MA Comprehensive Exam Reading List
(updated Fall 2015)

See pages 12-13 of the MA Handbook for specific details.

This “Reading List” is a selection of books from recent graduate seminars, as well as some of the major texts in each field. Do not be intimidated by its size; this is not a mandatory reading list. This is an open list from which you are to choose the texts for study. The Comprehensive Exam asks you to write three separate essays, each covering texts from the three “Areas” listed below. For two of the essays (Area I and Area II), you will need to choose 6 texts each (4 primary and 2 secondary). Area III is a little different; you are asked to write EITHER a “World Literature” OR a “Critical Theory/Literary Genre” essay. If you opt for “World Literature,” you are responsible for 4 primary and 2 secondary texts from the Reading List. If you opt for “Critical Theory/Literary Genre,” you are responsible for choosing 50 pages from each of your six critics (rather than being responsible for entire books). You may select part of a book or a few unabridged essays. Selections must be approved by the M.A. Coordinator. **Also, upon approval from the M.A. Coordinator,** you may substitute up to two authors’ titles for others by the same author. Authors not listed may not be substituted for those listed. Please keep in mind that you should choose texts that are united by common themes, histories, formal elements, cultural concerns, social identities, or other features. You will be constructing an argument about a major issue or period for each essay, so your texts should manifest commonalities as well as potential points of divergence.

Area I. **British Literature**
- A. Medieval/Renaissance
- B. 17th and 18th Centuries
- C. 19th Century
- D. 20th Century

Area II. **American Literature**
- A. Pre-1865
- B. Post-1865

Area III. **World Literature OR Critical Theory/Literary Genre**
- A. World Literature
- B. Critical Theory & Literary Genre

Notes: Unless otherwise indicated, “Selected Poems” includes any collected/selected edition. Authors marked with an asterisk* may count toward more than one category (British/American/World) with permission from the M.A. Coordinator.
I. British and Commonwealth Literature:

A) Medieval / Renaissance:
   Anon. *Beowulf* (c. 8-11C)
   Chaucer, Geoffrey. *Troilus and Criseyde* (c.1380); *Canterbury Tales* (c. e14C)
   Julian of Norwich, *The Showings* (1413)
   Spenser, Edmund. *Faerie Queene* (1590, 1596)
   Sidney, Philip. *Astrophel and Stella* (1591)
   Shakespeare, William. *The Tempest* (c. 1611)
   Shakespeare, William. *Sonnets* [Booth or Vendler ed.] (1609)

Secondary Texts:
   Booth, Stephen. *Shakespeare’s Sonnets* (1977)
   Ferguson, Margaret et al. eds. *Rewriting the Renaissance* (1986)

B) 17th & 18th Centuries:
   Blake, William. *Songs of Innocence and Experience* (1789, 1794)
   Behn, Aphra. *Oroonoko* (1688)
   Boswell, James. *Life of Johnson* (1791)
   Bunyan, John. *The Pilgrim’s Progress* (1678)
   Burney, Frances. *Evelina* (1778)
   Cavendish, Margaret. *Poems and Fancies* (1653)
   Defoe, Daniel. *Moll Flanders* (1719; 1722)
   Donne, John. Selected Poems
   Dryden, John. Selected Poems
   Equiano, Olaudah. *Interesting Narrative of the Life* (1789)
   Fielding, Henry. *Tom Jones* (1749)
   Johnson, Samuel. *A Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland* (1775)
   Jonson, Ben. *Bartholomew Fair* (1614)
   Milton, John. *Paradise Lost* (1667)
   Molière, *The Imaginary Invalid* (1673)
   Montagu, Lady Mary Wortley. *The Turkish Embassy Letters* (1718)
   Pope, Alexander. Selected Poems
   Radcliffe, Ann. *The Italian* (1797)
   Richardson, Samuel. *Pamela* (1740)
   Sterne, Laurence. *Tristram Shandy* (1759+)
   Smith, Charlotte. *The Young Philosopher* (1798)
   Swift, Jonathan. *Gulliver’s Travels* (1726, 1735)
   Wollstonecraft, Mary. *Letters Written in Sweden, Norway, and Denmark* (1796)

Secondary Texts:
   Barker-Benfield, G. J. *The Culture of Sensibility* (1992)
   Gallagher, Catherine. *Nobody’s Story* (1994)
   Hay, Douglas, ed. *Albion’s Fatal Tree* (1975)
Thompson, E. P. *The Making of the English Working Class* (1963)

