Universität Stuttgart
English & American Literatures and Cultures
WS 26/27

Reading Lists and Guidelines for the Final Oral Examination in English and American Literary and Cultural Studies

The reading list exam is part of the final oral exam that students take at the end of their studies in the module "Literary and Linguistic Competence".

The final oral exam takes 50 minutes in total and covers both literary and cultural studies (25 minutes) and linguistics (25 minutes). For the section on English and American literary and cultural studies, students have to prepare a focus topic as well as the reading list. Around 12-15 minutes of your exam will be spent to discuss your focus topic, before the exam moves on to more general questions on aspects of genre, trends and developments of English and American literatures within and across different periods, and connections between the works you have chosen.

The reading list is your opportunity to shine! It covers key works in English and American literatures from the medieval period to the 21st century, many of which you have covered in lectures and seminars during your studies. When assembling your reading list, make sure to include works that you have studied and/or written about in seminar papers. There are some requirements (see below) regarding the inclusion of different genres and literary periods. At the same time, there is a lot of flexibility: You may choose to focus on either American or English literature, or to combine both, and you may replace some works by works that are not listed here. Needless to stress, reading lists like the one below are selective and not meant to inhibit your exploration of other texts or other authors. Throughout your studies, you should read as many works as possible (both on and beyond this list) to get a sound sense of the key developments, trends, and debates in and across individual periods.

As you are expected to have a good grasp of the historical and cultural contexts of the works on your reading list, you should consult literary histories as additional background reading, based on the suggestions that you receive in the course of your exam colloquia.

How to assemble your focus topic (first part of the exam)

For your focus topic, you need to select **5-10 texts** (depending on the complexity of individual texts; please confirm the selection with your examiner), most of which should be taken from the reading list. These texts may overlap with the texts you have to select for your reading list (see below). You are encouraged to choose the texts covered in your exam colloquium, but you may also deviate from the topic and the reading of the colloquium. In addition to the primary texts, please select **5 papers/chapters from scholarly research** which cover aspects of the topic that you are focussing on for this first part of the exam.

How to assemble your reading list (second part of the exam)

- Overall, you have to choose **10 poems, 10 plays, 10 novels, and 10 short stories**. There are two options:
  (1) You can either distribute your choices evenly (e.g. 5 poems from American literature, 5 poems from English literature; etc…), or

(2) you can choose to focus on either American or English literature. In this case, you may choose 7 works in each category from your focus section (American or English) and the remaining three works in each category from the other section.

- You need to include **at least two plays** of different genres (e.g. a comedy and a tragedy) by William Shakespeare.
- You may **replace up to three works** by works that are not on this list. Please discuss your selections with your examiner.
- Please note that your reading list **must** cover **at least three different literary periods in each of the two sections**, i.e., in American and English literatures.
- In addition to these texts, your reading list must include **two non-fictional** texts from the reading list.
- The final reading list must be presented to your instructor by at **least the last week of your exam colloquium course.**

In a successful exam, you will show that you have a firm grasp of the works and the literary periods covered. You will be able to explain key developments in literary history, the historical and cultural background of the literary texts on your reading list as well as their formal structure, genres, key images and themes, and critical debates that have shaped these works.

Texts to choose from for your reading list:

