ENG2850 – Great Works of Literature II

**Name: ……**

**Optional Take-Home Exam**Must be submitted by **the deadline stated on the Schedule** in order to get the half-point bonus on your final grade. All questions must be answered. Since material and time is available at your will, I will expect each answer to be developed and proofread.

Instructions:

* Please answer directly below the questions in this document. You can measure your word count by selecting your answers and looking at the bottom left bar in your Word processor.
* When you are done, please proofread your work at least once.
Save it as **ENG2850\_LastName\_Name\_Take-HomeExam** and send it to me by email by the deadline stated on our website.

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1. **Short answers: Relating great works and literary movements**
2. ***Please answer either a or b (60-100 words).***
3. How do you think Virginia Woolf’s writing style in *A Room of One’s Own* (1929) relates to the historical context of that book? Please identify the context and give at least two ways in which the book relates to it.

**or**

1. Would you say that Emily Dickinson’s poems are experimental? Why?
(Please give at least two reasons why you think so or not, and use a specific example to support your answer.)

***2) Please answer either a or b (80-120 words).***

1. Compare the way reality is represented in Flaubert’s “A Simple Heart” (1877) and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie’s “The Headstrong Historian” (2009). Identify these texts’ literary movements and socio-historical contexts. How differently do they address decay, despair, and loss? Is one more “realistic” than the other? Why?

**or**

1. Emily Dickinson, Henrik Ibsen, and Virginia Woolf each raise questions about feminism through different literary forms and genres. Think about the texts we studied by them, their literary movements, and their socio-historical contexts. Do you see an evolution in the literary treatment of feminism across these authors’ time periods? Why? Even though they wrote in different forms and genres, are there any echoes or patterns that you can trace in their works?
2. ***Please answer either a or b (80-120 words).***
3. The *Confessions* of Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1782) start with the following statements:
“I have entered upon a performance which is without example, whose accomplishment will have no imitator. I mean to present my fellow-mortals with a man in all the integrity of nature; and this man shall be myself.” Rousseau’s works are sometimes attributed to the Enlightenment, other times, to Romanticism. Does the opening of *Confessions* cited above make you lean towards one movement or the other? What in this passage, specifically, makes you say so?

**or**

1. Think about the philosophical concept of time in Naguib Mahfouz’s “Zaabalawi” (1963). How is time represented in this story? What is different, and what is similar? How do you explain this in relation to its literary and historical contexts?
2. **Mini essay (500-700 words)**

Please choose **one** of the following prompts for your mini essay. Most important is that there be **a clear argument in your essay**, **supported by evidence** (references to the text’s plot, character, form, features, or language – no need for exact details – or quotes from the excerpt, only if you chose option 3). In any case, relating the text to its socio-historical context will help your argument. You are free to structure your essay as you please, as long as there is a clear argument.
*Advice: Keep it simple, focus on one aspect of the text (you have very little word count).*

1. The filmmaker Woody Allen said about his film *Midnight in Paris*: “Yeah, that's what the present is. It's a little unsatisfying because life's a little unsatisfying.” The film is about the Modernism era, when a variety of American and European authors wrote some of the most defining texts of Modernism in Paris. Without needing to have watched this film, and based on the Modernist texts we studied, what would you say is ‘’unsatisfying’’ about Modernism, and why? Give at least two examples of ‘’unsatisfying’’ Modernist literary features or techniques and refer to the texts we studied to back up your claims.
*Advice: This question invites you to focus on the relationship between text and audience, also called reader response or readership. You may think about the audience of the Modernism era (identify that historical context) and/or today’s audience.*

**or**

1. Close reading: please comment on the following excerpt from William Wordsworth’s “Lines Composed a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey” (1798). You do not need to cover the whole excerpt. Instead, focus on one or two aspects from it that you think is particularly meaningful, and argue why.
*Advice: Do not make the mistake of talking about the poem at large, or even commonplace and general concepts inspired by the poem. Focus on the excerpt itself, and its immediate literary and historical contexts.*

These beauteous forms,

Through a long absence, have not been to me

As is a landscape to a blind man's eye:

But oft, in lonely rooms, and 'mid the din

Of towns and cities, I have owed to them,

In hours of weariness, sensations sweet,

Felt in the blood, and felt along the heart;

And passing even into my purer mind

With tranquil restoration:—feelings too

Of unremembered pleasure: such, perhaps,

As have no slight or trivial influence

On that best portion of a good man's life