GEG S5 04 (M)
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ENGLISH DRAMA

SEMESTER V

ENGLISH

BLOCK -1

KRISHNA KANTA HANDIQUI STATE OPEN UNIVERSITY

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COURSE INTRODUCTION

The paper titled 'English Drama' in the fifth semester is a compulsory course of the BA English Major programme. It takes up a total of eight representative plays and dramatic works by some of the greatest playwrights and dramatists in English Literature namely Christopher Marlowe, William Shakespeare, Oliver Goldsmith, Henrik Ibsen, William J. Synge, Harold Pinter and Luigi Pirandello. Apart from providing an insight into the life and works of these dramatists, the course is designed with the aim of introducing the learners to the great English dramatic culture that traverses through several centuries starting from the medieval to the modern period.

BLOCK INTRODUCTION

The first block of the course on 'English Drama'consists a total of seven units. The introductory unit of the course introduces the learner to the medieval play titled *Everyman* which is a morality play on the pilgrimage of the protagonist revealing the significance of good deeds in the journey of one's lifetime. The second and third units takes up an Elizabethan tragedy titled *Doctor Faustus* written by Christopher Marlowe who had infused English tragedies with the powerful and passionate use of poetic language among other interesting aspects. The play reveals the protagonist's endless quest for knowledge and power that leads him to certain compromises thereby revealing many a sin that man commits in temptation and the consequences of the same.

The fourth and fifth units takes up one of the widely read plays of the renowned Elizabethan dramatist William Shakespeare titled *Hamlet* which is also considered one of his four greatest tragedies. The play revolves around the unexpected circumstances surrounding the death of prince Hamlet's father which leaves him much disoriented with the world, haunted by the spirit of the late King, secretly following every move of the murderer and engaging in a continuous speculation on the next step that he must take. The sixth and seventh unit takes up the Anglo-Irish playwright Oliver Goldsmith's play titled *She Stoops to Conquer* which in a way mocked the sentimental comedies of his time by allowing his characters to be flawed and thereby more life-like without necessarily being evil. The play reveals its leading protagonist as the new-age heroine who makes wise decisions and brings about a change in one's perspective to excel in life.

After going through the units of the first block, the learner will be able to discuss the prescribed drama and plays in a detailed manner. While going through a unit, you may also notice some text boxes, which have been included to help you know some of the difficult terms and concepts. You will also read about some relevant ideas and concepts in "LET US KNOW" along with the text. We have kept "CHECK YOUR PROGRESS" questions in each unit which have been designed to self-check your progress of study. It is important to note that the Self Learning Material (SLM) is not an end in itself and the learners are strongly advised to consult the references and other resources recommended for reading.