

**WESTERN UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH**

PhD QUALIFYING EXAMINATION READING LIST

English 9916 (SF)/ 9936 (PF)

AMERICAN LITERATURE

In order to develop a wide-ranging competency to teach and research in the field of American literature, candidates will prepare a reading list according to the instructions and requirements below. Students are encouraged to use scholarly editions of texts that will provide appropriate introductory and supplementary material (committee members can provide guidance on the kinds of editions that would be appropriate).

1. Instructions

i. Secondary Field Exam

Students may choose to specialize in three periods: the earlier (American I, contact-1865), the later (American II, 1865-present), or the entire span of the literature. Students who choose American I or American II should a) select roughly 40-45 of the **core** texts from that period and 15-18 texts from the other, and b) supplement with 10-15 additional texts of their choice (these selections may be made from the list if desired; all choices should be made in consultation with their committee). Students who ch

encouraged to choose theory and criticism that pertain to the primary texts they have chosen or that comment on their intended area of focus in American literature and culture.

CORE & OPTIONAL TEXTS

The American Literature list covers a time period from the contact era through to the present day. As a result of this expansive range of time, the list is divided into two periods, American Literature I and American Literature II. Particular texts and time periods listed are intended to be suggestive rather than prescriptive: candidates may substitute authors and texts not on the list in consultation with the Examining Committee. The candidate's list must include representative prose, poetry, and drama.

Core titles are listed in bold and should be given more weight in compiling lists (see instructions above).

* Students may, in consultation with their committee, choose a selection from texts marked by an asterisk.

American Literature I: origins-1865

PROSE 16th-17th Centuries

Alvar Nunez Cabeza de Vaca *The Relaccion* (1542)

Samuel de Champlain *Voyages of Samuel de Champlain* (1604-1618)

Thomas Hariot *A Briefe and True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia* (1588)

John Smith *General Historie of Virginia, New England, and the Summer Isles* (1624)*

Thomas Morton *New English Canaan* (1637)*

William Bradford *Of Plymouth Plantation* (1647)

John Winthrop Read:

“A Model of Christian Charity” (1629-30)

Journal of John Winthrop

Student may choose these additional texts:

“A Defence of an Order of Court” (1637)

“The Examination of Mrs. Anne Hutchinson” (1637)

Choose at least 3 of:

“The American Scholar” (1837)

“Divinity School Address” (1838)

“Self-Reliance” (1841)

“The Poet” (1844)

Margaret Fuller

Edgar Allan Poe

Women in the Nineteenth Century (1845)

At least 4 of: “Berenice” (1835)

The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket (1838)

“Fall of the House of Usher” (1839)

“The Man of the Crowd” (1840)

“Murders in the Rue Morgue” (1841)

“The Tell-Tale Heart” (1843)

“The Purloined Letter” (1844)

“Murders in the Rue Morgue” (1841)

Frederick Douglass

Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass (1845)

“What to the Slave is the 4th of July?” (1852)

Dion Boucicault

“The Octoroon” (1859)

William Wells Brown

Narrative of William Wells Brown (1847)

Clotel, Or, the President (1853)

Henry David Thoreau

Walden (1854)

Nathaniel Hawthorne

(At least 1 novel and 1 short story from:)

“My Kinsman, Major Molineux” (1832)

“Young Goodman Brown” (1835)

“Rappaccini’s Daughter” (1844)

The Scarlet Letter (1850)

The House of the Seven Gables (1851)

The Blithedale Romance (1852)

Harriet Beecher Stowe

(1852)

Sojourner Truth “Speech to the Women’s Rights Convention in Akron, Ohio, 1851”

Herman Melville

Moby-Dick (1851)

(At least 2 of)

Typee (1846)

Pierre, or, the Ambiguities (1852)

“Bartleby, the Scrivener” (1853)

“Benito Cereno” (1855)

“The Paradise of Bachelors and the Tartarus of Maids” (1855)

Billy Budd [1891] (1926)

Harriet Jacobs

Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl (1861)

Harriet Wilson

Our Nig (1859)