ENGLISH LITERATURES

POETRY

Geoffrey Chaucer, "Prologue" (from *The Canterbury Tales*)
Sir Thomas Wyatt the Elder, "I Find No Peace" (1557)
William Shakespeare, "Sonnet 18" or "Sonnet 130" or "Sonnet 73"
John Donne, "The Flea" (1633) or "Death be not Proud" (1633)
Margaret Cavendish, "A World Made by Atoms" (1653)
Andrew Marvell, "To his Coy Mistress" (1681)
Katherine Philips, "To My Excellent Lucasia, on Our Friendship" (1667)
John Milton, *Paradise Lost* (Book I) (1667) or "When I consider how my light is spent" (1673)
Alexander Pope, "The Rape of the Lock" (1712)
William Blake, "The Lamb" (1789) or "The Tyger" (1794)
Samuel Taylor Coleridge, "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" (1798)
Anna Letitia Barbauld, "The Rights of Woman" (c. 1799)
William Wordsworth, "I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud" (1807) or "Composed upon Westminster Bridge, September 3, 1802" (1807)
John Keats, "Ode on a Grecian Urn" (1820) or "To Autumn" (1820)
Robert Browning, "My Last Duchess" (1842)
Elizabeth Barrett Browning, "Sonnet 43" (1850)
Charlotte Mew, "The Farmer's Bride" (1916)
Wilfred Owen, "Dulce et Decorum Est" (1920)

William Butler Yeats, “Easter 1916” (1921)
T.S. Eliot, “The Waste Land” (1922)
Dylan Thomas, “A Refusal to Mourn” (1945)
Philip Larkin, “Church Going” (1954)
Seamus Heaney, “Digging” (1966)
Chris van Wyk, “In Detention” (1979)
Derek Walcott, “The Sea is History” (1979)
Ciaran Carson, “Belfast Confetti” (1989)
Carol Ann Duffy, “Eurydice” (1999)
Jazz Money, “Bila, A River Cycle” (2021)

DRAMA

Anon., *Everyman* (c. 1485-1500)
William Shakespeare, **a tragedy and a comedy of your choice**
Christopher Marlowe**,** *Doctor Faustus* or *The Jew of Malta* (1592)
Aphra Behn, *The Rover* (1677)
Richard Brinsley Sheridan, *The School for Scandal* (1777)
Oscar Wilde, *Salome* (1893), *The Importance of Being Earnest* (1895)
Samuel Beckett, *Waiting for Godot* (1952)*, Endgame* (1957)
John Osborne, *Look Back in Anger* (1956)
Harold Pinter, *The Birthday Party* (1958)
Edward Bond, *Saved* (1965)
Aimé Césaire, *A Tempest* (1969)
Wole Soyinka, *Death and the King’s Horseman* (1975)
Brian Friel, *Translations* (1980)
Caryl Churchill, *Top Girls* (1982)
Sarah Kane, *Blasted* (1995)
Marina Carr, *Portia Coughlan* (1996)
David Hare, *Stuff Happens* (2004)
Leah Purcell, *The Drover’s Wife* (2016)
James Graham, *Quiz* (2017)

NOVEL

Thomas More, *Utopia* (1516)
Aphra Behn, *Oroonoko, or The Royal Slave* (1688)
Daniel Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe* (1719)
Jonathan Swift, *Gulliver’s Travels* (1726)
Samuel Richardson, *Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded* (1740)
Henry Fielding, *Shamela* (1741)
Lawrence Sterne, *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman* (1759-1767)
Horace Walpole, *The Castle of Otranto* (1764)
Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice* (1813)
Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein, or The Modern Prometheus* (1818)
Charles Dickens, *Oliver Twist* (1837-38) or *Hard Times* (1854) or *Great Expectations* (1860-61)
Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre* (1847)

