MA in English Comprehensive Examination Reading List (Effective 15 August 2013)

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1. Instructions

1.1. Supervisory Committee

By the time the student has completed eighteen (18) hours of graduate coursework toward the degree, the student must have selected a supervisory committee that will be responsible for advising the student in preparing for comprehensive examinations, evaluating the oral portion of the comprehensive examination, evaluating any portfolio of written work, and/or supervising and evaluating the thesis.

Each supervisory committee should comprise at least three members of the graduate faculty in English, selected according to their ability to examine students over the various literary periods represented in the Common Reading List. One member should be responsible for British Literature to 1500 and British Literature 1500 to 1600; another, British Literature 1600 to 1832 and British Literature 1832 to Present; and another, American Literature to 1870 and American Literature 1870 to Present. Students in the Master of Arts in English with Philosophy as a Cognate Discipline will select a member of the graduate faculty in Philosophy to serve as a fourth member of the supervisory committee. Students in the Master of Arts in English with Modern Languages as a Cognate Discipline will select one member of the graduate faculty in Modern Languages to serve as a fourth member of the supervisory committee.

1.2. Concentrations

Each student will take comprehensive examinations according to the concentration that he or she has chosen.

- **Literature:** Students pursuing the Master of Arts in English Literature will read all listed works in all six areas of British and American literature--British Literature to 1500, British Literature 1500 to 1600, British Literature 1600 to 1832, British Literature 1832 to Present, American Literature to 1870, and American Literature 1870 to Present.
- English with Philosophy as a Cognate Discipline: Students pursuing the Master of Arts in English with Philosophy as a Cognate Discipline will read all listed works in four of the six areas of British and American literature and will read all listed works in the Philosophy area.
- English with Modern Languages as a Cognate Discipline: Students pursuing the Master of Arts in English with Modern Languages as a Cognate Discipline will read all listed works in four of the six areas of British and American literature and will read all listed works on a Modern Languages list determined by the student in consultation with a member of the graduate faculty in Modern Languages and the graduate coordinator in English.

1.3. Written Examinations

Students may begin to take written comprehensive examinations after completion of eighteen hours toward the degree and after submitting an application to take comprehensive examinations. (The form for applying to take comprehensive examinations can be found on the Murray State University Graduate School website at http://www.murraystate.edu/students/graduate.aspx.)

1.3.1. Written Examination Schedule

Written examinations will be administered three times per year on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday of the last full week in October, the first full week in April, and the last full week in June.

1.3.2. Written Examination Format

Students will write their answers by hand for no more than one hour in response to a choice of questions over each of the areas. At least two questions will be provided for each area, and students will write answers to one of those questions. No books, notes, computers, or other devices other than a pen or pencil are permitted for the examination. Students will be provided with the Common Reading List and paper for their answers.

1.3.3. Written Examination Marking, Reporting, and Retakes

Each examination will be read and evaluated by two members of the graduate faculty in a double-blind process. In the event of a disagreement between the two readers, the examination will be sent to a third reader. Each reader will submit to the graduate coordinator a report indicating whether the student passed the examination (see **Forms**), and the graduate coordinator will inform the student. Students may retake failed examinations two times; no examination may be taken more than three times.

1.4. Oral Examinations

After successful completion of all areas of the written comprehensive examinations, students must pass an oral examination that covers the reading list appropriate for each concentration.

1.4.1. Oral Examination Schedule

Students will work with their supervisory committees to schedule oral examinations at least one week after notification of passing marks on written examinations and no later than one week before scheduled graduation.

1.4.2. Oral Examination Format

No books, notes, computers, or other devices will be permitted, although student will be provided with a copy of the reading list. Ten minutes will be devoted to questions and answers over each area; each committee member may ask one follow-up question after all sections have been covered, although each follow-up may take no more than five minutes.

1.4.3. Oral Examination Marking, Reporting, and Retakes

After the student has completed the oral examination session, the faculty members of the supervisory committee will evaluate the student's performance on the examination and vote whether the student passed the examination. The committee will submit its report to the graduate coordinator using the oral report form (see **Forms**), and the graduate coordinator will notify the student whether she or he passed the oral examination. Students may retake the oral examination up to two times; no examination may be taken more than three times.

