rejoice
Much more that much good thereof shall spring;
To God more glory, more good will to men
From God, and over wrath grace shall abound.” (清大)

13. Readers of the opening two books of Milton’s *Paradise Lost* tend to be so carried away by their admiration for Satan’s heroic energy that they forget there is any other part to the poem. What structural device or balancing technique did Milton use in the remainder of the epic to make our sympathies gradually shift? (台大)
14. Describe the characterization of Milton’s Satan in *Paradise Lost*. (台大)
15. In a well-organized, substantial essay discuss the following:
- The function of the *General Prologue* in *The Canterbury Tales*
 - The Christian reference in *Beowulf*
 - The concept of “the hero” in *Paradise Lost* (台大)
16. Can the cannon of sixteenth and seventeenth-century English literature do without Shakespeare and Milton? What will we gain or lose if we exclude the two writers? Justify your argument with specific examples. (91. 台大)
17. Notable English pastoral elegies include John Milton’s “Lycidas,” Percy Shelley’s “Adonais,” and Matthew Arnold’s “Thyrsis.” How do you define “pastoral elegy”? Use any of the three poems to substantiate your observation. (92. 淡大)
18. Among the great English prose writers or essayists are Sir Thomas More, Francis Bacon, Robert Burton, John Dryden, Jonathan Swift, Samuel Johnson, Mary Wollstonecraft, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Charles Lamb, Thomas Carlyle, John Ruskin, Thomas Huxley, Walter Pater, and T. S. Eliot. Identify the authors and titles of the following two excerpts if possible. Then write a terse essay to discuss

the stylistic features of formal essay and familiar essay in the light of these two excerpts. (92. 師大)

- (1) Studies serve for delight, for ornament, and for ability. Their chief use for delight is in privateness and retiring; for ornament, is in discourse; and for ability, is in the judgment and disposition of business. For expert men can execute, and perhaps judge of particulars, one by one; but the general counsels, and the plots and marshaling of affairs, come best from those that are learned. To spend too much time in studies is sloth; to use them too much for ornament is affectation; to make judgment wholly by their rules is the humor of a scholar...
- (2) Democritus, as he is described by Hippocrates and Laertius, was a little wearish old man, very melancholy by nature, averse from company in his latter days, and much given to solitariness, a famous philosopher in his age, coevus with Socrates, wholly addicted to his studies at the last, and to a private life: writ may excellēt works, a great divine, according to the divinity of those times, an expert physician, a politician, an excellent mathematician, as *Diacosmus* and the rest of his works do witness. He was much delighted with the studies of husbandry, saith Columella, and often I find him cited by Constantinus and others treating of that subject. He knew the natures, differences of them. In a word, he was *omnifariam doctus*, a general scholar, a great student; and to the intent he might better contemplate, I find it related by some, that he put out his eyes, and was in his old age voluntarily blind, yet saw more than all Greece besides, and writ of every subject, ...

**Formal and familiar essays: The formal essay, or article, is relatively impersonal: the author writes as an authority, or at least as highly knowledgeable, and expounds the subject in an orderly way. ...In the familiar essay, the author assumes a tone of intimacy with his audience, tends to deal with every day things rather than with public affairs or specialized topics, and writes in a relaxed, self-revelatory, sometimes whimsical fashion. (from M. H. Abrams, *A Glossary of Literary Terms*.)

19. Discuss the features of Sir Thomas More's *Utopia* that reveal the spirit and substance of Renaissance humanism. (93. 政大)
20. Discuss the relevance and importance of two of the following in John Milton's *Paradise Lost*. (94. 台大)
 - (a) cosmology (b) temptation (c) style (d) freedom (e) choice
21. Choose two heroes/heroines from the following group to discuss how the description of each hero reflects the value, literary style, and historical background of its author's time. (94. 政大)

