

**Department of English Language and Literature
National and Kapodistrian University of Athens
MA Programme: English Studies: Literature and Culture**

Entry 2023

Entrance Exam Format

The written and oral exams for the Postgraduate Programme which leads to the acquisition of an MA in “English Studies: Literature and Culture” take place at the School of Philosophy at a time and date announced on the Department website.

During a three-hour exam, candidates are asked to explore subjects which relate to Anglophone literature and culture as well as theory and literary criticism. The questions are based on extracts from critical essays or theoretical texts (Part A) and short literary passages (Part B).

On the basis of their general familiarity with literary movements and periods, theoretical and critical trends in Anglophone literature, candidates are asked to write two essays. The first will analyze the main argument or thesis of a given extract from a critical essay (Part A) and the second will be a close reading of a short literary extract, both as regards its subject matter and structure, as well as its aesthetic features (Part B). Candidates are assessed on the basis of their ability to develop a critical argument, their ability to analyze critical essays and literary texts, as well as the quality of their written and spoken English.

Entrance Exam Sample

Answer all questions (parts one and two)

Part One

Choose **one** of the two passages (A or B), and, using examples from literary texts as well as your knowledge of contemporary critical/theoretical movements, develop and comment upon the ideas expressed in the chosen passage. (400-500 words)

A. Further expanding the already large class of Foucauldian apparatuses, I shall call an apparatus literally anything that has in some way the capacity to capture, determine, intercept, model, control, or secure the gestures, behaviours, opinions, or discourses of living beings. Not only, therefore, prisons, madhouses, the panopticon, schools, confession, factories, disciplines, juridical measures, and so forth (whose connection with power is in a certain sense evident), but also the pen, writing, literature, philosophy, agriculture, cigarettes, navigation, computers, cellular telephones and—why not—language itself, which is perhaps the most ancient of apparatuses.

— Giorgio Agamben, “What Is an Apparatus?”

B. Conservative literary critics contend that texts which have come to dominate the canonical lists are there due to their proven quality. Opponents of this view hold that canonical lists merely reflect political, cultural, and economic power relationships. Therefore, attempts to gain a place in the curriculum for the voices of women, minorities, and gay people are in part endeavors to redress political grievances.

— David Linton, "Reading the Metacanoncal Texts"

Part Two

Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*, published in 1925, is set on a single day in London in June 1923. The novel deals with people's ability to cope with change – ageing and death, class mobility, war and peace in the aftermath of World War I when England was undergoing a dramatic cultural change. Narrating the parallel stories of Clarissa Dalloway, who is throwing a party, and Septimus Warren Smith, a shell-shocked World War One veteran, *Mrs. Dalloway* challenged ideas of how a novel could be written and what language could reveal about the inner workings of the self. Discuss the opening of the novel, which is a landmark in modernist fiction, reflecting on the techniques used by Woolf to explore the subjective experience of the mind, as emotion, memory and the outside world flood in and out of the character's consciousness. Develop your answer in the form of an essay (400-500 words).

Mrs. Dalloway said she would buy the flowers herself.

For Lucy had her work cut out for her. The doors would be taken off their hinges; Rumpelmayer's men were coming. And then, thought Clarissa Dalloway, what a morning—fresh as if issued to children on a beach.

What a lark! What a plunge! For so it had always seemed to her, when, with a little squeak of the hinges, which she could hear now, she had burst open the French windows and plunged at Bourton into the open air. How fresh, how calm, stiller than this of course, the air was in the early morning; like the flap of a wave; the kiss of a wave; chill and sharp and yet (for a girl of eighteen as she then was) solemn, feeling as she did, standing there at the open window, that something awful was about to happen; looking at the flowers, at the trees with the smoke winding off them and the rooks rising, falling; standing and looking until Peter Walsh said, "Musing among the vegetables?"—was that it?—"I prefer men to cauliflowers"—was that it? He must have said it at breakfast one morning when she had gone out on to the terrace—Peter Walsh. He would be back from India one of these days, June or July, she forgot which, for his letters were awfully dull; it was his sayings one remembered; his eyes, his pocket-knife, his smile, his grumpiness and, when millions of things had utterly vanished—how strange it was!—a few sayings like this about cabbages.