2. Reading Lists by Area

2.1. BRITISH LITERATURE TO 1500

- 1. The Beowulf Poet: Beowulf
- 2. Anglo-Saxon Poetry: "The Wanderer," "The Dream of the Rood," "The Wife's Lament," "The Seafarer," "Wulf and Eadwacer," Bede's account of Caedmon and "Caedmon's Hymn"
- 3. Medieval Drama:
- 3a. Mankind
- 3b. York Cycle: Crucifixion
- 3c. Towneley Cycle: Noah, Second Shepherds' Play, and Last Judgment
- 4. Geoffrey Chaucer: *Canterbury Tales:* "The "General Prologue," The Knight's Prologue and Tale, The Miller's Prologue and Tale, The Reeve's Prologue and Tale, The Wife of Bath's Prologue and Tale, The Merchant's Prologue and Tale, The Pardoner's Prologue and Tale, The Prioress's Prologue and Tale, The Nun's Priest's Prologue and Tale
- 5. William Langland: The Vision of William Concerning Piers Plowman, B Text, Passus 1-6
- 6. Marie de France: The Lais of Marie de France
- 7. The Pearl-Poet: Sir Gawain and the Green Knight
- 8. Thomas Malory: "The Tale of King Arthur," "The Tale of the Sankgreal," "The Most Piteous Tale of the Morte Arthur Saunz Guerdon"

2.2. BRITISH LITERATURE, 1500-1660

- 1. More: *Utopia*
- 2. 16th c. Lyric
- 2a. Wyatt: Petrarch 140, 189, 190, "Who list his wealth and ease retain," "Mine own John Poins"
- 2b. Surrey: Petrarch 140, 310, "So cruel prison how could betide"
- 2c. Sidney, Astrophil and Stella 1, 7, 15, 34
- 2d. Spenser, *Shepherdes Calendar* "To His Booke," "Aprill" and "October" Eclogues; *Amoretti* 1, 75
- 3. Spenser, Book 1, Faerie Queene
- 4. Kyd, Spanish Tragedy, Jonson, Volpone, Webster, Duchess of Malfi
- 5. Shakespeare, King Lear, Henry IV, Part 1, Twelfth Night
- 6. Donne, "A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning," "The Bait," "The Flea," "The Canonization," "Elegy 19," "Good Friday, Riding Westward," Holy Sonnets "I am a little world made cunningly, "Death, be not proud," "Batter my heart, three-personed God," Meditation 17
- 7. Jonson, "To My Book," "On Something, That Walks Somewhere," "To William Camden," "To John Donne," "Inviting a Friend to Supper," "On My First Son," "On My First Daughter," "To Penshurst," "To the Memory of My Beloved, the Author, Mr. William Shakespeare"
- 8. Wroth, *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus* 1, 25, 39, 68, 74, Herbert, "Easter Wings, " "Jordan (1)," "The Windows," "The Collar," "The Pulley," Marvell, "Bermudas," "The Nymph Complaining for the Death of her Fawn," "To His Coy Mistress," "The Mower Against Gardens," "Horatian Ode Upon Cromwell's Return from Ireland"

2.3. BRITISH LITERATURE 1660-1832

- 1. John Milton, Paradise Lost
- 2. Restoration Dramas
- 2a. Aphra Behn, *The Rover*
- 2b. William Congreve, The Way of the World
- 2c. Susanna Centlivre, A Bold Stroke for a Wife
- 3. Daniel Defoe, Moll Flanders
- 4. Jonathan Swift, *Tale of a Tub*
- 5. Alexander Pope, *The Dunciad*
- 6. William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge, The Lyrical Ballads (1800)
- 7. Jane Austen, Sense and Sensibility
- 8. Romantic Poetry

