

MAJOR FIELD EXAM IN U.S. LITERATURE BEFORE 1900

Student: _____

Supervisor: _____

Anticipated Exam Date: _____

Candidates sitting this field examination will prepare by reading the following texts. In all instances, “selections” (more than one passage, excerpt, section, chapter, etc.) should be decided upon in consultation with the faculty member supervising the examination. Candidates should not limit themselves to the choices made by any one anthology but should develop their own diverse, relevant, and reasoned selections.

Though the abundance of “selections” entries here already offers much potential for flexibility, substitutions to the list are permissible.

Asterisks indicate works that cannot be replaced with substitutions.

PROSE FICTION AND NON-FICTION (INCLUDING NARRATIVE, ADDRESSES, SERMONS, POLITICAL DOCUMENTS, JUDICIAL DECISIONS, ESSAYS, CRITICISM, AND AUTOBIOGRAPHY)

Author	Title	Date
*	“The Mayflower Compact”	(1620)
*	“The Arbella Covenant”	(1630)
* John Winthrop	“A Modell of Christian Charity”	(1630)
* William Bradford	Selections from <i>Of Plymouth Plantation</i>	(1630-1650)
* Samuel Sewall	Selections from <i>The Diary of Samuel Sewall</i>	(1673-1729)
* Mary Rowlandson	Selections from <i>A Narrative of the Captivity and Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson</i>	(1682)
* Cotton Mather	Selections from <i>The Wonders of the Invisible World</i>	(1692, 1693)
*	Selections from <i>Magnalia Christi Americana</i>	(1702)
*	Selections from <i>Bonifacius</i>	(1710)
* Jonathan Edwards	“Personal Narrative”	(1740)
*	“Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God”	(1741)
* Benjamin Franklin	Selections from <i>Autobiography</i>	(1771-1790)
*	Selections from <i>The Way to Wealth</i>	(1757)

*	Selections from other works	
* Thomas Jefferson	“The Declaration of Independence”	(1775)
*	Selections from <i>Notes on the State of Virginia</i>	(1781-1787)
	Selected Letters	
* Michel-Guillaume Jean de Crèvecoeur	Selections from <i>Letters from an American Farmer</i>	(1769-80)
* Thomas Paine	<i>Common Sense</i>	(1776)
*	Selections from <i>The Crisis</i>	
*	<i>Rights of Man</i>	(1791)
*	“The Constitution of the United States”	(1787)
Olaudah Equiano	<i>The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African, Written by Himself</i>	(1789)
Phillis Wheatley	Selections	
William Hill Brown	<i>The Power of Sympathy</i>	(1789)
or		
Susanna Rowson	<i>Charlotte Temple</i>	(1791)
or		
Hannah Webster Foster	<i>The Coquette; or The History of Eliza Wharton. A Novel Founded on Fact</i>	(1797)
* Charles Brockden Brown	<i>Wieland or Edgar Huntly</i>	(1798)
* Washington Irving	“Rip Van Winkle”	(1824)
*	“The Legend of Sleepy Hollow”	(1824)
* James Fenimore Cooper	Two novels: one of “The Leatherstocking Tales” (<i>The Pioneers</i> (1823), <i>The Last of the Mohicans</i> (1826), <i>The Prairie</i> (1827), <i>The Pathfinder</i> (1840), and <i>The Deerslayer</i> (1841)) and one other	
David Walker	“Appeal”	(1829)
* Edgar Allan Poe	<i>The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket</i>	(1837)
	Five selected tales including at least one detective story; for instance, “The Gold Bug,” “Ligeia,” “The Tell-Tale Heart,” “The Fall of the House of Usher,” “The System of Doctor Tarr and Professor Fether,” “Murders in the Rue Morgue,” etc.	
*	“The Philosophy of Composition”	(1846)
*	“The Poetic Principle”	(1850)
* Ralph Waldo Emerson	At least ten selections including:	

