Master’s Exam Reading List: 2014

Chaucer, Canterbury Tales: General Prologue, Knight’s Tale, Miller’s Prologue and Tale, Reeve’s Prologue and Tale, Wife of Bath’s Prologue and Tale, Friar’s Prologue and Tale, Summoner’s Prologue and Tale, Clerk’s Prologue and Tale, Merchant’s Prologue and Tale, Franklin’s Prologue and Tale, Pardoner’s Prologue and Tale, and Nun’s Priest’s Prologue and Tale

Shakespeare, King Lear and The Tempest


Milton, Paradise Lost

Pope, Rape of the Lock

Defoe, Robinson Crusoe

Burney, Evelina

Austen, Persuasion

Wordsworth, Lyrical Ballads & Coleridge, “The Rime of the Ancient Mariner”

Harriet Jacobs, Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl

Dickens, Bleak House


Woolf, To the Lighthouse

Morrison, Song of Solomon

Walcott, Omeros

*Only the Wordsworth poems that are included in the 8th edition of The Norton Anthology of English Literature, plus the Preface to Lyrical Ballads.

**M.A. Exam Guidelines**

Students will normally be expected to take the new M.A. exam at the beginning of their final full semester. For most of you, that will be in January of 2014. In accordance with Graduate School Policy, students have one opportunity to retake the exam in the event that they fail on the first attempt.

There will be four one-hour questions, one of which will be an explication question on a work not previously announced. There will be no element of choice on the explication question. The other three one-hour questions will be from the reading list, and each will allow students to pick one question from a set of two.

In addition to the texts on the list, students should be conversant with broad issues concerning genre (the epic, the dramatic monologue, etc.) and literary history.

Each calendar year three works will rotate off the list and be replaced by three different ones. Copies of future reading lists will be made available.