**MA in English**

**Comprehensive Examination Reading List**

**(Effective 15 August 2015)**

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**1. Instructions**

**1.1. Supervisory Committee**

By the time the student has completed eighteen (18) hours of graduate coursework toward the degree, the student must have selected a supervisory committee that will be responsible for administering and evaluating the oral comprehensive examination.

Each supervisory committee should comprise at least three members of the graduate faculty in English, selected according to their ability to examine students over the various literary periods represented in the Common Reading List. One member should be responsible for British Literature to 1500 and British Literature 1500 to 1660; another, British Literature 1660 to 1832 and British Literature 1832 to Present; and another, American Literature to 1870 and American Literature 1870 to Present.

**1.2. Oral Examinations**

After successful completion of most or all of the coursework, students must pass an oral examination that covers the Common Reading List.

**1.2.1. Oral Examination Schedule**

Students will work with their supervisory committees to schedule oral examinations no later than one week before scheduled graduation.

**1.2.2. Oral Examination Format**

The student will meet with her or his supervisory committee for the oral examination. No books, notes, computers, or other devices will be permitted, although student will be provided with a copy of the reading list. Ten minutes will be devoted to questions and answers over each area.

**1.2.3. Oral Examination Marking, Reporting, and Retakes**

After the student has completed the oral examination session, the faculty members of the supervisory committee will evaluate the student’s performance on the examination and vote whether the student passed the examination in whole or in part. The committee will submit its report to the graduate coordinator, and the graduate coordinator will notify the student of the results. Students may retake failed portions of the oral examination up to two times; no examination may be taken more than three times.

**2. Reading Lists by Area**

***2.1. BRITISH LITERATURE TO 1500***

1. The Beowulf Poet: *Beowulf*

2. Anglo-Saxon Poetry: “The Wanderer,” “The Dream of the Rood,” “The Wife’s Lament,” “The Seafarer,” “Wulf and Eadwacer,” Bede’s account of Caedmon and “Caedmon’s Hymn”

3. Medieval Drama:

3a. *Mankind*

3b. York Cycle: *Crucifixion*

3c. Towneley Cycle: *Noah, Second Shepherds’ Play*, and *Last Judgment*

4. Geoffrey Chaucer: *Canterbury Tales:“* The “General Prologue,” The Knight’s Prologue and Tale, The Miller’s Prologue and Tale, The Reeve’s Prologue and Tale, The Wife of Bath’s Prologue and Tale, The Merchant’s Prologue and Tale, The Pardoner’s Prologue and Tale, The Prioress’s Prologue and Tale, The Nun’s Priest’s Prologue and Tale

5. William Langland: *The Vision of William Concerning Piers Plowman,* B Text, Passus 1-6

6. Marie de France: *The Lais of Marie de France*

7. The Pearl-Poet: *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*

8. Thomas Malory: “The Tale of King Arthur,” “The Tale of the Sankgreal,” “The Most Piteous Tale of the Morte Arthur Saunz Guerdon”

***2.2. BRITISH LITERATURE, 1500-1660***

1. More: *Utopia*

2. Sixteenth-Century Lyric

2a. Wyatt: Petrarch 140, 189, 190, “Who list his wealth and ease retain,” “Mine own John Poins”

2b. Surrey: Petrarch 140, 310, “So cruel prison how could betide”

2c. Sidney, *Astrophil and Stella* 1, 7, 15, 34

2d. Spenser, *Shepherdes Calendar* "To His Booke," "Aprill" and "October" Eclogues*; Amoretti* 1, 75

3. Spenser, Book 1, *Faerie Queene*

4. Kyd, *Spanish Tragedy*, Jonson, *Volpone*, Webster, *Duchess of Malfi*

5. Shakespeare, *King Lear*, *Henry IV, Part 1*, *Twelfth Night*

6. Donne, “A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning,” “The Bait,” “The Flea,” “The Canonization,” “Elegy 19,” “Good Friday, Riding Westward,” Holy Sonnets “I am a little world made cunningly, “ “Death, be not proud,” “Batter my heart, three-personed God,” Meditation 17

7. Jonson, “To My Book,” “On Something, That Walks Somewhere,” “To William Camden,” “To John Donne,” “Inviting a Friend to Supper,” “On My First Son,” “On My First Daughter,” “To Penshurst,” “To the Memory of My Beloved, the Author, Mr. William Shakespeare”

8. Seventeenth-Century Lyric

8a. Wroth, *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus* 1, 25, 39, 68, 74

8b. Herbert, “Easter Wings, “ “Jordan (1),” “The Windows,” “The Collar,” “The Pulley”

8c. Marvell, “Bermudas,” “The Nymph Complaining for the Death of her Fawn,” “To His Coy Mistress,” “The Mower Against Gardens,” “Horatian Ode Upon Cromwell’s Return from Ireland”

***2.3. BRITISH LITERATURE 1660-1832***

1. John Milton, *Paradise Lost*

2. Restoration Dramas

2a. Aphra Behn, *The Rover*

2b. William Congreve, *The Way of the World*

2c. Susanna Centlivre, *A Bold Stroke for a Wife*

3. Daniel Defoe, *Moll Flanders*

4. Jonathan Swift, *Tale of a Tub*

5. Alexander Pope, *The Dunciad*

6. William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *The Lyrical Ballads* (1800)

7. Jane Austen, *Sense and Sensibility*

8. Romantic Poetry

8a. Charlotte Smith: I, "The Partial Muse"; III, "The Nightingale";

VII, "On the Departure of the Nightingale"; LV, "The Return of the

Nightingale"; LXX, "On being cautioned against walking on a Headland

overlooking the Sea, because it was frequented by a Lunatic"

