Assignment MEG - 01
BRITISH POETRY (MEGOL)
(For July, 2026 and January, 2027 sessions)
(Based on Blocks (1 - 10)

Max. Marks: 100

Answer any five questions. All questions carry equal marks.

1. Discuss Donne's unconventional themes related to metaphysical conceits, paradoxes, and exploration of complex emotions in his love poems. **20**

2. How does Edmund Spenser showcase the theme of national identity in his poetry particularly in The Epithalamion and The Prothalamion? **20**

3. Analyze how Wordsworth uses nature to explore themes of growth, self-discovery, and the influence of the natural world on human experiences as he delineates in 'The Prelude Book I'. Supply suitable examples in support of your answer. **20**

4. Compare and contrast the poetic styles of P.B. Shelley and Keats in dealing with themes of mortality and nature. **20**

5. Explain the narrative structure and thematic significance of T.S. Eliot's 'The Waste Land'. **20**

6. Discuss the portrayal of love and faith in Andrew Marvell's poems with reference to specific examples from the learning material of the course. **20**

7. Investigate how Plath's poetic voice and confessional style are shaped by the larger modernist movements in literature. Discuss her engagement with themes of mental illness, gender dynamics, and personal struggles in the context of the mid-20th century literary landscape.(**20)**

1. Discuss Donne's unconventional themes related to metaphysical conceits, paradoxes, and exploration of complex emotions in his love poems. 20

Answer

John Donne's love poetry is unconventional because it refuses to treat love as a simple, sweet or decorative emotion. Instead, he turns love into an argument. His speakers think, persuade, challenge, joke and sometimes shock the reader. They use images taken from religion, science, geography, law and everyday life. This intellectual energy is a major feature of metaphysical poetry. Donne's poems are therefore not only expressions of feeling; they are dramatic attempts to understand what love does to the body, the mind and the soul.

Metaphysical conceits and surprising comparisons

One of Donne's most striking methods is the metaphysical conceit, an extended comparison between things that seem very different at first. In "The Flea," a tiny insect becomes the centre of an elaborate argument about physical union. The flea has bitten both the speaker and the woman, so their blood is mixed inside it. The speaker playfully treats this mixing as if it were already a kind of marriage. The idea is deliberately strange. Yet the poem shows how quickly Donne can move from a small physical object to questions of sex, honour, religion and social rules. The conceit is not decoration added after the thought; it is the thought itself.

A more serious example appears in "A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning." Two lovers who must be physically separated are compared to the two legs of a geometrical compass. One leg remains fixed at the centre while the other travels in a circle, but both remain connected and finally come together. The image is unusual because geometry seems far removed from love. Donne uses it to suggest steadiness, trust and spiritual unity. Separation is real, but it does not destroy a mature relationship. The conceit gives a precise shape to an emotion that would otherwise be difficult to explain.

In "The Good-Morrow," the lovers' room becomes almost a complete world. Maps, hemispheres and sea discoveries are brought into the language of private love. The age of exploration enters an intimate poem. Donne suggests that the lovers no longer need to search for distant worlds because each finds a complete world in the other. This mixing of personal emotion with geography shows his ability to make love both immediate and intellectually large.