

- 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* questions the ideology of the separate spheres that had informed the US society in the 19th century. The role of gender categories, at the turn of the century, was undergoing a radical transformation. Discuss the topic referring to relevant chapters or episodes, and focusing on the historical and cultural background of the United States of the time.
2. Is *Sister Carrie* a socialist novel? Discuss the political issues that the novel either explicitly addresses or only hints at.
3. Hurstwood's family: analyze the sections of the novel that feature Hurstwood's domestic background, pointing out the role of the traditional family and its transformation or crisis at the end of the 19th century.
4. Write a comment for the following passage, highlighting its general meaning and its significance within the novel:

When Hurstwood called she met a man who was more clever than Drouet in a hundred ways. Not as insatiably desirous of the feminine, he was yet more successful. He paid that peculiar deference to women which every member of the sex appreciates. He was not overawed, he was not overbold. His great charm was attentiveness. Schooled in winning those birds of fine feather among his own sex, the merchants and professionals who visited his resort, he could use even greater tact when endeavoring to prove agreeable to someone who charmed him. In a pretty woman, of any refinement of feeling whatsoever, he found his greatest incentive. He was mild, placid, assured, giving the impression that he wished to be of service only—to do something which would make the lady more pleased.

Drouet had ability in this line himself when the game was worth the candle, but he was too much the egotist to reach the polish which Hurstwood possessed. He was too buoyant, too full of ruddy life, too assured. He succeeded with many who were not quite schooled in the art of love. He failed dismally where the woman was slightly experienced and possessed innate refinement. In the case of Carrie he found a woman who was all of the latter but none of the former. He was lucky in that opportunity tumbled into his lap, as it were. A few years later with a little more experience, the slightest tide of success, and he had not been able to approach Carrie at all.

Ah, how rapidly women learn. In the main they are Jesuits by instinct. Endow them with beauty, and within the possibilities of their environment they will pick and choose. Show them two men and they will understand which one appreciates women most. Such fine methods of comparison man does not possess. It is an inherited qualification of the sex, developed by ages of necessity.

(ch. 10)

Lingua e letteratura angloamericana MAGISTRALE B 2019/20 – JULY 2020

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1. The United States and England represent two distinct polarities in *The Portrait of a Lady*, each involving a set of values and imageries. Write a paragraph explaining why this opposition is so crucial to the general understanding of the novel, making explicit references to specific passages or episodes.
2. Isabel and Pansy share a lot of traits in common, but also embody two radically different models of femininity. Write a paragraph about these two characters, making references to specific passages or episodes.
3. Aging, illness and death are probably among the most crucial motifs of the novel, which can be read, to some degree, as a novel about human temporality. Discuss the topic referring to relevant chapters or episodes.
4. Write a comment for the following passage, highlighting its general meaning and its significance within the novel:

She could live it over again, the incredulous terror with which she had taken the measure of her dwelling. Between those four walls she had lived ever since; they were to surround her for the rest of her life. It was the house of darkness, the house of dumbness, the house of suffocation. Osmond's beautiful mind gave it neither light nor air; Osmond's beautiful mind indeed seemed to peep down from a small high window and mock at her. Of course it had not been physical suffering; for physical suffering there might have been a remedy. She could come and go; she had her liberty; her husband was perfectly polite. He took himself so seriously; it was something appalling. Under all his culture, his cleverness, his amenity, under his good-nature, his facility, his knowledge of life, his egotism lay hidden like a serpent in a bank of flowers. She had taken him seriously, but she had not taken him so seriously as that. How could she - especially when she had known him better? She was to think of him as he thought of himself - as the first gentleman in Europe. So it was that she had thought of him at first, and that indeed was the reason she had married him. But when she began to see what it implied she drew back; there was more in the bond than she had meant to put her name to. It implied a sovereign contempt for every one but some three or four very exalted people whom he envied, and for everything in the world but half a dozen ideas of his own. That was very well; she would have gone with him even there a long distance; for he pointed out to her so much of the baseness and shabbiness of life, opened her eyes so wide to the stupidity, the depravity, the ignorance of mankind, that she had been properly impressed with the infinite vulgarity of things and of the virtue of keeping one's self unspotted by it. But this base, ignoble world, it appeared, was after all what one was to live for; one was to keep it for ever in one's eye, in order not to enlighten or convert or redeem it, but to extract from it some recognition of one's own superiority. On the one hand it was despicable, but on the other it afforded a standard. Osmond had talked to Isabel about his renunciation, his indifference, the ease with which he dispensed with the usual aids to success; and all this had seemed to her admirable. She had thought it a grand indifference, an exquisite independence. But indifference was really the last of his qualities; she had never seen any one who thought so much of others. For herself, avowedly, the world had always interested her and the study of her fellow creatures been her constant passion. She would have been willing, however, to renounce all her curiosities and sympathies for the sake of a personal life, if the person concerned had only been able to make her believe it was a gain! is at least was her present conviction; and the thing certainly would have been easier than to care for society as Osmond cared for it. (ch. 42)