

GUIDELINES FOR THE M.A. COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION AND LITERATURE OPTION READING LIST

Fall 2005

Literature Option students are responsible for four different literary periods. They should prepare to answer a question on one period from each of the four categories below. (Teaching Assistants in the literature option are responsible for one period from each of the first three categories as well as a question on writing pedagogy and rhetoric.) The comprehensive examination will be offered by arrangement with the Graduate Program Director. Usually, students choose to take the exam following the completion of their graduate coursework in early to mid June or mid to late January. Students should meet with the Graduate Program Director at least two months prior to specify the four (or three for teaching assistants) literary periods of choice and to apply for a timeslot. After consultation with all of the students who have applied for an exam slot, the Director will set specific times, dates and locations. Normally, the examination will be administered in two parts on two separate days (with a “day of rest” in between), with two periods covered in each part—one in the morning and one in the afternoon. (Note: Students who wish to take the exam at times other than those indicated above should discuss their options with the Director.)

The Four Categories:

1. **Medieval and Renaissance or Restoration and 18th Century**
2. **19th Century British or American Literature to the 20th Century**
3. **20th Century American or 20th Century British**
4. **One additional period** from the six listed above (or writing pedagogy and rhetoric for teaching assistants)

For each of the four parts of the M.A. comprehensive examination, students will have at least two questions to choose from. Texts and notes are not allowed for the examination, although specific small poems or quoted excerpts may be provided with or within the question itself. Questions may require students to work with a single long work, a selection of works by a single author or poet, or a selection of works by a group of writers. The essays should demonstrate the student’s competency in dealing intelligently and cogently with matters such as analyzing literary texts, discussing their inherent thematic issues, addressing matters of form and/or content, and so on.

Examinations will be graded by no fewer than two faculty readers who will determine if each essay is high pass, pass or fail. In cases of disagreement, there will be a third reader. Whenever possible, at least one of the readers will be a specialist in the area the question covers. Usually, the readers will not know the name of the student whose exam they are grading nor will the students know the identities of the readers.

A student may attempt the test a maximum of two times. If the student fails more than two parts on the first attempt, he or she must retake the entire examination. In the second attempt, he or she must then pass no fewer than three parts. If a student fails two parts on the first attempt, he or she must retake two parts and pass at least one on the second attempt. If a student fails one part, he or she must retake that part. In any case, if the student fails one part twice, he or she will undertake an assigned research project in that area under the supervision of by a faculty member designated by the graduate committee. Students who fail to pass three parts of the examination in two tries will not be awarded the M.A. in English.

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MA LITERATURE OPTION READING LIST

MEDIEVAL AND RENAISSANCE

Beowulf

Chaucer

General prologue to *The Canterbury Tales*

"The Miller's Prologue and Tale"

"The Wife of Bath's Prologue and Tale"

"The Pardoner's Prologue and Tale"

Donne

"Go and Catch a Falling Star"

"The Flea"

"The Sun Rising"

"The Canonization"

"A Valediction forbidding Mourning"

"Holy Sonnets" (1, 7, 10)

"Good Friday, 1613. Riding Westward"

Milton

"Lycidas"

Paradise Lost

Spenser

Faerie Queene, Book I

Shakespeare

Sonnets:

18 [Shall I compare thee to a summer's day]

43 [When most I wink, then do mine eyes best see]

73 [That time of year thou mayst in me behold]

116 [Let me not to the marriage of true minds]

130 [My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun]

Hamlet

Twelfth Night

The Tempest

Henry IV, 1 and 2

Marlowe

Doctor Faustus

RESTORATION AND 18TH CENTURY

Blake

"Songs of Innocence and Experience"

Pope

"An Essay on Criticism"

"The Rape of the Lock"

"The Dunciad," Bk. IV

Fielding

Joseph Andrews

Swift

"Strephon and Chloe"

"Verses on the Death of Dr. Swift"

"A Modest Proposal"