Martin Delany

Blake, or the Huts of America (1859)

Rebecca Harding Davis

Life in the Iron Mills (1861)

Abraham Lincoln

“Gettysburg Address” (1863)

POETRY--1600-1865

Native American poetry

see poetry selections in “Native American Oral Literature” in

Anne Bradstreet

5-volume Norton Anthology

The Tenth Muse (1650)

“The Author to Her Book” (1678)

“Some Lines Written on the Burning of My House”(1666)

“To My Dear and Loving Husband” (1678)

Edward Taylor

“Upon a Spider Catching a Fly”

Phillis Wheatley

Poems Occasional and Moral (1773)

Philip Freneau poems including “The Rising Glory of America”
(1786 version); “The Indian Burying Ground” (1788)

Kate Chopin

The Awakening (1899)

PROSE 1900-1950

Zitkala-

Impressions from an Indian Childhood (1900) and

The School Days of an Indian Girl (1900)

Sister Carrie (1900) or *An American Tragedy* (1925)

Theodore Dreiser

Up from Slavery (1901)

Booker T. Washington

The Marrow of Tradition (1901)

Charles Chesnutt

Indian Boyhood (1902)

Charles A. Eastman

The Souls of Black Folk (1903)

W.E.B. Du Bois

The House of Mirth (1905) or *The Age of Innocence* (1920)

Edith Wharton

(1906)

Geronimo

The Education of Henry Adams (1906)

Henry Adams

1 novel or or 5-6 short stories, including “To Build a Fire” (1908)

Jack London

1 of “Melanctha” (1909); *Tender Buttons* (1914)

Gertrude Stein

The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas (1933)

Sui Sin Far (Edith Eaton)

“Mrs. Spring Fragrance” (1912)

James Weldon Johnson

The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man (1912)

Willa Cather

My Antonia (1918) or *O Pioneers!* (1913)

Sinclair Lewis

Main Street (1920) or *Babbitt* (1922)

John Dos Passos

Manhattan Transfer (1925)

F. Scott Fitzgerald

The Great Gatsby (1925) or *Tender Is the Night* (1934)

Ernest Hemingway

In Our Time (1925) and at least 1 other novel or 5-6 short stories

Nella Larsen

Quicksand (1928) or *Passing* (1929)

William Faulkner

At least 2 of: *The Sound and the Fury* (1929)

As I Lay Dying (1930)

Absalom, Absalom (1936)

Light in August (1932)

“Barn Burning” (1939)

Go Down, Moses (1942)

Black Elk Speaks (1932)

Black Elk

Miss Lonelyhearts (1933) or *The Day of the Locust* (1939)

Nathanael West

Call It Sleep (1934)

Henry Roth

The Surrounded (1936)

D’arcy McNickle

Their Eyes Were Watching God (1937)

Zora Neale Hurston

Of Mice and Men (1937) or *The Grapes of Wrath* (1939)

John Steinbeck

At least 3 stories from *Collected Stories* [1965] or the novella *Pale Horse, Pale Rider* (1939)

Katherine Anne Porter

The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter (1940)

Carson McCullers

Native Son (1940)

Richard Wright

“A Worn Path” (1941), “Petrified Man” (1941)

Eudora Welty

Cane (1943)

Jean Toomer

POETRY 1865-1950

Please use the selections included in the 5-volume *Norton Anthology of American Literature* as a starting point and choose substitutions as necessary. Students are recommended to choose 3-5 poems per poet.

Paul Laurence Dunbar
H. D. (Hilda Doolittle)
Amy Lowell
Gertrude Stein
T. S. Eliot
Mina Loy
Robert Frost
Wallace Stevens
William Carlos Williams
Ezra Pound
Marianne Moore
e.e. cummings
Edna St. Vincent Millay
Hart Crane
Langston Hughes
Carl Sandburg
Countee Cullen
Muriel Rukeyser
Claude McKay

