

FIELD IX: AMERICAN LITERATURE SINCE 1865

REVISED: DECEMBER 2018

EFFECTIVE: JANUARY 2020

STATEMENT OF EXPECTATIONS

In order to demonstrate proficiency as a scholar in Later American Literature, the candidate's writing will demonstrate confident, in-depth knowledge of

- major works, as defined in the first instance by the primary texts appearing on the reading lists,
- historical contexts and movements relating to those works, and
- scholarly approaches and criticism in the field, featuring the secondary texts appearing on the reading list.

The candidate's writing will also demonstrate abilities to

- develop substantial and well-organized interpretive arguments,
- offer sophisticated analysis of primary texts, and
- engage dynamically with secondary critical sources.

In practical terms, the candidate taking the exam will

- address each question fully,
- use an essay structure that requires statement/support/explanation to develop its ideas, and
- use criticism or theory as relevant to analysis of the primary texts but not focus on the criticism or theory to the exclusion of the primary texts.

In preparing for examination, the candidate should study developments in the genres of drama, poetry, creative nonfiction, and fiction. The candidate should also become familiar with such "isms" as Realism, Naturalism, Modernism, Postmodernism, and multiculturalism while assessing the limitations of such categories. In general, the candidate may choose to build upon or challenge existing scholarship of whatever type.

The examiners will ask questions that can—and should—be addressed with texts on the reading list. If relevant to a question, however, the candidate may use any texts in the field, whether studied independently or through course work.

READING LIST

1865-1910

Walt Whitman, selections from *Leaves of Grass* (1891-92) as follows:

- "Song of Myself"
- "Calamus" poems
- "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd"
- "Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking"
- "Drum-Taps" poems
- "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry"

Emily Dickinson, selections from *Poems* (ed. R. W. Franklin, 1999) as follows:

- "There's a certain slant of light"
- "I felt a funeral in my brain"
- "I taste a liquor never brewed"
- "Title divine is mine"
- "Wild Nights – Wild Nights"
- "He fumbles at your soul"
- "Death sets a thing significant"
- "I'm ceded – I've stopped being their's"
- "This was a poet"
- "I heard a fly buzz when I died"
- "I started early – took my dog"
- "They shut me up in prose"
- "The soul selects her own society"
- "I like to see it lap the miles"
- "Essential oils are wrung"
- "Publication is the auction"
- "Because I could not stop for death"
- "I reckon when I count at all"
- "It feels a shame to be alive"
- "My life had stood a loaded gun"
- "My portion is defeat today"
- "Tell all the truth but tell it slant"
- "What mystery pervades a well"
- "Of God we ask one favor"

Henry James, selections from *The Turn of the Screw and Other Short Fiction* (Bantam Classics, 1981) as follows:

- The Turn of the Screw*
- "Daisy Miller"

“The Beast in the Jungle”

Elizabeth Stuart Phelps, *The Story of Avis* (1877)

Mark Twain, *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1884)

William Dean Howells, *The Rise of Silas Lapham* (1885)

Sarah Orne Jewett, “A White Heron” (1886)

Mary Wilkins Freeman, selections from *A New England Nun and Other Stories* (Penguin, 1990) as follows:

“A New England Nun”

“The Revolt of ‘Mother’”

“The Lost Ghost”

Charlotte Perkins Gilman, “The Yellow Wall-Paper” (1892), “If I Were a Man” (1914), and “Why I Wrote ‘The Yellow Wall-Paper’” (all in *The Yellow Wall-Paper and Other Stories*, Oxford World’s Classics, ed. Robert Shulman, 1995)

Stephen Crane, *Maggie, A Girl of the Streets* (1893)

Paul Laurence Dunbar, selections from *The Collected Poems of Paul Laurence Dunbar* (1913) as follows:

“Ere Sleep Comes Down to Soothe the Weary Eyes”

“Frederick Douglass”

“An Ante-Bellum Sermon”

“Ode to Ethiopia”

“The Colored Soldiers”

“When de Co’n Pone’s Hot”

“When Dey ‘Listed Colored Soldiers”

“We Wear the Mask”

“When Malindy Sings”

“A Negro Love Song”

“Phyllis”

“If”

“The Party”

Kate Chopin. *The Awakening* (1899)

Theodore Dreiser, *Sister Carrie* (1900)

Zitkala-Sa, “School Days of an Indian Girl” (1900)

