

# 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. 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> Centuries
- C. 19<sup>th</sup> Century
- D. 20<sup>th</sup> 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:

Amussen, Susan. *The Ordered Society: Gender and Class...* (1988)  
Booth, Stephen. *Shakespeare's Sonnets* (1977)  
Fein, Susanna, and David Raybin. *Chaucer: Contemporary Approaches* (2010)  
Ferguson, Margaret et al, eds. *Rewriting the Renaissance* (1986)  
Greenblatt, Stephen. *Renaissance Self-Fashioning* (1980)  
Vendler, Helen. *The Art of Shakespeare's Sonnets* (1997)  
Wall, Wendy. *The Imprint of Gender: Authorship and Publication...* (1993)

### B) 17<sup>th</sup> & 18<sup>th</sup> 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)  
Castle, Terry. *Masquerade and Civilization* (1986)  
Davis, Lennard. *Factual Fictions* (1983)  
Gallagher, Catherine. *Nobody's Story* (1994)  
Hay, Douglas, ed. *Albion's Fatal Tree* (1975)  
McKeon, Michael. *The Origins of the English Novel* (1987)  
Nicolson, Marjorie. *Mountain Gloom and Mountain Glory*, (1959)  
Price, Martin. *To the Palace of Wisdom* (1970)

Stone, Lawrence. *The Family, Sex, and Marriage in England, 1500-1800* (1977)  
Thompson, E. P. *The Making of the English Working Class* (1963)  
Watt, Ian. *Rise of the Novel* (1957)

C) 19<sup>th</sup> 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)  
Wordsworth, William. *The Prelude* (1805 ed.)

Secondary Texts:

Abrams, M. H. *The Mirror and the Lamp* (1953)  
Armstrong, Nancy. *Desire and Domestic Fiction* (1987)  
Bloom, Harold, ed. *Romanticism and Consciousness* (1970)  
Brantlinger, Patrick. *Rule of Darkness* (1988)  
Butler, Marilyn. *Romantics, Rebels, and Reactionaries* (1985)  
Chandler, James. *England in 1819* (1998)  
Chase, Cynthia. *Decomposing Figures* (1986)  
Christ, Carol. *Victorian and Modern Poetics* (1984)  
de Man, Paul. *The Rhetoric of Romanticism* (1984)  
Duncan, Ian. *Modern Romance and the Transformations of the Novel* (1992)  
Levine, George. *The Realistic Imagination* (1981)  
Manning, Peter. *Reading Romantics* (1990)  
McGann, Jerome. *The Romantic Ideology* (1985)  
Miller, D. A. *The Novel and the Police* (1988)  
Miller, J. Hillis. *The Form of Victorian Fiction* (1968)  
Poovey, Mary. *Uneven Developments* (1988)  
Reed, Arden, ed. *Romanticism and Language* (1984)  
Wolfson, Susan. *Borderlines* (2006)

D) 20<sup>th</sup> Century:

Auden, W. H. *Selected Poems*  
Beckett, Samuel. *Waiting for Godot* (1953)  
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

Hughes, Ted. *Crow* (1970)  
Ishiguro, Kazuo. *The Remains of the Day* (1989)  
Kureishi, Hanif. *The Buddha of Suburbia* (1990)  
Larkin, Philip. *The Whitsun Weddings* (1964)  
Lawrence, D. H. *Women in Love* (1920)  
McEwan, Ian. *Atonement* (2001)  
Orton, Joe. *Entertaining Mr Sloane* (1964)  
Shaw, G. B. *Pygmalion* (1912)  
Smith, Zadie. *White Teeth* (2000)  
Stoppard, Tom. *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* (1966)  
Woolf, Virginia. *To the Lighthouse* (1927)  
Yeats, W. B. *Collected Poems* (Finneran, ed.)

