

Master's Exam Reading List: 2012

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, Othello and Much Ado about Nothing

Donne, "The Canonization," "A Valediction Forbidding Mourning," "The Ecstasy," "The Flea," "Twickenham Garden," "A Fever," "The Anniversary," "The Primrose," "A Nocturnal upon St. Lucy's Day, Being the Shortest Day," "A Valediction: Of My Name, in the Window"

Milton, Paradise Lost

Pope, Rape of the Lock

Swift, Gulliver's Travels

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

Dickinson (poem numbers are from the recommended Franklin edition), "I taste a liquor never brewed" (207), "There's a certain slant of light" (320), "I felt a funeral in my brain" (340), "It was not death, for I stood up" (355), "After great pain" (372), "This world is not conclusion" (373), "The soul selects her own society" (409), "My life had stood a loaded gun" (464), "I dwell in possibility" (466), "I reckon when I count at all" (533), "The brain -- is wider than the sky--" (598), "I started early -- took my dog" (656), "Each life converges to some centre--" (724), "Behind me -- dips eternity--" (743), "The loneliness one dare not sound--" (877), "Severer service of myself" (887), "I stepped from plank to plank" (926), "As the starved maelstrom laps the navies" (1064), "A narrow fellow in the grass" (1096), "Tell all the truth but tell it slant" (1263)

Stevens, “Tea at the Palaz of Hoon,” “Disillusionment of Ten O’Clock,” “Sunday Morning,” “The Idea of Order at Key West,” “The Motive for Metaphor,” and “The World as Meditation”

Faulkner, The Sound and the Fury

Morrison, Beloved

Nabokov, Pale Fire

*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 2011. Under the new system, students will have only one opportunity to retake the exam if they don’t pass it the first time. This is in accordance with Graduate School policy.

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.