Charles Chesnutt, *The Marrow of Tradition* (1901)

W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903)

Edith Wharton, *The House of Mirth* (1905)

1910-1960

Robert Frost, selections from *Complete Poems* (1946) as follows:

“Mending Wall”

“Home Burial”

"After Apple Picking"
"The Oven Bird"
"Birches"
"Stopping By Woods on a Snowy Evening"
"For Once, Then, Something"
"Acquainted with the Night"
"Two Tramps in Mud Time"
"The Most of It"
"Neither Out Far Nor In Deep"
"Design"

Susan Glaspell, *Trifles* (1916)

Willa Cather, *My Ántonia* (1918)

Sherwood Anderson, *Winesburg, Ohio* (1919)

T.S. Eliot, selections from *Complete Poems and Plays* (1970) as follows:

"The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock"
"The Waste Land"
"Four Quartets"

Edna St. Vincent Millay, selections rpt. in *Anthology of Modern American Poetry* (2000)

Wallace Stevens, selections from *Collected Poetry and Prose* (1997) as follows:

"Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird"
"Peter Quince at the Clavier"
"Sunday Morning"
"The Snow Man"
"The Idea of Order at Key West"
"Anecdote of the Jar"
"Notes toward a Supreme Fiction"
"Not Ideas About the Thing but the Thing Itself"
"Of Modern Poetry"
"Man Made Out of Words"
"Earthly Anecdote"

William Carlos Williams, selections as reprinted in *Anthology of Modern American Poetry* except for "The Descent of Winter" (2000)

Langston Hughes, selections from *Poems*, ed. Arnold Rampersad (1999) as follows:

"The Weary Blues"
"Dream Variation"
"The Negro Speaks of Rivers"
"Cross"
"Epilogue: I, Too"
"Mulatto"
"Let America Be America Again"

"Johannesburg Mines"
 "The English"
 "Advertisement for the Waldorph-Astoria"
 "Goodbye Christ"
 "Postcard from Spain"
 "Madrid"
 "The Bitter River"
 "Visitors to the Black Belt"
 "Note on Commercial Theatre"
 "Trumpet Player: 52nd Street"
 "Theme for English B"
 "Dream Deferred" (Also titled "Harlem" in "Lenox Avenue Mural")
 "Christ in Alabama"

Countee Cullen, *Color* (1925)

F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby* (1925)

Ernest Hemingway, *The Sun Also Rises* (1926)

William Faulkner, *The Sound and the Fury* (1929)

Nella Larsen, *Passing* (1929)

William Faulkner, *Absalom, Absalom!* (1936)

Zora Neale Hurston, *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (1937)

John Steinbeck, *The Grapes of Wrath* (1939)

James Agee, *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men* (1941)

Tennessee Williams, *A Streetcar Named Desire* (1947)

Arthur Miller, *Death of a Salesman* (1949)

Ralph Ellison, *Invisible Man* (1952)

James Baldwin, *Notes of a Native Son* (1955)

Flannery O'Connor, *A Good Man Is Hard to Find* (1955)

Robert Lowell, *Life Studies* (1956)

Eugene O'Neill, *Long Day's Journey Into Night* (1956)

Mary McCarthy, *Memories of a Catholic Girlhood* (1957)

Allen Ginsberg, *Howl and Other Poems* (1959)

Gwendolyn Brooks, selections from *Selected Poems* (1963) as follows:

"the mother"

"a song in the front yard"

"The Sundays of Satin-Legs Smith"

"Gay Chaps at the Bar" (all poems in this sequence, not just title poem)

"we real cool"

"A Bronzeville Mother Loiters in Mississippi. Meanwhile, a Mississippi
 Mother Burns Bacon"

"The Chicago Defender Sends a Man to Little Rock"

"The Lovers of the Poor"
"The Ballad of Rudolph Reed"

1960-Present

Walker Percy, *The Moviegoer* (1961)

Sylvia Plath, *Ariel* (1965)

Thomas Pynchon, *The Crying of Lot 49* (1965)

Joan Didion, *Play It As It Lays* (1970)

Elizabeth Bishop, selections from *Poems; Prose* (2011) as follows:

"The Map"

"The Sandpiper"

"The Man-Moth"

"The Fish"

"At the Fishhouses"

"Brazil, January 1, 1501"

"Crusoe in England"

"In the Waiting Room"

"The Moose"