Emily Brontë, *Wuthering Heights* (1847)
Elizabeth Gaskell, *North and South* (1854-55)
George Eliot, *Middlemarch* (1871-72)
Lewis Carroll, *Alice in Wonderland* (1865)
Robert Louis Stevenson, *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1886)
Oscar Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1890)
Thomas Hardy, *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* (1891)
Bram Stoker, *Dracula* (1897)
Henry James, *The Turn of the Screw* (1898)
Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness* (1899)
James Joyce, *Ulysses* (1922)
EM Forster, *A Passage to India* (1924)
Virginia Woolf, *Mrs Dalloway* (1925)
Aldous Huxley, *Brave New World* (1932)
George Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949)
William Golding, *Lord of the Flies* (1954)
Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart* (1958)
D.H. Lawrence, *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (1960)
Jean Rhys, *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966)
Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, *Petals of Blood* (1977)
Salman Rushdie, *Midnight's Children* (1981)
Margaret Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985)
J.M. Coetzee, *Foe* (1986) or *Elizabeth Costello* (2003)
Alan Moore, *V for Vendetta* (1988)
Kazuo Ishiguro, *The Remains of the Day* (1989)
Michael Ondaatje, *The English Patient* (1992)
Arundhati Roy, *The God of Small Things* (1997)
Ian McEwan, *Atonement* (2001)
Andrea Levy, *Small Island* (2004)
Amitav Ghosh, *The Hungry Tide* (2004)
Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, *Purple Hibiscus* (2004)
Kate Grenville, *The Secret River* (2005)
Aravind Adiga, *The White Tiger* (2008)
Hilary Mantel, *Wolf Hall* (2009)
Julian Barnes, *The Sense of an Ending* (2011)
Ali Smith, *Autumn* (2016) or *Gliff* (2024)
Anna Burns, *Milkman* (2018)
Tara June Winch, *The Yield* (2019)
Bernadine Evaristo, *Girl, Woman, Other* (2019)
Kazuo Ishiguro, *Klara and the Sun* (2021)

SHORT STORY
Elizabeth Gaskell, "Old Nurse's Story" (1852)
Charles Dickens, "The Signal Man" (1866)
Arthur Conan Doyle, "The Speckled Band" (1892)

George Egerton, “A Cross Line” (1893)
Rudyard Kipling, “‘Wireless’” (1902)
James Joyce, “The Dead” (from *Dubliners*) (1914)
Virginia Woolf, “The Mark on the Wall” (1917)
M.R James, “Two Doctors” (1919)
Katherine Mansfield, “The Garden Party” (1922)
Agatha Christie, “Tape-Measure Murder” (1940)
Elizabeth Bowen, “The Demon Lover” (1945)
Alice Munro, “Dance of the Happy Shades” (1968)
Ian McEwan, “Butterflies” (1975)
Doris Lessing, “To Room Nineteen” (1978)
Margaret Atwood, “Gertrude Talks Back” (1992)
Andrea Levy, “Loose Change” (2005)
Nam Le, “The Boat” (2008)
Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, “The Thing Around Your Neck” (2009)
Ellen van Neerven, “Water” (2014)
Neel Mukherjee, “The Soldier’s Tale” (2017)

NON-FICTION

John Dryden, *An Essay of Dramatic Poesy* (1668)
John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690) (Norton selection)
Jonathan Swift, “A Modest Proposal” (1729)
Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Inquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1757) (Norton selection)
Edmund Burke, *From Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790)
Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792) (Norton selection)
William Wordsworth, “Preface” to *Lyrical Ballads* (1800)
Dorothy Wordsworth, *The Grasmere Journals* (1800-02)
Percy Bysshe Shelley, “A Defence of Poetry” (1821/1840) (Norton selection)
John Stuart Mill, “What is poetry?” (1833) or “On Liberty” (1859)
Matthew Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy* (1869) (Norton selection)
T. S. Eliot, “Tradition and the Individual Talent” (1919) or “The Metaphysical Poets” (1921)
Virginia Woolf, “Modern Fiction” (1921) or *A Room of One’s Own* (1929)
George Orwell, “Shooting an Elephant” (1936)
Salman Rushdie, “Commonwealth Literature Does not Exist” or “The Empire Writes Back with a Vengeance” (1982) or “Imaginary Homelands” (1991)

AMERICAN LITERATURE

POETRY

Anne Bradstreet, “To My Dear and Loving Husband” (1678)
“In Memory of My Dear Grandchild, Elizabeth Bradstreet” (1678)
“[...] Upon the Burning of Our House, July 10th, 1666” (1650)
Phillis Wheatley, “On Being Brought […]” & “To the University of Cambridge […]” (1773)