PROSE 1950-present

J. D. Salinger	<i>The Catcher in the Rye</i> (1951) or <i>Nine Stories</i> (1953)
Ralph Ellison	<i>Invisible Man</i> (1952)
James Baldwin	<i>Go Tell It On The Mountain</i> (1953)
	<i>If Beale Street Could Talk</i> (1974)
Vladimir Nabokov	<i>Lolita</i> (1955) or <i>Pale Fire</i> (1962)
Jack Kerouac	<i>On the Road</i> (1957)
William S. Burroughs	<i>Naked Lunch</i> (1959)

Don DeLillo *White Noise* (1985) or *Underworld* (1997) or *Mao II* (1992)
Alice Walker *The Color Purple* (1985) or 2-3 short stories
Toni Morrison *The Bluest Eye* (1970) or *Beloved* (1987)
Sandra Cisneros *The House on Mango Street* (1984) or *Woman Hollering Creek*
(1991)
Sherman Alexie *The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven* (1993) or
Reservation Blues (1995)
Philip Roth *The Human Stain* (2000)
Alison Bechdel *Fun Home* (2006)
Junot Diaz *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* (2007)
Colson Whitehead *The Underground Railroad* (2016)

POETRY 1950-present

Please use the selections included in the Norton Anthology of Postmodern American Poetry, 2nd

Tennessee Williams	<i>A Streetcar Named Desire</i> (1947) and <i>Cat on a Hot Tin Roof</i> (1955)	
Eugene O'Neill		(1956)
Lorraine Hansberry	<i>A Raisin in the Sun</i> (1959)	
Edward Albee		(1963)
Sam Shepard	<i>Buried Child</i> (1978)	
David Mamet	<i>Glengarry Glen Ross</i> (1984)	
August Wilson	<i>Fences</i> (1985)	
David Henry Hwang	<i>M. Butterfly</i> (1988)	
Tony Kushner	<i>Angels in America</i> (1991)	
Lin-Manuel Miranda	<i>Hamilton</i> (2015)	

American Studies theory and literary criticism

A reminder: Students taking the secondary field exam may select texts from this list if they wish. Students taking the primary field exam must choose some titles from this list, and are encouraged to make selections that discuss their chosen primary texts. They may, in consultation with their committee, choose to be examined on 1-2 chapters of each monograph rather than the entire monograph, but they must be able to explain the trajectory and cultural importance of the work's argument.

- Anzaldúa, Gloria. *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*.
- Benn Michaels, Walter. *The Gold Standard and the Logic of Naturalism*.
- Bercovitch, Sacvan. *The American Jeremiad*.
- Berlant, Lauren. *Cruel Optimism*.
- Blackhawk, Ned. *Violence Over the Land: Indians and Empires in the Early American West*.
- Brodhead, Richard. *Cultures of Letters: Scenes of Reading and Writing in Nineteenth-Century America*.
- Brown, Gillian. *Domestic Individualism: Imagining Self in Nineteenth-Century America*.
- Brown, Dee. *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee*.
- Buell, Lawrence. *The Environmental Imagination: Thoreau, Nature Writing, and the Formation of American Culture*
- Burgett, Bruce, and Glenn Hendler, eds. *Keywords for American Cultural Studies*. 2nd Edition.
- Carby, Hazel. *Reconstructing Womanhood: The Emergence of the Afro-American Woman Novelist*.
- Crenshaw, Kimberlé, Neil Gotanda, Gary Peller, and Kendall Thomas, eds. *Critical Race Theory: The Key Writings That Formed the Movement*.
- Davidson, Cathy N., and Jessamyn Hatcher, eds. *No More Separate Spheres!: A Next Wave American Studies Reader*.
- Davidson, Cathy N. *Revolution and the Word: The Rise of the Novel in America*.
- Denning, Michael. *The Cultural Front: The Laboring of American Culture in the 20th Century*.
- Fiedler, Leslie. *Love and Death in the American Novel*.
- Fishkin, Shelley Fisher. *Was Huck Black? Mark Twain and African American Voices*
- Gates, Henry Louis. *The Signifying Monkey: A Theory of African-American Literary Criticism*
- Genovese, Eugene D. *From Revolution to Rebellion: Afro-American Slave Revolts in the Making of the Modern World*.