#### Secondary Texts:

Ardis, Ann. *Modernism and Cultural Conflict* (2002)  
Booth, Howard and Nigel Rigby, eds. *Modernism and Empire* (2000)  
Bradbury, Malcolm and James McFarlane. *Modernism* (1978)  
Brannigan, John. *Orwell to the Present: Literature in England 1945-2000* (2003)  
Broom, Sarah. *Contemporary British and Irish Poetry* (2006)  
Eagleton, Terry. *Exiles and Émigrés* (1970)  
Esty, Jed. *A Shrinking Island* (2003)  
Felski, Rita. *The Gender of Modernity* (1995)  
Gikandi, Simon. *Maps of Englishness* (1996)  
Mao, Douglas and Rebecca Walkowitz, eds. *Bad Modernisms* (2006)  
Scholes, Robert. *Paradox of Modernism* (2006)  
Sinfield, Alan. *Literature, Politics, and Culture in Postwar Britain* (1989)

## **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)  
Irving, Washington. *The Sketch Book of Geoffrey Crayon* (1820)  
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)  
Wheatley, Phillis. *Poems on Various Subjects, Religious and Moral* (1773)

#### Secondary Texts:

Bruckner, Martin and Hsuan Hsu, eds. *American Literary Geographies* (2007)  
Cavell, Stanley. *The Senses of Walden* (1981 edition, with essays on Emerson)  
Dauber, Ken. *The Idea of Authorship in America* (1990)

Davidson, Cathy. *Revolution and the Word* (2004)  
Fiedler, Leslie. *Love and Death in the American Novel* (1960)  
Kaplan, Amy and Donald Pease, eds. *Cultures of United States Imperialism* (1993)  
Lawrence, D. H. *Studies in Classic American Literature* (1923)  
Slotkin, Richard. *Regeneration Through Violence* (1973)  
Tompkins, Jane. *Sensational Designs: The Cultural Work of American Fiction* (1986)

B) Post-1865:

Brown, Dee. *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee* (1970)  
Deloria, Vine. *Custer Died for Your Sins: An Indian Manifesto* (1969)  
Dickinson, Emily. *Collected Poems* (1960)  
\*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)  
Hughes, Langston. *The Collected Poems* (1994)  
Lowell, Robert. *Life Studies* (1959)  
Miller, Arthur. *Death of a Salesman* (1949)  
Moore, Alan. *Watchmen* (1986)  
Morrison, Toni. *Beloved* (1987)  
Mullen, Harryette. *Recyclopedia* (2006)  
Naylor, Gloria. *Mama Day* (1988)  
Peltier, Leonard. *Prison Writings: My Life Is My Sun Dance* (1999)  
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)  
Spiegelman, Art. *Maus* (1987)  
Twain, Mark. *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1885)  
Walker, Alice. *The Color Purple* (1983)  
Welch, James. *Fools Crow* (1986)  
Whitman, Walt. *Leaves of Grass* (1881)  
Williams, Tennessee. *A Streetcar Named Desire* (1948)

Secondary Texts:

Belgrad, Daniel. *The Culture of Spontaneity* (1991)  
Ford, Karen Jackson. *Gender and the Poetics of Excess: Moments of Brocade* (1997)  
\*Gates, Henry Louis, Jr. *The Signifying Monkey* (1988)  
\*Gilroy, Paul. *The Black Atlantic* (1993)  
\*Jameson, Fredric. *Postmodernism; or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (1991)  
Lott, Eric. *Love and Theft: Blackface Minstrelsy and the American Working Class* (1993)  
McHale, Brian. *Postmodernist Fiction* (1987)  
Michaels, Walter Benn. *Our America: Nativism, Modernism, and Pluralism* (1995)  
Morrison, Toni. *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination* (1992)  
Nielsen, Aldon. *Black Chant: Languages of African-American Postmodernism* (1997)  
Sundquist, Eric. *Faulkner: A House Divided* (1985)  
Walker, Alice. *In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens: Womanist Prose* (1983)  
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)  
 Lorrís, 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):