Bewoulf in *Beowulf*

Sir Gawain in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*

Redcrosse Knight in Book I of *The Faerie Queene*

English Literature III

1. Illustrate the skill of satire employed in *Gulliver's Travels*. You may focus on any one of the four Voyages. (政大)
2. In a well-organized, substantial essay discuss the critical concept in the following:
 - a. Philip Sidney, *The Defence of Poesy*
 - b. Alexander Pope, *An Essay on Criticism*
3. Satire flourished during the Neoclassical age, and its most distinguished practitioners were Alexander Pope and Jonathan Swift. Discuss first the reasons why satire flourished during this period and then compare Pope and Swift as satirists. (政大)
4. Explain Jonathan Swift's famous dictum that man should more properly be regarded as animal rationis capax ("an animal capable of reason") than as animal rationale ("a rational animal"). How does this dictum appear as the central theme of *Gulliver's Travels*? (台大)
5. In what way can Thomas Gray's "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard" be considered as documents which deviate from the dominant poetic trend of the eighteenth century and anticipate some of the ideas and themes in the Romantic period? (清大)
6. Discuss the picaresque tradition adapted by Daniel Defoe. Choose one novel for discussion. (台大)
7. The treatment of death has been a recurrent theme in literature. Writers often present death or deathbed scenes to explore its significance for different people. Choose TWO from the following list of works, and discuss—compare and contrast if necessary—their treatment of death:
 - (A) *Beowulf*
 - (B) *Everyman*
 - (C) Marlowe, *Doctor Faustus*
 - (D) Gray, "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard" (中興)
8. Discuss the peculiar narrative techniques of Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*. How might the work be seen as an "origin" of the English novel? (台大)
9. Samuel Johnson's *Dictionary* defines satire as a work "in which wickedness or folly is censured". Discuss with reference to the work of TWO satirists of the period. (台大)
10. What does it mean to travel in *Gulliver's Travels*? (90. 台大)
11. The rise of the English novel in the eighteenth century was marked by a claim of realism. It culminated in the works of Jane Austen. Discuss any one of them as a realistic novel. (台大)
12. In his "Preface to Shakespeare," Samuel Johnson writes as Shakespeare's faults:

- “To the unities of time and place he has shown no regard.” Comment on Johnson’s criticism, focusing your attention on the following questions:
- a. What are “unities of time and place”?
 - b. Why would Johnson have such a criticism on Shakespeare?
 - c. What do you think of Johnson’s criticism? (90. 政大)
13. “The mock-heroic is a dominant Augustan form because its aim is to expose the gap between the ideal and the real.” Discuss with reference to the work of one or more writers in the eighteenth century. (台大)
14. Discuss the function of money in Jane Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice*. (中興)
15. Compare and contrast a female protagonist in a novel by Jane Austen with a female character by an 18th century male author. (90. 輔大)
16. What is a mock epic? What kinds of textual examples that you can think of to characterize Alexander Pope’s *The Rape of the Lock* as a mock epic? (91. 師大)
17. Aphra Behn’s *Oroonoko* has always been regarded as a typical case study of the brutality imposed by the white (European) culture upon the black (African) culture. Please elaborate this point in your discussion, and then explain the way Oroonoko maintains his own cultural identity while adopting the European culture. Your arguments have to be supported by textual evidence. (91. 師大)
18. The following works deal with colonial subject matter in an implicit or explicit way. They can either be read as endorsing or critiquing British colonialism. Discuss any one of them in this light. (91. 淡大)
- a. “Tempest”
 - b. *Robinson Crusoe*
 - c. *Oroonoko*
 - d. *A Passage to India*
19. The representation of woman has always been bifurcated into two extremely opposite images: the very good and the bad. For example, the outrageous crying of Margery Kempe in public (*The Book of Margery Kempe* by Margery Kempe), the seduction of Eve (*Paradise Lost* by John Milton), the chastity of Imoinda (*Oroonoko* by Aphra Behn), and the Duchess of Malfi (*The Duchess of Malfi* by John Webster), who is perhaps ambiguously seductive and submissive at the same time. Choose TWO female characters from the above list, and discuss the ways the authors formulate their female/feminine subjectivity. (93. 師大)
20. The Enlightenment concepts of “Reason” and “Nature” informed the intellectual and moral visions of many eighteenth-century English literary writers. Discuss how these writers approached the ideas and expressed their understandings of the world through perspectives provided by the ideas. You should discuss at least three major writers. (94. 成大)

21. Literature that evokes laughter and amusement is comic, but satire is not only comic but also implies ridicule and contempt. A satire diminishes its subject in a humorous and ironic way in order to comment upon human vice and folly. Choose ONE of the following works to discuss its satiric elements. Draw upon specific textual evidences such as the narrative speaker, the plot, the characters, or the symbols to make your point. (*Volpone*, *Mac Flecknoe*, *The Way of the World*, *Gulliver's Travels*, *A Modest Proposal*) (94. 師大)