

**FIELD VI:
BRITISH LITERATURE FROM 1800 TO 1900**

Revised: December 2018

Effective: January 2020

STATEMENT OF EXPECTATIONS

The successful candidate in Field VI, Nineteenth-Century Literature, will demonstrate a broad knowledge of the sweeping changes to literary culture in the roughly hundred years from 1798 to 1900 in Britain. The candidate will be expected to understand the underlying historical forces that transformed culture, such as industrialization, urbanization, imperialism, new social roles for previously marginalized groups, and the rise of a more literate middle class.

We also expect a thorough knowledge of the generic transformations that accompanied the rise of this whole new kind of readership, including the development of a broadly popular poetry, the spread of the realistic novel and the *Bildungsroman*, and the intense examination in prose writers of the new role of culture itself in an industrial world dominated by an acquisitive bourgeoisie. And within this history, literary phenomena from Romanticism to Aestheticism are important to understand as local reactions to both social and cultural developments.

Students should respond to the questions in the examination with essays that demonstrate advanced knowledge of the essential skills for writing in our discipline, such as carefully structured argumentation, development of original ideas supported by evidence, the appropriate use and documentation of criticism by others, fluency and persuasiveness in style, and grammatical correctness. Finally, students should have a general grasp of both the history and present state of criticism as professionals have defined the field.

READING LIST

PRIMARY TEXTS:

NOVELS

Maria Edgeworth, *Castle Rackrent*

Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice,*
Emma, OR
Persuasion

Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein*

William M. Thackeray, *Vanity Fair*

Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre*
Villette, OR *Shirley*

Emily Brontë, *Wuthering Heights*

Anne Brontë, *The Tenant of*
Wildfell Hall

Charles Dickens, *Bleak House*
David Copperfield

George Eliot, *Middlemarch*
Daniel
Deronda

Elizabeth Gaskell, *North and South,* OR
Mary Barton, OR
Cranford, OR
Wives and Daughters

George Meredith, *Diana of the Crossways,*
OR *The Egoist*

Wilkie Collins, *The Woman in White,* OR
The Moonstone

Anthony Trollope, *The Way We Live Now*

H. Rider Haggard, *King Solomon's Mines*

William Morris, *News from Nowhere,*

George Gissing, *The Odd Women*

Thomas Hardy, *Jude the Obscure,* OR
Tess of the D'Urbervilles

PROSE

Thomas DeQuincey “On the Knocking of the Gate in *Macbeth*,” “The English Mail Coach.”

Matthew Arnold, Various essays (“The Function of Criticism at the Present Time,” “Literature and Science,” “The Study of Poetry”)

Culture and Anarchy

Robert Buchanan, “The Fleshly School of Poetry: Mr. D. G. Rossetti” (essay) Thomas

Carlyle, *Past and Present*

Sartor Resartus

Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *The Friend* (selections)

Biographia Literaria (4, 13, 14, 17)

Charles Darwin, *On the Origin of Species* (especially the conclusion) Frances Power

Cobbe, *The Duties of Women* (selections)

Sarah Stickney Ellis, *The Women of England* (selections)

Friedrich Engels, *Condition of the Working Class in England*, “The Great Towns” William

Hazlitt, *Spirit of the Age* (selections)

Other short essays (including “My first acquaintance with poets,” “On Gusto” and the essays gathered together as “Characters of Shakespeare's Plays”).

Mary Kingsley, *Travels in West Africa*

Harriet Martineau, *Autobiography*

Thomas Babington Lord Macaulay, *A History of England* (selections) Henry

Mayhew, *London Labor and the London Poor*

John Stuart Mill, *Autobiography*

On Liberty

The Subjection of Women

John Henry Cardinal Newman, *The Idea of a University* (especially Discourse VII) OR,

Apologia Pro Vita Sua (especially “Note A: Liberalism”)

Caroline Norton, "A Letter to the Queen on Lord Chancellor Cranworth's Marriage and Divorce Bill" (letter)

Florence Nightingale, *Cassandra*

Walter Pater, *Studies in the History of the Renaissance* (especially "Leonardo Da Vinci" and "Conclusion")

D. G. Rossetti, "The Stealthy School of Criticism" (essay)

John Ruskin, various essays ("The Storm Cloud....," "Of Queen's Gardens," "Traffic," "The Great Exhibition....")

Modern Painters (Volume V and its discussion of Turner)

The Stones of Venice (especially Vol. II, ch. iv, "St. Mark's," and Vol. II, ch. vi, "The Nature of Gothic")

Arthur Symons, "The Decadent Movement in Literature" (essay)

Oscar Wilde, Selected essays (especially "The Decay of Lying," "The Soul of Man Under Socialism")

William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge, "Preface" (*Lyrical Ballads*)

POETRY

ROMANTIC ERA:

William Wordsworth, *Lyrical Ballads (1800)*; Any Two Books of the 1814 *Prelude*;
Selected *Sonnets*; Ode: Intimations of Immortality....