Achebe, Chinua. *Things Fall Apart* (1958)  
 Adiga, Aravind. *The White Tiger* (2008)  
 \*Atwood, Margaret. *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985)  
 Ben Jelloun, Tahar. *This Blinding Absence of Light* (2006)  
 Buchner, Georg. *Woyzeck* (1837)  
 Camus, Albert. *The Stranger* (1942)  
 \*Coetzee, J.M. *Disgrace* (1999)  
 \*Desai, Kiran. *The Inheritance of Loss* (2006)  
 Díaz, Junot. *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* (2007)  
 Djébar, Assia. *Fantasia: An Algerian Cavalcade* (1985)  
 García Márquez, Gabriel. *Love in the Time of Cholera* (1985)  
 Gerould, Daniel, ed. *Symbolist Drama: An International Collection* (2001)  
 Gide, André. *The Immoralist* (1902)  
 \*Gordimer, Nadine. *The Conservationist* (1974)  
 Habiby, Emile. *The Secret Life of Saeed* (1972)  
 Hofmannsthal, Hugo von. *The Fool and Death* (1914)  
 James, Marlon. *The Book of Night Women* (2009)  
 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)  
 Okri, Ben. *The Famished Road* (1991)  
 Ondaatje, Michael. *The English Patient* (1992)  
 Remarque, Erich Maria. *All Quiet on the Western Front* (1929)  
 \*Rhys, Jean. *The Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966)  
 \*Roy, Arundhati. *The God of Small Things* (1997)  
 \*Rushdie, Salman. *Midnight's Children* (1981)  
 Pamuk, Orhan. *My Name is Red* (1998)  
 Sacco, Joe. *Palestine* (1992)  
 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:

\*Achebe, Chinua. "An Image of Africa" (1975)

Anzaldúa, Gloria. *Borderlands/LA Frontera: The New Mestiza* (1987)

Ashcroft, Bill et al. *The Empire Writes Back* (2002)

Benstock, Shari. *Women of the Left Bank* (1987)

\*Bhabha, Homi. *The Location of Culture* (1994)

Damrosch, David. *What is World Literature?* (2003)

\*Fanon, Frantz. *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952)

\*Freud, Sigmund. "The Uncanny" (1922)

\*Huggan, Graham. *The Postcolonial Exotic: Marketing the Margins* (2001)

\*Kenner, Hugh. *The Pound Era* (1971)

\*Marx, Karl. Selected Writings

\*Nietzsche, Friedrich. Selected Writings

Peace, Richard. *Fyodor Dostoevsky's Crime and Punishment: A Casebook*. (2005)

Robertson, Ritchie. *The Cambridge Companion to Thomas Mann*. (2001)

\*Said, Edward. *Orientalism* (1978)

\*Sartre, Jean-Paul. *What is Literature?* (1947)

\*Symons, Arthur and Richard Ellmann. *The Symbolist Movement in Literature* (1899)

\*Thiong'o, Ngugi Wa. *Decolonizing the Mind* (1986)

#### B) Critical Theory & Literary Genre:

Adorno, Theodor. *Minima Moralia* (1951)

Alter, Robert. *The Pleasures of Reading in an Ideological Age* (1989)

Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities* (1991)

Aristotle. *Poetics*

Arnold, Matthew. *Essays in Criticism* (1865, 1888)

Attridge, Derek. *The Rhythms of English Poetry* (1982)

Auerbach, Erich. *Mimesis* (1935; 1946)

Austin, J. L. *How to Do Things with Words* (1962)

Barthes, Roland. *S/Z* (1970)

Benjamin, Walter. "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" (1936)

Bhabha, Homi. *The Location of Culture* (1994)

Bloom, Harold. *Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry* (1997)

Booth, Wayne. *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (1961)

Brecht, Bertolt. *Brecht on Theater* (1957)