C) 19th Century:
Austen, Jane. *Pride and Prejudice* (1813)
Bronte, Charlotte. *Jane Eyre* (1847)
Bronte, Emily. *Wuthering Heights* (1847)
Browning, Elizabeth Barrett. *Aurora Leigh* (1856)
Browning, Robert. *The Ring and the Book* (1869)
Byron, G.G. *Don Juan* (1821)
Coleridge, S.T. Selected Poems
Dickens, Charles. *Bleak House* (1853)
Dodgson, Charles. *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865)
Eliot, George. *Middlemarch* (1872)
Hopkins, G. M. Selected Poems
Keats, John. Selected Poems
Shelley, Mary. *Frankenstein* (1818 ed.)
Shelley, P.B. Selected Poems
Stevenson, Robert Louis. *Kidnapped* (1886)
Tennyson, Alfred. Selected Poems
Thackeray, William. *Vanity Fair* (1848)
Wilde, Oscar. *The Importance of Being Earnest* (1895)
Wordsworth, Dorothy. *The Grasmere and Alfoxden Journals* (1897)

Secondary Texts:
Abrams, M. H. *The Mirror and the Lamp* (1953)
Manning, Peter. *Reading Romantics* (1990)
Poovey, Mary. *Uneven Developments* (1988)

D) 20th Century:
Auden, W. H. *Selected Poems*
Byatt, A. S. *Possession* (1990)
Conrad, Joseph. *Lord Jim* (1900)
Forster, E. M. *A Passage to India* (1924)
Greene, Graham. *The End of the Affair* (1951)
Heaney, Seamus. Selected Poems
Larkin, Philip.  *The Whitsun Weddings* (1964)
Lawrence, D. H.  *Women in Love* (1920)
Orton, Joe.  *Entertaining Mr Sloane* (1964)
Shaw, G. B.  *Pygmalion* (1912)
Woolf, Virginia.  *To the Lighthouse* (1927)
Yeats, W. B.  *Collected Poems* (Finneran, ed.)

**Secondary Texts:**


II. American Literature

**A) Pre-1865:**

Bradstreet, Anne.  *The Tenth Muse, Lately Sprung Up in America* (1650)
Brown, Charles Brockden.  *Wieland; or, the Transformation* (1798)
Brown, William Hill.  *The Power of Sympathy* (1789)
Cooper, James Fenimore.  *The Last of the Mohicans* (1827)
Douglass, Frederick.  *Narrative of the Life* (1845)
Emerson, Ralph Waldo.  *Selected Essays* (1844) [any edition since]
Foster, Hannah Webster.  *The Coquette* (1797)
Franklin, Benjamin.  *The Autobiography* (1789)
Hawthorne, Nathaniel.  *The Blithedale Romance* (1852)
Jacobs, Harriet.  *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (1861)
Jefferson, Thomas.  *Notes on the State of Virginia* (1781)
Melville, Herman.  *Moby-Dick* (1851)
Poe, Edgar Allan.  *Stories* (1845)
Rowlandson, Mary.  *The True History of the Captivity and Restoration* (1682)
Stowe, Harriet Beecher.  *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* (1852)
Thoreau, Henry David.  *Walden* (1854)

**Secondary Texts:**

Bruckner, Martin and Hsuan Hsu, eds.  *American Literary Geographies* (2007)
Kaplan, Amy and Donald Pease, eds. *Cultures of United States Imperialism* (1993)
Lawrence, D. H. *Studies in Classic American Literature* (1923)

**B) Post-1865:**

*Eliot, T. S.  Selected Poems.*
Ellison, Ralph. *Invisible Man* (1952)
Faulkner, William. *Absalom, Absalom!* (1936)
Fitzgerald, F. Scott. *The Great Gatsby* (1925)
Hansberry, Lorraine. *A Raisin in the Sun* (1959)
Hemingway, Ernest. *The Sun Also Rises* (1927)
Miller, Arthur. *Death of a Salesman* (1949)
Plath, Sylvia. *Ariel* (1965)
Pound, Ezra. *A Draft of XXX Cantos* (1930)
Silko, Leslie Marmon. *Ceremony* (1977)
Sontag, Susan. *At the Same Time: Essays and Speeches* (2007)
Twain, Mark. *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1885)
Whitman, Walt. *Leaves of Grass* (1881)
Williams, Tennessee. *A Streetcar Named Desire* (1948)

**Secondary Texts:**

Williams, William Carlos. *In the American Grain* (1925)