- Giles, Paul. *Transatlantic Insurrections: British Culture and the Formation of American Literature, 1730-1860*.
- Gilroy, Paul. *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness*.
- Haraway, Donna. "A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century." *Socialist Review* 80 (1985): 65-108.
- Harris, Cheryl. "Whiteness as Property." *Harvard Law Review* 106 (1993): 1707-91.
- Hartman, Saidiya. *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America*.
- Horsman, Reginald. *Race and Manifest Destiny: The Origins of American Racial Anglo-Saxonism*.
- Hutcheon, Linda. *The Politics of Postmodernism*.
- Kaplan, Amy. *The Anarchy of Empire in the Making of U.S. Culture*.
- Kaplan, Amy, and Donald E. Pease, eds. *Cultures of United States Imperialism*.
- Kerber, Linda K. "The Republican Mother: Women and the Enlightenment—An American Perspective." 205.
- Kulick, Bruce. "Myth and Symbol in American Studies." *American Quarterly* 24 (1972): 435-50.
- Leitch, Vincent B. *American Literary Criticism Since the 1930s*.
- Lepore, Jill. *The Name of War: King Philip's War and the Origins of American Identity*.
- Lewis, R. W. B. *The American Adam: Innocence, Tradition, and Tragedy in the Nineteenth Century*.
- Lott, Eric. *Love and Theft: Blackface Minstrelsy and the American Working Class*.
- Marx, Leo. *The Machine in the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America*.
- McGill, Meredith L. *American Literature and the Culture of Reprinting*.
- Merrell, James H. "Second Thoughts on Colonial Historians and American Indians," *WMQ* 69 (July 2012): 451-512
- Merish, Lori. *Sentimental Materialism: Gender, Commodity Culture, and Nineteenth-Century American Literature*.
- Miller, Perry. *Errand into the Wilderness*.
- Morrison, Toni. *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness in the Literary Imagination*.
- Omi, Michael and Howard Winant. "On the Theoretical Status of the Concept of Race." *Asian American Studies: A Reader*. Eds. Jean Yu-Wu Shen and Min Song. Rutgers UP, 2000. 199-208.
- Puar, Jasbir K. *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times*.
- Radway, Janice. "What's in a Name?" *The Futures of American Studies*. Eds. Donald Pease and Robyn Wiegman. Duke UP, 2002. 45-75.
- Richter, Daniel. *Facing East from Indian Country: A Native History of Early America*.
- Romero, Lora. *Home Fronts: Domesticity and Its Critics in the Antebellum United States*.
- Saldívar, José David. *Border Matters: Remapping American Cultural Studies*.
- Sayre, Gordon. *The Indian Chief as Tragic Hero: Native Resistance and the Literatures of America, from Moctezuma to Tecumseh*.
- Shanley, Kathryn W. "The Indians America Loves to Love and Read: American Indian Identity and Cultural Appropriation." *American Indian Quarterly* 21.4 (1997): 675-702.
- Slotkin, Richard. *Gunfighter Nation: The Myth of the Frontier in Twentieth-Century America*.
- Spillers, Hortense. "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe: An American Grammar Book." *Diacritics* Vol. 17, No. 2, (Summer, 1987), pp. 65-81
- Turner, Frederick Jackson. *The Frontier in American History*.

- Warren, Joyce W. "Performativity and the Repositioning of American Literary Realism." *Challenging Boundaries: Gender and Periodization*. Eds. Joyce W. Warren and Margaret Dickie. Athens, GA: U of Georgia P, 2000. 3-25.
- Vizenor, Gerald. *Manifest Manners: Narratives on Postindian Survivance* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 1999)
- White, Richard. *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815*.
- Yu, Henry. *Thinking Orientals: Migration, Contact, and Exoticism in Modern America*.
- Zamir, Shamoon. *Dark Voices: W.E.B. Du Bois and American Thought 1888-1903*.
- Zinn, Howard. *tates*.

Departmental regulations regarding PhD comprehensive exams can be found @ the following site: <https://www.uwo.ca/english/graduate/phd/index.html>.