**MA Comprehensive Exam Reading List**

Department of English & Rhetoric

Effective Fall 2017 – Spring 2020

It is recommended that students be prepared to discuss, broadly, all of the texts below and to analyze, closely, at least one work from each numbered section.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **British Literature** | | |
| 1 | Medieval | *Beowulf*  “Sir Gawain and the Green Knight”  Chaucer, from *The Canterbury Tales*:  “The Wife of Bath’s Prologue and Tale” |
| 2 | Renaissance Drama | William Shakespeare:  *Hamlet* and *The Tempest*  Christopher Marlowe: *Doctor Faustus* |
| 3 | Seventeenth Century Poetry and Prose | Aemilia Lanyer  “Eve’s Apology in Defense of Women”  John Donne:  “The Flea”  “The Holy Sonnets”  Andrew Marvell:  “Bermudas”  “The Garden”  “To His Coy Mistress”  John Milton: *Paradise Lost* Books I-IV, IX-X  Aphra Behn: *Oroonoko* |
| 4 | Eighteenth Century Poetry and Prose | Alexander Pope: *The Rape of the Lock*  Daniel Defoe: *Moll Flanders*  Jonathan Swift: *Gulliver’s Travels* |
| 5 | Nineteenth Century Romantic Poetry | William Wordsworth:  “The Two-Part Prelude” (1798-1799)  “Tintern Abbey”  “Ode: Intimations of Immortality”  John Keats:  “Ode to Psyche”  “Ode to a Nightingale”  “Ode on a Grecian Urn” |
| 6 | Nineteenth Century Novel | Jane Austen: *Pride and Prejudice*  Mary Shelley: *Frankenstein*  Charles Dickens: *David Copperfield*  George Eliot: *Middlemarch* |
| 7 | Nineteenth Century Victorian Poetry | Alfred, Lord Tennyson:  “Ulysses”  “Tithonus”  “Lady of Shalott”  “The Coming of Arthur”  Robert Browning:  “Porphyria’s Lover”  “Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came”  “Caliban upon Setebos”  Christina Rosetti: “Goblin Market” |
| 8 | Irish Renaissance | Oscar Wilde: *The Importance of Being Ernest*  William Butler Yeats  “The Stolen Child”  “The Second Coming”  “Sailing to Byzantium”  “Leda and the Swan” |
| 9 | Twentieth Century Modernism | Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*  James Joyce: *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*  Virginia Woolf: *To the Lighthouse*  Samuel Beckett: *Waiting for Godot*  Dylan Thomas: “Do Not Go Gentle into that Good Night”  Tom Stoppard: *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* |
| **American Literature** | | |
| 10 | Seventeenth Century | Mary Rowlandson:  “Narrative”  Anne Bradstreet:  “Verses upon the Burning of Our House”  “The Author to her Book” |
| 11 | Eighteenth Century | Ben Franklin: *Autobiography* |
| 12 | Transcendentalism | Ralph Waldo Emerson:  “Nature”  “Self-Reliance”  Henry David Thoreau:  “Economy,” from *Walden*  Nathaniel Hawthorne: *The Scarlet Letter*  Herman Melville: “Benito Cereno” |
| 13 | Nineteenth Century | Frederick Douglass:  “Narrative of the Life” (1845 version)  Walt Whitman:  *Leaves of Grass* (1855 version)  Emily Dickinson:  “Because I could not stop for Death”  “I felt a funeral in my brain”  “I felt a fly buzz-when I died”  “There’s a certain slant of light”  “I’m nobody! Who are you?” |
| 14 | Realism | Mark Twain:  *Huckleberry Finn*  Henry James:  *Daisy Miller*  Edith Wharton:  *House of Mirth* |
| 15 | Modernist Fiction | W. E. B. Du Bois:  From *The Souls of Black Folk* (Chapters 1 and 3)  William Faulkner:  *The Sound and the Fury*  F. Scott Fitzgerald:  *The Great Gatsby*  Ernest Hemingway:  *The Sun Also Rises* |
| 16 | Modernist Poetry | T. S. Eliot:  *The Wasteland*  William Carlos Williams:  “The Red Wheelbarrow”  “Spring and All”  “This is Just to Say” |
| 17 | Harlem Renaissance | Langston Hughes:  “The Negro Speaks of Rivers”  “Dream Variations”  “The Weary Blues”  “Harlem”  Zora Neale Hurston:  *Their Eyes Were Watching God*  Nella Larsen:  *Passing* |
| 18 | Modern Drama | Eugene O'Neill: *Long Day's Journey Into Night*  Tennessee Williams: *A Streetcar Named Desire*  Lorraine Hansberry: *A Raisin in the Sun*  August Wilson: *The Piano Lesson* |
| 19 | Postwar/Contemporary Fiction | Flannery O’Connor:  “A Good Man is Hard to Find”  Toni Morrison:  *Beloved*  Louise Erdrich:  *Love Medicine*  Thomas Pynchon: “Entropy” |
| 20 | Postwar/Contemporary Poetry | Allen Ginsberg: “Howl”  Elizabeth Bishop:  “Crusoe in England”  “The Fish”  Gwendolyn Brooks:  “We Real Cool”  “To the Diaspora”  Joy Harjo:  "She Had Some Horses"  Sylvia Plath:  “Lady Lazarus”  “Daddy” |
| **International Literature** | | |
| 21 | Ancient Greece | Sophocles: *Antigone* |
| 22 | Ancient Rome | Virgil: *The Aeneid* (Books 1 and 6) |
| 23 | Italian Middle Ages | Dante Alighieri: *Inferno* (Cantos 1-5 and 34) |
| 24 | French Renaissance | Michel de Montaigne: “Of Cannibals” |
| 25 | Twentieth-Century Argentina | Jorge Luis Borges:  “The Garden of Forking Paths” |
| 26 | Twentieth-Century Colombia | Gabriel Garcia Marquez:  “Death Constant Beyond Love” |
| 27 | Twentieth-Century Martinique | Aimé Césaire: *A Tempest* |
| 28 | Twentieth-Century Egypt | Naguib Mahfouz: “Zaabalawi” |
| 29 | Twentieth-Century Nigeria | Chinua Achebe: *Things Fall Apart*  Wole Soyinka: *Death and the King’s Horseman* |
| 30 | Twentieth-Century India | Salman Rushdie: “Chekov and Zulu”  Arundati Roy: *The God of Small Things* |