Brooks, Cleanth. *The Well Wrought Urn* (1947)

Brustein, Robert. *The Theater of Revolt: Studies in Modern Drama...* (1964, 1991)

Burke, Kenneth. *The Philosophy of Literary Form* (1941)

Carlson, Marvin. *Theories of the Theatre* (1984, 1993)

Cavell, Stanley. *Must We Mean What We Say* (1969)

Chatman, Seymour. *Story and Discourse* (1978)

Cixous, Hélène. *The Laugh of the Medusa* (1975)

Critchley, Simon. *The Ethics of Deconstruction* (1992)

de Beauvoir, Simone. *The Second Sex* (1949)

Derrida, Jacques. "Declarations of Independence" (1976)

de Man, Paul. *Allegories of Reading* (1979)

Donoghue, Denis. *The Third Voice: Modern British and American...* (Willett, ed.; 1966)

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

Eagleton, Terry. *The Ideology of the Aesthetic* (1990)

Eliot, T.S. *Selected Prose* [Kermode, ed.] (1975)

Empson, William. *Seven Types of Ambiguity* (1930)

Esslin, Martin. *The Field of Drama* (1988)  
 Foucault, Michael. *History of Sexuality*, volume 1 (1977)  
 Frye, Northrup. *Anatomy of Criticism* (1957)  
 Gallagher, Catherine and Stephen Greenblatt. *Practicing New Historicism* (2000)  
 Genette, Gérard. *Narrative Discourse* (1983)  
 Gilbert, Sandra and Susan Gubar. *The Madwoman in the Attic* (1979)  
 Gramsci, Antonio. *Prison Notebooks* (c. 1930)  
 Gross, Harvey and Robert McDowell. *Sound and Form in Modern Poetry* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.; 1999)  
 Hall, Stuart. *Representation* (1997)  
 Hartman, Charles O. *Free Verse: An Essay on Prosody* (1980)  
 Hirsch, Edward. *How to Read a Poem* (1999)  
 Hollander, John. *Melodious Guile: Fictive Pattern in Poetic Language* (1988)  
 Jameson, Fredric. *The Political Unconscious* (1981)  
 Johnson, Barbara. *A Life with Mary Shelley* (2014)  
 Lemon, L.T. and MJ Reis, ed. *Russian Formalist Criticism* (1965)  
 Lévi-Strauss, Claude. *Structural Anthropology* (1963)  
 Lukács, Georg. Selections in Bloch *et al*, *Aesthetic and Politics*  
 Morrison, Toni. *Playing in the Dark* (1992)  
 Mulvey, Laura. *Visual and Other Pleasures* (1989)  
 Puttenham, George. *The Arte of English Poesie* (1589)  
 Said, Edward. *Orientalism* (1978)  
 Shelley, P.B. *A Defence of Poetry* (1819)  
 Spivak, Gayatri. "Can the Subaltern Speak?" (1988)  
 Todorov, Tzvetan. *The Poetics of Prose* (1971)  
 Tompkins, Jane. "The Reader in History" (Tompkins, ed., *Reader Response Criticism*; 1980)  
 White, Hayden. *Metahistory* (1973)  
 Wimsatt, W.K. *The Verbal Icon* (1954)  
 Wittgenstein, Ludwig. *Philosophical Investigations* (1953)  
 Woolf, Virginia. *A Room of One's Own* (1929)  
 Wordsworth, William. "Preface" to *Lyrical Ballads* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.; 1802)

\* Rivkin and Ryan, eds., *Literary Theory: An Anthology 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.* Selections including:  
 Louis Althusser, Gloria Anzaldúa, Mikhail Bakhtin, Jean Baudrillard, Judith Butler, Gilles  
 Deleuze and Félix Guattari, Ferdinand de Saussure, Jacques Derrida, Judith Halberstam,  
 Dick Hebdige, Jacques Lacan, Lisa Lowe, Eve Sedgwick.