Joel Barlow, “The Hasty Pudding” (1796)
William Cullen Bryant, “To Cole, the Painter” (1829)
Edgar Allan Poe, “The Raven” (1845)
Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, “The Song of Hiawatha“ (1855)
Walt Whitman, “Song of Myself” (1855); “Crossing Brooklyn Ferry“ (1856); “When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom’d“ (1865)
Emily Dickinson, “Because I could not stop for Death“ (ca. 1863; publ. 1890); “I heard a Fly buzz—when I died—“ (ca. 1862; publ. 1896); “My Life had stood—a Loaded Gun—“ (ca. 1863; publ. 1890)
Robert Frost, “Mending Wall“ (1914); “The Road Not Taken“ (1916)
Ezra Pound, “In a Station of the Metro“ (1913)
Marianne Moore, “Poetry“ (1919)
Wallace Stevens, “Sunday Morning“ (1915)
Claude McKay, “If We Must Die” (1919)
T. S. Eliot, “The Waste Land“ (1922)
William Carlos Williams, “The Red Wheelbarrow” (1923); “Spring and All“ (1923)
Langston Hughes, “The Negro Speaks of Rivers“ (1921); “I, too“ (1926)
Countee Cullen, “Heritage“ (1925)
Allen Ginsberg, “Howl” (1955)
Robert Lowell, “Skunk Hour“ (1959)
Sylvia Plath, “Daddy“ (1962); “Lady Lazarus“ (1962)
Adrienne Rich, “Diving into the Wreck“ (1973)
Joy Harjo, “She Had Some Horses“ (1983)
Rita Dove, “Parsley“ (1983)
Louise Glück, “Mock Orange“ (1985)
Natasha Trethewey, “Native Guard“ (2006)
Ocean Vuong, “Someday I'll Love Ocean Vuong“ (2016)

DRAMA
Royall Tyler, *The Contrast* (1787)
Eugene O’Neill, *The Emperor Jones* (1920); *Mourning Becomes Electra* (1931); *Long Day’s Journey into Night* (1956)
Elmer Rice, *The Adding Machine* (1923)
Lillian Hellman, *The Children’s Hour* (1934)
Thornton Wilder, *Our Town* (1938)
Tennessee Williams, *The Glass Menagerie* (1944); *A Streetcar Named Desire* (1947); *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* (1955)
Arthur Miller, *Death of a Salesman* (1949); *The Crucible* (1953)
Lorraine Hansberry, *A Raisin in the Sun* (1959)
Edward Albee, *Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* (1962)
Sam Shepard, *Buried Child* (1978)
August Wilson, *Fences* (1985)
Tony Kushner, *Angels in America* (1991–1992)
Josefina López, *Real Women Have Curves* (1996)