**III. World Literature / Critical Theory & Literary Genre**

**A) World Literature (pre-1900):**
Alighieri, Dante. *Divine Comedy* (early 14C)
Ariosto, Ludovico. *Orlando Furioso* (1532)
Boccaccio, Giovanni. *Decameron* (1353)
Cervantes, Miguel de. *Don Quixote* (1605, 1615)
Dostoevsky, Fyodor. *Crime and Punishment* (1866)
Flaubert, Gustave. *Madame Bovary* (1857)
Goethe, Johann Wolfgang. *Faust* (1832)
Gogol, Nikolai. “The Overcoat” (1842)
Hoffmann, E. T. A. “The Sandman” (1816)
Hugo, Victor. *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (1831)
Huysmans, J.K. *Against Nature* (1884)
Lorris, Guillaume de and Jean de Meun. *Romance of the Rose* (c. 1230, 1275)
Maeterlinck, Maurice. *The Intruder* (1890)
Navarre, Marguerite de. *Heptaméron* (1558)
Pisan, Christine de. *The Book of the City of Ladies* (1405)
Rimbaud, Arthur. *Illuminations* (1886)
Verne, Jules. *Around the World in Eighty Days* (1873)

**World Literature (1900 and after):**
*Atwood, Margaret. The Handmaid’s Tale* (1985)
Buchner, Georg. *Woyzeck* (1837)
Camus, Albert. *The Stranger* (1942)
*Coetzee, J.M. Disgrace* (1999)
Gide, André. *The Immoralist* (1902)
Hofmannsthal, Hugo von. *The Fool and Death* (1914)
Joyce, James. *Ulysses* (1922)
Maeterlinck, Maurice: *The Intruder* (1890)
Mahfouz, Naguib. *Arabian Days and Nights* (1979)
Mann, Thomas. *Death in Venice* (1912)
*Naipaul, V. S. The Mimic Men* (1967)
Remarque, Erich Maria. *All Quiet on the Western Front* (1929)
*Rhys, Jean. The Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966)
Salih, Tayeb. *Season of Migration to the North* (1966)
Schnitzler, Arthur. *Lieutenant Gustl* (1900)
Selvon, Sam. *Lonely Londoners* (1958)
Sologub, Fyodor. *The Petty Demon* (1907)
Strindberg, August. *The Ghost Sonata* (1907)
*Synge, John M. *Riders to the Sea* (1904)
*Walcott, Derek. *Omeros* (1990)

**Secondary Texts:**
*Bhabha, Homi. *The Location of Culture* (1994)
*Fanon, Frantz. *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952)
*Freud, Sigmund. “The Uncanny”* (1922)
*Marx, Karl. *Selected Writings*
*Nietzsche, Friedrich. *Selected Writings*
*Sartre, Jean-Paul. *What is Literature?* (1947)

**B) Critical Theory & Literary Genre:**
*Adorno, Theodor. *Minima Moralia* (1951)
*Aristotle. *Poetics*
*Arnold, Matthew. *Essays in Criticism* (1865, 1888)
*Auerbach, Erich. *Mimesis* (1935; 1946)
*Austin, J. L. *How to Do Things with Words* (1962)
*Bhabha, Homi. *The Location of Culture* (1994)
*Brecht, Bertolt. *Brecht on Theater* (1957)
*Burke, Kenneth. *The Philosophy of Literary Form* (1941)
*Cavell, Stanley. *Must We Mean What We Say* (1969)
*Chatman, Seymour. *Story and Discourse* (1978)
*de Beauvoir, Simone. *The Second Sex* (1949)
*de Man, Paul. *Allegories of Reading* (1979)
*du Bois, W. E. B. *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903)
*Eliot, T. S. *Selected Prose* [Kermode, ed.] (1975)
*Empson, William. *Seven Types of Ambiguity* (1930)
Gilbert, Sandra and Susan Gubar.  *The Madwoman in the Attic* (1979)
Gramsci, Antonio.  *Prison Notebooks* (c. 1930)
Johnson, Barbara.  *A Life with Mary Shelley* (2014)
Lukács, Georg.  Selections in Bloch et al, *Aesthetic and Politics*
Shelley, P.B.  *A Defence of Poetry* (1819)
White, Hayden.  *Metahistory* (1973)
Wimsatt, W.K.  *The Verbal Icon* (1954)
Woolf, Virginia.  *A Room of One’s Own* (1929)

* Rivkin and Ryan, eds., *Literary Theory: An Anthology 2nd ed*.  Selections including: