



**AFRICA  
UNIVERSITY**  
*A United Methodist-Related Institution*

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## **CSSTHE**

**HEC 201/HEN 303: Syntax and Semantics**

**END OF FIRST SEMESTER EXAMINATIONS**

**NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2018**

**LECTURER: DR P.R SVONGORO**

**DURATION: 3 HOURS**

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### ***INSTRUCTIONS***

1. Answer any THREE questions in this paper. All questions carry EQUAL marks.

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2. Number your answers carefully.

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3. Begin each new answer on a fresh page and write legibly.



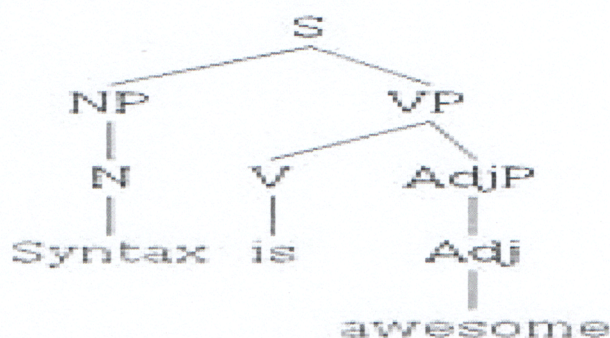
Answer any THREE questions.

#### QUESTION 1

Discuss the view by De Swart (1998: 101) that, "If we are interested in language as a means of communication, we do not want to study syntax for its own sake". [20 marks]

#### QUESTION 2

Study the following phrase structure tree and answer the question which follows.



Using the above sentence and any **three** others of your own, explain the functions played by Noun Phrases (NPs) and Verb Phrases (VPs) in sentences. [20 marks]

#### QUESTION 3

Demonstrate the syntax-semantics interface by showing that syntactic elements (noun, verb, adjective and adverb for instance) have distinct roles in syntax which change when one considers their thematic/semantic roles. [20 marks]

#### QUESTION 4

Study the following words and then answer the questions that follow.

**dear, light, bear, dull, bright**



- (a) Group the words according to their semantic relations and justify your classification. **[10 marks]**
- (b) Using examples from the list of words above, explain the semantic issue raised by homonyms and polysemous words. **[10 marks]**

#### QUESTION 5

Study the following ambiguous sentences and answer the questions which follow.

- (i) The burglar threatened the student with the knife.
- (ii) Visiting relatives can be boring.
- (iii) John found his wallet near the bank.
- (iv) Peter informed the warden about the burglary at their hostel. He was so upset about it.

- (a) Identify and explain the type of ambiguity found in each of the sentences above. **[8 marks]**
- (b) Using your own examples, explain why ambiguity is both a syntactic and semantic issue. **[12 marks]**

**END OF EXAMINATION**