NOVEL

William Hill Brown, *The Power of Sympathy* (1789)
Charles Brockden Brown, *Wieland* (1798)
James Fenimore Cooper, *The Last of the Mohicans* (1826)
Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The Scarlet Letter* (1850)
Herman Melville, *Moby Dick* (1851)
Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1851)
Henry David Thoreau, *Walden; or, Life in the Woods* (1854)
Louisa May Alcott, *Little Women* (1868)
Henry James, *The Portrait of a Lady* (1881); *The Bostonians* (1886)
Mark Twain, *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1883)
Kate Chopin, *The Awakening* (1899)
Edith Wharton, *The House of Mirth* (1905)
Upton Sinclair, *The Jungle* (1906)
Theodore Dreiser, *Sister Carrie* (1900)
Ernest Hemingway, *The Sun Also Rises/Fiesta* (1923); *A Farewell to Arms* (1929)
F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby* (1925)
William Faulkner, *The Sound and the Fury* (1929); *As I Lay Dying* (1930); *Absalom, Absalom!* (1936)
Zora Neal Hurston, *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (1937)
John Steinbeck, *Grapes of Wrath* (1939)
Richard Wright, *Native Son* (1940)
Ralph Ellison, *Invisible Man* (1952)
Vladimir Nabokov, *Lolita* (1955)
Jack Kerouac, *On the Road* (1957)
Ken Kesey, *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* (1962)
N. Scott Momaday, *House Made of Dawn* (1968)
Kurt Vonnegut, *Slaughterhouse-Five* (1969)
Thomas Pynchon, *The Crying of Lot 49* (1966); *Gravity's Rainbow* (1973)
Maxine Hong Kingston, *The Woman Warrior* (1976)
Leslie Marmon Silko, *Ceremony* (1977)
Alice Walker, *The Color Purple* (1982)
Sandra Cisneros, *House on Mango Street* (1984)
Paul Auster, *City of Glass* (1985)
Don DeLillo, *White Noise* (1985); *Underworld* (1997); *Falling Man* (2007)
Toni Morrison, *Song of Solomon* (1977); *Beloved* (1987)
Philip Roth, *American Pastoral* (1997); *The Plot Against America* (2004)
Jonathan Franzen, *The Corrections* (2001)
Jeffrey Eugenides, *Middlesex* (2002)
Jhumpa Lahiri, *The Namesake* (2003)
Cormac McCarthy, *The Road* (2006)
Junot Díaz, *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* (2007)
Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, *Americanah* (2013)
Colson Whitehead, *The Underground Railroad* (2016)
Percival Everett, *James* (2024)

SHORT STORY

Washington Irving, "Rip Van Winkle" (1819); "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" (1820)
Nathaniel Hawthorne, "Young Goodman Brown" (1835); "My Kinsman, Major Molineux" (1832); "The Birth-Mark" (1843)
Edgar Allan Poe, "The Fall of the House of Usher" (1839); "The Purloined Letter" (1844)
Herman Melville, "Bartleby, the Scrivener" (1853); "Benito Cereno" (1855)
Henry James, "Daisy Miller: A Study" (1878)
Charlotte Perkins Gilman, "The Yellow Wallpaper" (1892)
Kate Chopin, "Story of an Hour" (1894)
Stephen Crane, "The Open Boat" (1897)
Sherwood Anderson, "Hands" (1919)
Ernest Hemingway, "Hills Like White Elephants" (1927); "Indian Camp" (1924)
William Faulkner, "A Rose for Emily" (1930)
Flannery O'Connor, "A Good Man Is Hard to Find" (1953)
Ralph Ellison, "Battle Royal" (1952)
James Baldwin, "Sonny's Blues" (1957)
John Cheever, "The Swimmer" (1964)
Leslie Marmon Silko, "Lullaby" (1974)
Sandra Cisneros, "Woman Hollering Creek" (1991)
Jhumpa Lahiri, "The Third and Final Continent" (1999)
Sefi Atta, "Green" (2004)

NON-FICTION

Native American Creation Myths, *"*The Iroquois Creation Story*"* (n.d.)
Christopher Columbus, selected *Letters* (1493)
John Smith, *The General History of Virginia* (1622)
William Bradford, *Of Plymouth Plantation* (1637)
John Winthrop, *"*A Modell of Christian Charity*"* (1630)
Mary Rowlandson, *A Narrative of the Captivity ...* (1682)
Thomas Jefferson, *The Declaration of Independence* (1776)
Benjamin Franklin, *The Autobiography* (1790)
J. Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur, *Letters from an American Farmer* (1782)
Thomas Paine, *Common Sense* (1776)
Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Nature* (1836); "Self-Reliance" (1841)
Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave* (1845)
Margaret Fuller, *Woman in the Nineteenth Century* (1845)
Edgar Allan Poe, "The Philosophy of Composition" (1846)
Elizabeth Cady Stanton, "Seneca Falls: Declaration of Sentiments" (1848)
Harriet Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (1861)
W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903)
Randolph Bourne, "Trans-National America" (1916)
Martin Luther King Jr., "Letter from Birmingham Jail" (1963)
Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (1987)
Toni Morrison, *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination* (1992)