	“Nature”	(1836)
	“The American Scholar”	(1837)
	“The Divinity School Address”	(1838)
	“Self-Reliance”	(1841)
	“The Poet”	(1844)
	“Experience”	(1844)
	“Fate”	(1860)
	“Thoreau”	(1862)
	Selections from other essays, journals, and letters	
* Nathaniel Hawthorne	Selections from <i>Twice-Told Tales</i>	(1837, 1842)
*	<i>Mosses from an Old Manse</i>	(1846)
*	<i>The Scarlet Letter</i>	(1850)
*	<i>The Blithedale Romance</i>	(1852)
* Alexis de Tocqueville	Selections from <i>Democracy in America</i>	(1838)
Margaret Fuller	Selections from <i>Woman in the Nineteenth Century</i>	(1845)
* Frederick Douglass	<i>Narrative of the Life of an American Slave</i>	(1845)
* Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Lucretia Mott, et al.	“Declaration of Sentiments” and “Resolutions” (Seneca Falls, New York)	(1848)
Sojourner Truth	“Ain’t I a Woman”	(1851)
* Harriet Beecher Stowe	<i>Uncle Tom’s Cabin</i>	(1852)
* Henry David Thoreau	<i>Walden</i>	(1854)
*	<i>Resistance to Civil Government</i>	(1849)
*	“Slavery in Massachusetts”	(1854)
	Selected letters and reviews	
* Harriet Jacobs	<i>Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl</i>	(1861)
* Herman Melville	<i>Moby Dick</i>	(1851)
*	Selected stories including “Bartleby, the Scrivener”	(1853)
*	<i>Billy Budd</i> or <i>Typee</i>	(1888/1924) (1846)
* Walt Whitman	Preface to <i>Leaves of Grass</i>	(1855)
*	<i>Democratic Vistas</i>	(1871)
	Dred Scott v. John F. A. Sandford	(1857)
Rebecca Harding Davis	<i>Life in the Iron Mills</i>	(1861)
Abraham Lincoln	Selected speeches including:	
	“House Divided”	(1858)
*	“Gettysburg Address”	(1863)

	“Second Inaugural Address”	(1865)
Martin Delany	<i>The Condition, Elevation, Emigration and Destiny of the Colored People of the United States Politically Considered</i>	(1852)
	or <i>Blake, or The Huts of America: A Tale of the Mississippi Valley, the Southern United States</i>	(1859)
Louisa May Alcott	<i>Little Women</i>	(1868-69)
Chief Joseph	Oration	(1877)
* Henry James	Selected stories including “Daisy Miller”	
*	<i>The Portrait of a Lady</i>	(1881)
*	One other novel	
*	“The Art of Fiction”	(1884)
* Samuel Langhorne Clemens [Mark Twain]	<i>The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn</i>	(1884)
*	One other novel	
*	Selected stories	
* William Dean Howells	One novel Selections from <i>Criticism and Fiction</i>	(1891)
Edward Bellamy	<i>Looking Backward: 2000-1887</i>	(1888)
Alice James	<i>Diary</i>	(1889-92)
Charlotte Perkins Gilman	“The Yellow Wallpaper”	(1891)
* Stephen Crane	<i>Maggie, A Girl of the Streets</i>	(1893)
*	<i>The Red Badge of Courage</i>	(1895)
	Selected stories, including: “The Open Boat”	(1898)
* Frederick Jackson Turner	“The Significance of the Frontier in American History”	(1893)
* Sara Orne Jewett	<i>The Country of the Pointed Firs</i>	(1896)
	<i>Plessy v. Ferguson</i>	(1896)
* Frank Norris	One novel	
* Kate Chopin	<i>The Awakening</i>	(1899)
Charles Chestnutt	<i>The Conjure Woman</i>	(1899)
* Thorstein Veblen	<i>The Theory of the Leisure Class</i>	(1899)