8b. William Blake: "The Mental Traveler"; "The Chimney Sweeper" (from

Songs of Innocence); "The Chimney Sweeper" (from Songs of Experience);

"Marriage of Heaven and Hell"

8c. John Keats: "When I Have Fears"; "Ode to a Nightingale"; "Ode on

Melancholy"; "Ode on a Grecian Urn"; "To Autumn"

***2.4. BRITISH LITERATURE 1832 TO PRESENT***

1. Victorian Poetry

1a. Alfred Tennyson: “The Lady of Shalott,”; “Ulysses”; “The Lotos-Eaters”; "The Charge of the Light Brigade”; “Locksley Hall”

1b. Elizabeth Barrett Browning: *Sonnets from the Portuguese* Sonnets 21, 22, 43; "The Runaway Slave at Pilgrim's Point"

1c. Matthew Arnold: "Dover Beach"; "The Buried Life"; "The Scholar-Gypsy"

2. Charlotte Bronte: *Jane Eyre*

3. Charles Dickens: *David Copperfield*

4. Victorian Nonfiction Prose

4a. Thomas Carlyle: from *Past and Present,* “Captains of Industry"

4b. John Stuart Mill: from *The Subjection of Women,* "Chapter One"

4c. John Ruskin: from *The Stones of Venice,* "The Nature of Gothic"

5. Modern Poetry

5a. W. B. Yeats: "The Lake Isle of Innisfree"; "The Second Coming"; "Easter 1916"; "Among School Children"; "Sailing to Byzantium"

5b. World War One Poetry: Rupert Brooke: "The Soldier"; Wilfred Owen: "Dulce Et Decorum Est"; Siegfried Sassoon: "They"; Siegfried Sassoon: "Glory of Women"; May Wedderburn Cannan: “Rouen”

5c. Thomas Hardy: "Hap"; "The Darkling Thrush"; "Channel Firing"; "Convergence of the Twain"; "The Ruined Maid"

6. Virginia Woolf: *Mrs Dalloway*

7. James Joyce: *Dubliners*

8. Oscar Wilde: *The Importance of Being Earnest*

***2.5. AMERICAN LITERATURE TO 1870***

1. Bradford: Chapters I, IX, XI, XIV, and XIX in *Of Plymouth Plantation*

2. Nathaniel Hawthorne: *House of the Seven Gables*

3. Emerson: *Self-Reliance*; “The American Scholar”; “Introduction” to *Nature*

4. Jacobs: *Incidents in the Life*

5. Early American Short Works

5a. Poe: “The Tell-Tale Heart”

5b. Charlotte Perkins Gilman: “The Yellow Wallpaper”

5c. James: *Daisy Miller*

6. Melville: *Moby-Dick*

7. Whitman: "Song of Myself"; "Lilacs"; "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry"

8. Early-American Poetry

8a. Anne Bradstreet: “The Author to Her Book”; “A Letter to Her Husband, Absent upon Public Employment”; “Before the Birth of One of Her Children”; “Upon the Burning of Our House July 10th, 1666”

8b. Edward Taylor: “The Preface to *God’s Determinations*”; “Huswifery”; “Upon Wedlock, & Death of Children”; “The Ebb & Flow”; “A Fig for thee Oh! Death”

8c. Emily Dickinson: “There’s a certain Slant of light”; “I started Early—Took my Dog—”; “I Felt a Funeral”; “Publication—is the Auction”; “Because I could not stop for Death—”;

“My Life had stood—a Loaded Gun—”; “After Certain Pain a Formal Feeling Comes”

***2.6. AMERICAN LITERATURE 1870 TO PRESENT***

1. William Faulkner: *Absalom, Absalom!*

2. Jean Toomer: *Cane*

3. Edith Wharton: *The* *House of Mirth*

4. Don DeLillo : *White Noise*

5. Short Stories

5a. Flannery O’Connor: “Good Country People,” “Everything That Rises Must Converge’” “The Displaced Person,” “The Life You Save May Be Your Own,” “The Artificial Nigger”

5b. Eudora Welty: “A Visit of Charity,” “Powerhouse,” “At the Landing,” “The Petrified Man,” “Moon Lake”

5c. Raymond Carver: “The Student’s Wife,” “The Bridle,” “So Much Water So Close to Home,” “Why Don’t You Dance?,” “Where I’m Calling From”

6. Modern Drama

6a. Arthur Miller: *Death of a Salesman*

6b. Tennessee Williams: *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*

6c. Eugene O’Neill: *Long Day’s Journey into Night*

7. Early Modernist Poetry

7a. T.S. Eliot: *The Wasteland,* “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock”

7b. William Carlos Williams: “Spring and All,” “To Elsie,” “Danse Russe,” “The Great Figure,” “The Widow’s Lament in Springtime”

7c. Robert Frost: “Mending Wall,” “Home Burial,” “The Oven Bird,” “ ‘Out, Out—‘,” “Directive”

8. Mid-Century Poetry

8a. Gwendolyn Brooks: “A Bronzeville Mother Loiters in Mississippi. Meanwhile, a Mississippi Mother Burns Bacon,” “To Be in Love,” “Gay Chaps at the Bar” (entire sequence), “The Lovers of the Poor,” “The Ballad of Rudolph Reed”

8b. Elizabeth Bishop: “Poem,” “The Moose,” “The Armadillo,” “Sandpiper,” “Arrival at Santos”

8c. Robert Lowell: “The Quaker Graveyard in Nantucket,” “To Speak of Woe That Is in Marriage,” “Skunk Hour,” “For the Union Dead,” “Mr. Edwards and the Spider”