

- 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* between social determinism and the critique of the United States capitalism: 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. *Sister Carrie* is, among other things, a novel about 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. Hurstwood's family: analyze the sections of the novel that feature Hurstwood's domestic background, highlighting the role of women 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:

The life of the world behind the curtain is a fascinating thing to every outsider with theatrical leanings, as we well know. It would require the pen of a Hawthorne and the spirit of the "Twice-Told Tales" to do justice to that mingled atmosphere of life and mummery which pervades the chambers of the children of the stage. The flare of the gas jets, the open trunks suggestive of travel and display, the scattered contents of the make-up box—rouge, pearl-powder, whiting, burnt cork, India ink, pencils for the eyelids, wigs for the head, scissors, looking glasses, drapery—in short all the nameless paraphernalia of disguise have a remarkable atmosphere of their own. They breathe of the other half of life in which we have no part, of doors that are closed, and mysteries which may never be revealed. Through these we may be admitted—through these get a glimpse of the joys and sorrows which we may never be permitted to feel on our own behalf.

Carrie had not known this atmosphere before, but now it made a deep impression upon her. Since her arrival in the city, many things had influenced her but always in a far-removed manner. This new atmosphere was more friendly. It was wholly unlike the great, brilliant mansions which waved her coldly away, permitting her only awe and distant wonder. This took her by the hand kindly, as one who says, "My dear, come in." It opened for her as if for its own. She had wondered at the greatness of the names upon the billboards, the marvel of the long notices in the papers, the beauty of the dresses upon the stage—the atmosphere of carriages, flowers, refinement. Here was no illusion. Here was an open door to all of that. She had come upon it as one who stumbles upon a secret passage, and, behold, she was in the chamber of diamonds and delight.

(ch. 19)

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1. The notions of ‘activity’ and ‘passivity’ play a crucial role in *The Portrait of a Lady*. Write a paragraph explaining why they are so important and what function they have in the novel, making explicit references to specific passages or episodes. You can refer to the movie as well.
2. Ralph Touchett, Lord Warburton and Caspar Goodwood embody three radically different models of masculinity. Write a paragraph about these characters, making references to specific passages or episodes.
3. *The Portrait of a Lady* is, among other things, a novel about moving across different countries and landscapes. Compare the images of America, Europe and “the Orient” as given in the novel, referring to relevant passages and highlighting their function in the overall narrative.
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)