

- 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. Migrants and migration play a significant role in *Sister Carrie*, the novel often referring to both external and internal migration in the United States in the second half of the 19th century. Write a paragraph about this statement, referring to relevant episodes or passages from the novel and to the other texts you have read.
3. Hurstwood's last days: analyze the sections of the novel featuring the final stage of his life and his suicide.
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)

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

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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. Henrietta Stackpole and Madame Merle, two key figures in the novel, share a number of traits in common, but are also very different from each other. Write a paragraph about these two characters, making references to specific passages or episodes.
3. *The Portrait of a Lady* can be read as a novel about attempts to both build up and preserve families and undermine the very idea and symbolic role of family. Write a paragraph about this statement, referring to the role played by some of the characters.
4. Write a comment for the following passage, highlighting its general meaning and its significance within the novel:

"What is Mr. Osmond?"

"What is he? Nothing at all but a very good man. He is not in business," said Isabel. "He is not rich; he is not known for anything in particular."

She disliked Mr. Goodwood's questions, but she said to herself that she owed it to him to satisfy him as far as possible.

The satisfaction poor Caspar exhibited was certainly small; he sat very upright, gazing at her.

"Where does he come from?" he went on.

"From nowhere. He has spent most of his life in Italy."

"You said in your letter that he was an American. Hasn't he a native place?"

"Yes, but he has forgotten it. He left it as a small boy."

"Has he never gone back?"

"Why should he go back?" Isabel asked, flushing a little, and defensively. "He has no profession."

"He might have gone back for his pleasure. Doesn't he like the United States?"

"He doesn't know them. Then he is very simple—he contents himself with Italy."

"With Italy and with you," said Mr. Goodwood, with gloomy plainness, and no appearance of trying to make an epigram. "What has he ever done?" he added, abruptly.

"That I should marry him? Nothing at all," Isabel replied, with a smile that had gradually become a trifle defiant. "If he had done great things would you forgive me any better? Give me up, Mr. Goodwood; I am marrying a nonentity. Don't try to take an interest in him; you can't."

"I can't appreciate him; that's what you mean. And you don't mean in the least that he is a nonentity. You think he is a great man, though no one else thinks so."

(ch. 32)