Gulliver's Travels

Wycherly

The Country Wife

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19TH CENTURY BRITISH

Arnold

"Resignation"
"Memorial Verses"
"Dover Beach"
"Stanza from the Grand Chartreuse"
"Sweetness and Light"

Browning

"My Last Duchess"
"The Bishop Orders His Tomb"
"Fra Lippo Lippi"
"Soliloquy of the Spanish Cloister"

Carlyle

"The Everlasting No"
"The Everlasting Yea"
"Natural Supernaturalism"

Keats

"The Eve of St. Agnes"
"Ode to a Nightingale"
"Ode on a Grecian Urn"
"To Autumn"

Shelley

"Mont Blanc"
"Ode to the West Wind"

Tennyson

"Locksley Hall"
"The Lady of Shalott"
"The Lotus-Eaters"
"Ulysses"

Wordsworth

Lyrical Ballads (including Preface)
"Ode: Intimations of Immortality"

Austen

Pride and Prejudice

Brontë

Jane Eyre

Dickens

Hard Times

Shelley

Frankenstein

AMERICAN LITERATURE TO THE 20TH CENTURY

Dickinson

"Because I could not stop for Death"
"These are the days when birds come back--"
"Wild Nights--Wild Nights!"
"There's a certain slant of light"
"The soul selects her own society--"
"After great pain, a formal feeling comes--"
"I heard a fly buzz--when I died--"
"A narrow fellow in the grass"
"Tell all the truth but tell it slant--"

Whitman

"Song of Myself"

Hawthorne

"The Minister's Black Veil"
"Young Goodman Brown"
"My Kinsman, Major Molineaux"

Melville

"Benito Cereno"
Billy Budd

Poe

"The Fall of the House of Usher"

Chopin

The Awakening

Douglass

Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass

Twain

Adventures of Huckleberry Finn

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20TH CENTURY AMERICAN

Brooks
 "The Mother"
 "A Song in the Front Yard"
 "The Lovers of the Pool"

Eliot
 "The Waste Land"

Frost
 "Mending Wall"
 "After Apple Picking"
 "Design"
 "Directive"
 "Birches"
 "Home Burial"

Hughes
 "The Negro Speaks of Rivers"
 "Theme for English B"
 "I, Too"

Lowell
 "Skunk Hour"

Plath
 "Daddy"
 "Cut"
 "Lady Lazarus"

Pound
 "In a Station of the Metro"
 "The River Merchant's Wife"
 "Hugh Selwyn Mauberly"

Williams
 "The Red Wheelbarrow"
 "Spring and All"
 "The Widow's Lament in Springtime"

Ellison
 "Battle Royal"

Faulkner
Go Down, Moses
 "A Rose for Emily"

Fitzgerald
The Great Gatsby

Hemingway
 "Big Two-Hearted River"
 "A Clean, Well-Lighted Place"
 "Hills Like White Elephants"

Hurston
Their Eyes Were Watching God

Morrison
The Bluest Eye

O'Connor
 "Everything that Rises Must Converge"

O'Neill
Long Day's Journey into Night

Williams
A Streetcar Named Desire

20TH CENTURY BRITISH

Heaney
 "Digging"
 "Punishment"
 "Bogland"

Hughes
Crow

Larkin
 "High Windows"
 "Church Going"

Yeats
 "The Lake Isle of Innisfree"
 "September, 1913"
 "The Wild Swans at Coole"
 "Easter, 1916"
 "The Second Coming"
 "Sailing to Byzantium"
 "Among School Children"
 "Crazy Jane Talks with the Bishop"
 "Lapis Lazuli"

Conrad
Heart of Darkness

Joyce
The Dead

Lawrence
 "Odour of Chrysanthemums"
 "The Horse Dealer's Daughter"

Spark
The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie

Winterson
Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit

Woolf
To the Lighthouse

Beckett
Endgame

Osborne
Look Back in Anger

Stoppard
Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead