
UNIVERSITI SAINS MALAYSIA

First Semester Examination
2015/2016 Academic Session

December 2015/January 2016

HXE 420 – LITERATURE IN THE RENAISSANCE PERIOD

Duration : 3 hours

Please check that this examination paper consists of TWO printed pages before you begin the examination.

Answer any FOUR questions.

1. In what way/s does John Donne's poetry respond to the Renaissance as an 'age of discovery'? Support your answer with reference to TWO of the poems studied on the course.

[100 marks]

2. With reference to TWO of the Andrew Marvell poems studied, discuss the respective benefits and costs of retirement and ease on the ONE hand, and action and war on the other.

[100 marks]

3. "Here, therefore, is the first distemper [or problem] of learning, when men study words and not matter". To what extent does Francis Bacon's own treatment of 'matter' (subjects or topics) support or contradict this idea? Illustrate your answer with reference to TWO of the *Essays* (1625).

[100 marks]

4. Michel de Montaigne summarised his own sceptical attitude toward knowledge with a rhetorical question, 'What do I know?' With reference to any TWO of the *Essays* (1582), identify how this attitude is expressed.

[100 marks]

5. "Revenge is always reactive, secondary, a response to some previous deed, whereas the most powerful tragedies develop from some primal act of violence" (R. A. Foakes, 2002). In light of this criticism, debate the proposition that *Hamlet* (1602) represents an ineffectual or 'failed' tragedy.

[100 marks]

6. Magic tricks and supernatural power pervade *Dr. Faustus* (1604), but to no significant effect. Explain why.

[100 marks]