William Blake, *Songs of Innocence and of Experience*; *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*; one
minor prophecy, such as *Europe* or *America*.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Kubla Khan*; *The Rime of Ancient Mariner*; *Christabel*; the
“Conversation Poems”

Charlotte Smith, *Elegiac Sonnets* (selections)

John Keats, All Odes of 1819; *La Belle Dame Sans Merci*; *Lamia*; *The Fall of Hyperion*;
selected sonnets

Percy Bysshe Shelley, *Prometheus Unbound*; *Mont Blanc*; Ode to the West Wind; selected short
lyrics

Lord Byron, *Manfred*; two cantos of *Don Juan*.

VICTORIAN ERA:

Elizabeth Barrett Browning, *Aurora Leigh and Other Poems*, ed. Bolton and Holloway
(Penguin, 1996).

Alfred Tennyson, *Ulysses*; *Morte d'Arthur*; *Break, break, break*; *Now sleeps the crimson petal,*
Tears, Idle Tears, Come down, O maid, from yonder mountain height (from
The Princess); *In Memoriam*; *Maud*, *Tithonus*. The best edition is Christopher
Ricks's (Longman, 1989)

Robert Browning, *My Last Duchess*; *Soliloquy of the Spanish Cloister*; *Fra Lippo Lippi*; *Andrea*
del Sarto; *Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came*; *Selections from The*
Ring and the Book. The best edition is Pettigrew and Collins, eds. (2 vols.,
Penguin, 2001).

Emily Brontë, The night is darkening round me; It's over now; I've known it all; I know not how it falls on me; Cold in the earth, and the deep snow piled above thee!, The Prisoner. The best edition is Gezari, ed. *Poems* (Penguin, 1992).

Matthew Arnold, Isolation: To Marguerite I, II ; The Scholar-Gypsy; Dover Beach

Christina Rossetti, *Goblin Market*, Selected Sonnets and other Poems*

Edward Fitzgerald, The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam

G. M. Hopkins, Selected Poems *

A.C. Swinburne, The Triumph of Time, Hymn to Proserpine*

Thomas Hardy, Selected Poetry*

Poets of the 90's [Lionel Johnson and others]*

*in *The Broadview Anthology of British Literature: The Victorian Era*

Also consult Christopher Ricks's *The New Oxford Book of Victorian Verse* (1987)

DRAMA

J. M. Barrie, *Peter Pan*

Dion Boucicault, *The Corsican Brothers*

Edward Fitzball, *The Negro of Wapping*

W. S. Gilbert and A. Sullivan, *The Mikado*

A. W. Pinero, *The Second Mrs Tanqueray*, *Trelawny of the Wells*

G. B. Shaw, *Mrs. Warren's Profession*

Oscar Wilde, *The Importance of Being Earnest*; *Lady Windermere's Fan*

SECONDARY TEXTS:

ROMANTIC ERA:

M.H. Abrams, *Natural Supernaturalism*.

Marilyn Butler, *Romantics, Rebels, and Reactionaries: English Literature and its Background, 1760-1830*

Hartman, Geoffrey. *Wordsworth's Poetry: 1787-1814*

Kenneth Johnson, Gilbert Chaitlin, et. al., eds. *Romantic Revolutions: Criticism and Theory*

Jerome McGann, *The Romantic Ideology*

Tilottama Rajan, *Dark Interpreter*

VICTORIAN ERA:

General and the Novel:

Altick, Richard. *Victorian People and Ideas: A Companion for the Modern Reader of Literature*

Armstrong, Nancy. *Desire and Domestic Fiction: A Political History of the Novel*

Beer, Gillian. *Darwin's Plots: Evolutionary Narrative in Darwin, George Eliot and Nineteenth-Century Fiction*

Brantlinger, Patrick. *Rule of Darkness: British Literature and Imperialism, 1830-1914*

Brooks, Peter. *Reading for the Plot*

Gilbert, Sandra and Susan Gubar. *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination*

Gilmour, Robin. *The Victorian Period: The Intellectual and Cultural Context of English Literatures, 1830-1890*

Houghton, Walter. *The Victorian Frame of Mind: 1830-1870*

Levine, George. *The Realistic Imagination: English Fiction from Frankenstein to Lady Chatterley*

Showalter, Elaine. *A Literature of Their Own: British Women Novelists from Brontë to Lessing* (relevant chapters)

Poetry:

Isobel Armstrong *Victorian Poetry: Poetry, Politics and Poetics* (1993; revised edition) Robert

Langbaum, *The Poetry of Experience*

Victorian Poetry [journal], selections

Prose:

Hilary Fraser, *English prose of the nineteenth century*

Helsing, E. R. L. Sheets, and W. Veeder, eds., *The Woman Question: Society and Literature in Britain and America, 1837-1883*

Raymond Williams, *Culture and Society*

Drama:

M.Booth, *Theatre in the Victorian Age*

T.C. Davis, *The Economics of the British Stage 1800-1914*

D. Kift, *The Victorian Music Hall: Culture, Class and Conflict* Students may also consult reference texts such as the *Cambridge Companions to Victorian poetry, Victorian and Edwardian Theatre, and Victorian Culture; Roe's Companion to Victorian Literature and Culture and Romanticism, etc.*