

Lingua e letteratura angloamericana MAGISTRALE A 2019/20 – MAY 2020

- You have to write your answers in English. Make sure that your answers contain no spelling or grammar errors;
- Submit **Word** documents;
- On top of your exam write your name, student number, the course name, and the number of credits you need (**if you only need 6 credits write “6-CFU exam”; if you need 12 credits write “12-CFU exam/module A”**);
- Use **400-600** words per question and indicate the word count for each answer;
- Read the questions carefully and try to answer them in a precise, nuanced, and complete way. You will be assessed on **your ability to read primary texts carefully and to clearly explain your analysis**. Be **thoughtful, critical, and articulate**;
- The answer should have a clear, logical structure, with smooth transitions between sentences and/or paragraphs;
- If you write an introduction and/or a conclusion, keep these short (no more than 20% of the word count for introduction and conclusion together) and make sure each part is relevant; quotations too may not comprise more than 20% per answer – preferably less;
- **Originality is important: find your own references and quotes and formulate your own explanations and arguments. THERE WILL BE AN AUTOMATIC PLAGIARISM CHECK.**

1. *Sister Carrie* stages the shift from the 19th to the 20th century, focusing on a crucial stage in the US history in which the country was undergoing radical transformations. Write a paragraph about this statement, referring to relevant episodes or passages from the novel and to the other texts you have read.
2. *Sister Carrie* is, among other things, a novel about media, communication and journalism. Discuss the topic referring to relevant chapters or episodes, and focusing on the historical and cultural background of the United States of the time.
3. Drouet and Hurstwood provide two contrasting models of masculinity. Discuss the matter with reference to the passages from the novel in which this difference is highlighted.
4. Write a comment for the following passage, highlighting its general meaning and its significance within the novel:

Even now she lacked self-assurance, but there was that in what she had already experienced which left her a little less than timid. She wanted pleasure, she wanted position, and yet she was confused as to what these things might be. Every hour the kaleidoscope of human affairs threw a new lustre upon something, and therewith it became for her the desired—the all. Another shift of the box and lo, some other had become the beautiful, the perfect.

On her spiritual side also, she was rich in feeling, as such a nature well might be. Sorrow in her was aroused by many a spectacle—an uncritical upwelling of grief for the weak and the helpless. She was constantly pained by the sight of the white-faced, ragged men who slopped desperately by her in a sort of wretched mental stupor. The poorly clad girls who went blowing by her window evenings—coming from some of the shops of the West Side, she pitied from the depths of her heart. She would stand and bite her lips as they passed, shaking her little head and wondering. They had so little, she thought. It was so sad to be ragged and poor. The hang of faded clothes pained her eyes.

“And they have to work so hard!” was her only comment.

On the street sometimes she would see men working—Irishmen with picks, coal heavers with great loads to shovel, Americans busy about some work which was a mere matter of strength—and they touched her fancy. Toil, now that she was free of it, seemed even a more desolate thing than when she was of it. She saw it through a mist of fancy—a pale, sombre half-light which was the essence of poetic feeling. Her old father, in his flour-dusted miller's suit, sometimes returned to her in memory—revived by a face in a window. A shoemaker pegging at his last, a blastman seen through a narrow window in some basement where iron was being melted, a bench worker seen high aloft in some window, his coat off, his sleeves rolled up—these took her back in fancy to the details of the mill. She felt, though she seldom expressed them, sad thoughts upon this score. Her sympathies were ever with that underworld of toil from which she had so recently sprung and which she best understood.

(ch. 16)

