

Master's Exam Reading List: 2017

Chaucer, Canterbury Tales: General Prologue, Knight's Tale, Miller's Prologue and Tale, Reeve's Prologue and Tale, Wife of Bath's Prologue and Tale, Friar's Prologue and Tale, Summoner's Prologue and Tale, Clerk's Prologue and Tale, Merchant's Prologue and Tale, Franklin's Prologue and Tale, Pardoner's Prologue and Tale, and Nun's Priest's Prologue and Tale

Shakespeare, King Lear and The Tempest

Webster, The Duchess of Malfi

Milton, Paradise Lost

Behn, Oroonoko: or, the Royal Slave

Defoe, Robinson Crusoe

Benjamin Franklin, The Autobiography

Keats, "Letter to George and Tom Keats, December 21, 27, 1817," "Letter to Richard Woodhouse, October 27, 1818," "When I Have Fears that I May Cease to Be," "Ode on a Grecian Urn," "Ode to a Nightingale," "The Eve of St. Agnes," "On Seeing the Elgin Marbles," "Ode on Melancholy," "Ode to Psyche," "To Autumn," "La Belle Dame Sans Merci"

Douglass, Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass

George Eliot, Middlemarch

Dickinson (poem numbers are from the recommended Franklin edition), "I taste a liquor never brewed" (207), "There's a certain slant of light" (320), "I felt a funeral in my brain" (340), "It was not death, for I stood up" (355), "After great pain" (372), "This world is not conclusion" (373), "The soul selects her own society" (409), "My life had stood a loaded gun" (464), "I dwell in possibility" (466), "I reckon when I count at all" (533), "The brain -- is wider than the sky--" (598), "I started early -- took my dog" (656), "Each life converges to some centre--" (724), "Behind me -- dips eternity--" (743), "The loneliness one dare not sound--" (877), "Severer service of myself" (887), "I stepped from plank to plank" (926), "As the starved maelstrom laps the navies" (1064), "A narrow fellow in the grass" (1096), "Tell all the truth but tell it slant" (1263)

Woolf, To the Lighthouse

Morrison, Song of Solomon

Williams Carlos Williams, "Tract," "The Widow's Lament in Springtime," "Spring and All," "The Farmer," "The Red Wheelbarrow," "At the Ball Game," "This Is Just to Say," "The Yachts," "These," "The Last Words of My English Grandmother," "The Ivy Crown," "Asphodel, That Greeny Flower"

Walcott, Omeros

M.A. Exam Guidelines

Students will normally be expected to take the new M.A. exam at the beginning of their final full semester. For most of you, that will be in January of 2016. In accordance with Graduate School Policy, students have one opportunity to retake the exam in the event that they fail on the first attempt.

There will be four one-hour questions, one of which will be an explication question on a work not previously announced. There will be no element of choice on the explication question. The other three one-hour questions will be from the reading list, and each will allow students to pick one question from a set of two.

In addition to the texts on the list, students should be conversant with broad issues concerning genre (the epic, the dramatic monologue, etc.) and literary history.

Each calendar year three works will rotate off the list and be replaced by three different ones. Copies of future reading lists will be made available.