"One Art"

"Pink Dog"

"In the Village" (prose)

Adrienne Rich, selections from *Poetry and Prose*, Norton Critical edn. (1993) as follows:

"Aunt Jennifer's Tigers"

"Planetarium"

"Trying to Talk to a Man"

"Diving Into the Wreck"

"21 Love Poems"

"When We Dead Awaken" (prose)

"Split at the Root: An Essay on Jewish Identity" (prose)

"Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence" (prose)

Dorothy Bryant, *Ella Price's Journal* (1972)

Octavia Butler, *Kindred* (1979)

Anne Tyler, *Dinner at the Homesick Restaurant* (1982)

Richard Rodriguez, *Hunger for Memory* (1982)

August Wilson, *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom* (1982)

Sandra Cisneros, *The House on Mango Street* (1984)

Don DeLillo, *White Noise* (1985)

Art Spiegelman, *Maus I: My Father Bleeds History* and *Maus II: And Here My Troubles Began* (1986)

Toni Morrison, *Beloved* (1987)

Louise Erdrich, *Tracks* (1988)
 Yusef Komunyakaa, *Dien Cai Dau* (1988)
 Louise Glück, *The Wild Irises* (1992)
 Jeffrey Eugenides, *The Virgin Suicides* (1993)
 Thomas King, *Green Grass, Running Water* (1993)
 Lucy Grealy, *Autobiography of a Face* (1994)
 Tony Kushner, *Angels in America, Part I: Millennium Approaches* and *Part II: Perestroika* (1994)
 Michael Cunningham, *The Hours* (1998)
 Jhumpa Lahiri, *Interpreter of Maladies* (1999)
 Michael Chabon, *The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier and Clay* (2000)
 Jonathan Safran Foer, *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* (2005)
 Alison Bechdel, *Fun Home* (2006)
 Frances Khirallah Noble, *The New Belly Dancer of the Galaxy* (2007)
 Richard Russo, *That Old Cape Magic* (2009)
 Lisa See, *Shanghai Girls* (2009)
 Ta-Nehisi Coates's *Between the World and Me* (2015)
 Martha Kelly, *Lilac Girls* (2017)

SECONDARY TEXTS

Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands / La Frontera* (1987)
 Phillip Barrish, ed. *The Cambridge Introduction to American Literary Realism* (2001)
 Martha J. Cutter, *Unruly Tongue: Identity and Voice in American Women's Writing, 1850-1930* (1999)
 Betsy Erkkila, "Ethnicity, Literary Theory, and the Grounds of Resistance," *American Quarterly*, vol. 47, no. 4, 1995, pp. 563-594.
 Wendy B. Faris, "The Question of the Other: Cultural Critiques of Magical Realism," *Janus Head*, vol. 5, no. 2, 2002, pp. 101-119.
 Judith Fetterly, *The Resisting Reader* (1978)
 Shelley Fisher Fishkin, "Crossroads of Cultures: The Transnational Turn in American Studies," *American Quarterly* vol. 57, no. 1, 2005, pp. 17-57.
 Vivian Gornick, *The Situation of the Story* (2002)
 Patricia Hampl, *I Could Tell You Stories* (1999)
 Linda Hutcheon, *The Politics of Postmodernism* (1989)
 George Hutchinson, *The Harlem Renaissance in Black and White* (1996)
 Walter Kalaidjian, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to American Modernism* (2005)
 David Karsner, ed., *A Companion to Twentieth-Century American Drama* (2005)
 Phillip Lopate, introduction, *The Art of the Personal Essay* (1993)
 Walter Benn Michaels, *Our America: Nativism, Modernism, and Pluralism* (1995)

Jack Myers, *A Profile of Twentieth-Century American Poetry* (1991)
Cary Nelson, *Repression and Recovery: Modern American Poetry and the Politics of Cultural Memory* (1989)
G. R. Thompson, *Reading the American Novel, 1865-1914* (2012)
Sally Robinson, *Marked Men: White Masculinity in Crisis* (2000)
Andrew Ross, *The Failure of Modernism: Symptoms of American Poetry* (1986)
Richard Ruland and Malcolm Bradbury, *From Puritanism to Postmodernism* (1991)
Eric Sundquist, *To Wake the Nations: Race in the Making of American Literature* (1993):
introduction and chapters 3-6
Ben Yagoda, *Memoir: A History* (2009)