POETRY	GUIDANCE
Anne Bradstreet * Ralph Waldo Emerson Edward Taylor John Greenleaf Whittier Henry Wadsworth Longfellow Herman Melville Phillis Wheatley * Emily Dickinson Philip Freneau * Walt Whitman William Cullen Bryant Edgar Allan Poe Stephen Crane Paul Laurence Dunbar Frances Harper	<p>In consultation with the exam supervisor, candidates will develop a list of five to ten poems, when and where applicable, of the following poets. The aim of “five to ten poems” is to provide an initial but workable “representative sense” of the poet’s work. It is strongly recommended that candidates develop a sense of the poems’ first contexts and arrangements in their original collections (for example, the formats of the various editions of <i>Leaves of Grass</i>).</p> <p>The specified list of poems must appear on the Major Field Reading List <i>prior</i> to submission to the Graduate Study Committee for approval.</p>

CRITICISM			GUIDANCE
Author	Title	Date	
* Sacvan Bercovitch	<i>American Jeremiad</i>	(1978)	Given the substitution percentage which can be applied to the list (20%), we advise that students apply substitution sparingly with the literary content and more liberally with the critical content. New works of criticism are published annually; conversations change. The list below does not attempt to keep up or
	or <i>The Puritan Origins of the American Self</i>	(1986)	
Michael D. Bell	<i>The Development of American Romance</i>	(1980)	
* Lawrence Buell	<i>Literary Transcendentalism</i>	(1973)	
	or <i>New England Literary Culture: From</i>	(1986)	

	<i>Revolution through Renaissance</i>		pre-select criticism that is “necessary to the field,” beyond the exemplary texts with asterisks. It offers suggestions. Mainly it presents “what a list might look like.” Students should take the opportunity to review the current field and make substitutions according to their interests, and in consort with their supervisor.
* Richard Chase	<i>The American Novel and Its Tradition</i>	(1957)	
Charles Davis & Henry Louis Gates, Jr., eds.	<i>The Slave's Narrative</i>	(1993)	
Ann Douglas	<i>The Feminization of American Culture</i>	(1977)	
Judith Fetterley	<i>The Resisting Reader</i>	(1978)	
Leslie Fiedler	<i>Love and Death in the American Novel</i>	(1960)	
* Amy Kaplan	<i>The Social Construction of American Realism</i>	(1988)	
* Annette Kolodny	<i>The Lay of the Land: Metaphor as Experience and History in American Life and Letters</i>	(1975)	
D.H. Lawrence	<i>Studies in Classic American Literature</i>	(1923)	
Harry Levin	<i>The Power of Blackness</i>	(1958)	
R.W.B. Lewis	<i>The American Adam: Innocence, Tradition and Tragedy in the Nineteenth Century</i>	(1955)	
Eric Lott	<i>Love and Theft: Blackface Minstrelsy and the American Working Class</i>	(1993)	
Deborah E. McDowell & Arnold Rampersad, eds.	<i>Slavery and the Literary Imagination</i>	(1989)	
Leo Marx	<i>The Machine in the Garden</i>	(1964)	
* F.O. Matthiessen	<i>American Renaissance: Art and Experience in the Age of Emerson and Whitman</i>	(1941)	
Walter Benn Michaels	<i>The Gold Standard and the Logic of Naturalism: American Literature at the Turn of the Century</i>	(1987)	
Perry Miller	<i>Errand into the Wilderness</i>	(1985/6)	
David Reynolds	<i>Beneath the American Renaissance: The Subversive Imagination in the Age of Emerson and Melville</i>	(1988)	

Sergio Perosa	<i>American Theories of the Novel, 1793-1903</i>	(1983)
Richard Poirier	<i>A World Elsewhere: The Place of Style in American Literature</i>	(1966)
Henry Nash Smith	<i>Virgin Land</i>	(1950/70)
Jane Tompkins	<i>Sensational Designs: The Cultural World of American Fiction 1790-1860</i>	(1985)
Alan Trachtenberg	<i>The Incorporation of America: Culture and Society in the Gilded Age</i>	(1982)
Joyce W. Warren	<i>The American Narcissus: Individualism and Women in Nineteenth-Century American Fiction</i>	(1984)
Wilmeth, Don B. and C. W. E. Bigsby, eds.	<i>The Cambridge History of American Theatre</i>	(1998)
Edmund Wilson, ed.	<i>The Shock of Recognition: The Development of Literature in the United States Recorded by the Men Who Made It</i>	(1943)