INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

1. Candidates are requested to write legibly.
2. Answer THREE questions.
3. You may not answer more than one question on a film; however, you may answer three questions on novels.
4. This paper consists of five pages. Please ensure that you have them all.
1) *One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest*

In a letter to a friend, Ken Kesey commented that point of view “truly is the most important problem in writing”. Analyse ways in which having *One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest* recounted from Chief Bromden’s point of view influences your reading of the novel.

2) *Sula*

The narrative insistently blurs and confuses [. . .] binary oppositions. It glories in paradox and ambiguity beginning with the prologue that describes the setting, the Bottom, situated spatially in the top. We enter a new world here, a world where we never get to the “bottom” of things, a world that demands a shift from an either/or orientation to one that is both/and, full of shifts and contradictions.

Deborah E. McDowell

Consider *Sula* as an extended satire on binarist thinking.

3) *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*

Examine ways in which the film mocks bourgeois morality and ideology, and promotes an avant-garde sensibility, the exploration of taboos, nonconformist gender politics, camp, queer, the theatrical body – tattooed, cross-gendered, flamboyant – and 1970s hedonism, while at the same time offering a critique of its own excesses.

4) *A Private Life*

On one of the ledges at either end of the snow-white bathtub sits the solitary, green-and-yellow sunflower in the plump lavender vase – the effect, a twilight scene bathed in pale sunlight. […]

A three-dimensional modernist painting, a fictitious world.

It doesn’t matter what time of day it is, all I have to do is cast a glance into the bathroom and I feel as if I had just come back from a long journey and, tired and short of breath, all I want to do is feel the warm currents of water flow around me as I lie there quietly, naked as an eel in the shush of running water, conscious only of its caressing warmth.

The scene in my bathroom is rich in pattern, order, and certainty, while the scenes in the world outside are brushed in sloppy, incoherent strokes, a constant uproar of changing appearances and structures.
Two worlds, one inside, one outside, and I can’t decide which one is nothing more than dreams.

One by one, the days go by. All time has passed away and left me here alone.

On one such day, I noticed that my rubber tree, my tortoiseshell bamboo, and all the green shrubs on my balcony were growing so vigorously that there was no longer enough room for them. My first thought was that perhaps I should move them to the flower beds outside. From the way they were gazing down from the balcony window, I could see that they too had been thinking about this and couldn’t make up their minds. If they were to move outside, they could draw nourishment from the rich soil of the broad, deep beds, but they would also have to struggle ceaselessly with all the other plants to survive. And they would be unprotected from the wind and sun. On the other hand, although they could escape nature’s ravaging heat and cold on my balcony, they would be deprived of any deeper sustenance.

They are thinking about this. So am I.

Carefully analyse the effects achieved in these passages, which occur at the end of the novel.

5) *Shallow Grave*

The bottom line in any great murder case, I believe, is the sneaky suspicion that there, but for the grace of God, go we — either as victim or, in our nightmares, murderer. Since no reasonable person can remotely hope to identify with Juliet, David or Alex, the whole case drops through.

Roger Ebert

Many critics, like Ebert, find all three main characters in the film to be morally repulsive and unlikeable. Do you agree? How does your response to the characters determine your reaction to the film as a whole?

6) *Specimen Days*

Cunningham’s image of hope in the face of disaster is aimed at the present moment and is brought into being from both the past and the future. The carefully controlled tripartite structure that integrates related narrative chronologies is stretched into a future that is at once unknown and simultaneously deeply
familiar. The repetition that incorporates small variations, with Simon, Luke and Catherine each taking it in turns to die before the other, combined with the ventriloquized and polyvalent voice of Whitman throughout, weaves together a moment of hopeful resolve while echoing the repetitive structure and temporal leaps characteristic of trauma itself.

Robert Duggan

Explain ways in which techniques employed by Cunningham respond to the task of mourning those who died in the attacks on the Twin Towers in New York on 11 September 2001, while evoking hope for the city’s future.

7) TransAmerica

For Bree to succeed in her emotional journey to overcome the marginalizing heteronormative constructs for the American citizen, she must first turn to the catalytic influences of her fellow outsiders.

Matthew McDonald

The film forges the analogy that to be transsexual and white is like being racially other, but it also reinforces the simplistic and incorrect notion that “racial others” lack power.

Rebecca Scherr

Interpret the film’s representations of transgender and race, offering where appropriate responses to the above quotations.

8) The Virgin of Flames

Critically analyse the effects created in the last chapter of The Virgin of Flames, “Benediction”. Explain how they are typical of the concerns expressed throughout the text.

Leavened.
This blue light here and trembling with knowledge beyond measure; also love: perhaps. It falls with the sense of a wingspan, but is gone just as soon leaving only the memory of it; and like this River, it is never the same twice.
Last night’s regretful rain is now only ash.
And maybe this too.
Here, on the edge of morning, perched on the lip of a bridge, hunched in the solitary sadness of a gargoyle, a woman picks petals from a flower, dropping each into the endless flow, her whispers holding it all like a prayer: he loved me; he loved me not. In the river below, an angry dog barks as it swims for safety unaware of the petals falling like gossamer, like promises not kept. But there are no scriptures here in this city of angels where every moment is a life lived too fast, where the spines of freeways, like arteries, like blood, circle in hope. Permanence is this River and with piety’s conviction we make a home here.

There will never be no more River.

9) *District 9*

Aliens impinge on human existence and incite our longing either to be better than we are, or at least not worse.

Istvan Csicsery-Ronay

Evaluate the significance of the shifts portrayed in the character of Wikus van de Merwe as he engages with aliens, and he himself becomes alien.

10) *Zoo City*

A critical dystopia is a non-existent society described in some detail and normally located in time and space that the author intended a contemporaneous reader to view as worse than contemporary society but that normally includes at least one eutopian enclave or holds out hope that the dystopian can be overcome and replaced with a eutopia.

Lyman Tower Sargent

Provide a critical analysis of *Zoo City*, using the framework of the critical dystopian.