8a. Charlotte Smith: I, "The Partial Muse"; III, "The Nightingale"; VII, "On the Departure of the Nightingale"; LV, "The Return of the Nightingale"; LXX, "On being cautioned against walking on a Headland overlooking the Sea, because it was frequented by a Lunatic"

8b. William Blake: "The Mental Traveler"; "The Chimney Sweeper" (from Songs of Innocence); "The Chimney Sweeper" (from Songs of Experience); "Marriage of Heaven and Hell"

8c. John Keats: "When I Have Fears"; "Ode to a Nightingale"; "Ode on Melancholy"; "Ode on a Grecian Urn"; "To Autumn"

2.4. BRITISH LITERATURE 1832 TO PRESENT

1. Victorian Poetry

1a. Alfred Tennyson: "The Lady of Shalott,"; "Ulysses"; "The Lotos-Eaters"; "The Charge of the Light Brigade"; "Locksley Hall"

1b. Elizabeth Barrett Browning: *Sonnets from the Portuguese* Sonnets 21, 22, 43; "The Runaway Slave at Pilgrim's Point"

1c. Matthew Arnold: "Dover Beach"; "The Buried Life"; "The Scholar-Gypsy"

2. Charlotte Bronte: Jane Eyre

3. Charles Dickens: David Copperfield

4. Victorian Nonfiction Prose

4a. Thomas Carlyle: from Past and Present, "Captains of Industry"

4b. John Stuart Mill: from The Subjection of Women, "Chapter One"

4c. John Ruskin: from The Stones of Venice, "The Nature of Gothic"

5. Modern Poetry

5a. W. B. Yeats: "The Lake Isle of Innisfree"; "The Second Coming"; "Easter 1916"; "Among School Children"; "Sailing to Byzantium"

5b. World War One Poetry: Rubert Brooke: "The Soldier"; Wilfred Owen: "Dulce Et Decorum Est"; Siegfried Sassoon: "They"; Siegfried Sassoon: "Glory of Women"; May Wedderburn: "Cannon"

5c. Thomas Hardy: "Hap"; "The Darkling Thrush"; "Channel Firing"; "Convergence of the Twain": "The Ruined Maid"

6. Virginia Woolf: *Mrs Dalloway*

7. James Joyce: *Dubliners*

8. Oscar Wilde: The Importance of Being Earnest

2.5. AMERICAN LITERATURE TO 1870

- 1. Bradford: Chapters I, IX, XI, XIV, and XIX in Of Plymouth Plantation
- 2. Nathaniel Hawthorne: House of the Seven Gables
- 3. Emerson: Self-Reliance; "The American Scholar"; "Introduction" to Nature
- 4. Jacobs: Incidents in the Life
- 5. Early American Short Works 5a. Poe: "The Tell-Tale Heart"
- 5b. Charlotte Perkins Gilman: "The Yellow Wallpaper"
- 5c. James: Daisy Miller
- 6. Melville: *Moby-Dick*
- 7. Whitman: "Song of Myself"; "Lilacs"; "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry"
- 8. Early-American Poetry
- 8a. Anne Bradstreet: "The Author to Her Book"; "A Letter to Her Husband, Absent upon Public Employment"; "Before the Birth of One of Her Children"; "Upon the Burning of Our House July $10^{\rm th}$, 1666"
- 8b. Edward Taylor: "The Preface to *God's Determinations*"; "Huswifery"; "Upon Wedlock, & Death of Children"; "The Ebb & Flow"; "A Fig for thee Oh! Death"
- 8c. Emily Dickinson: "There's a certain Slant of light"; "I started Early—Took my Dog—"; "I Felt a Funeral"; "Publication—is the Auction"; "Because I could not stop for Death—"; "My Life had stood—a Loaded Gun—"; "After Certain Pain a Formal Feeling Comes"

2.6. AMERICAN LITERATURE 1870 TO PRESENT

1. William Faulkner: Absalom, Absalom!

2. Jean Toomer: Cane

3. Edith Wharton: The House of Mirth

4. Don DeLillo: White Noise

5. Short Stories

5a. Flannery O'Connor: "Good Country People," "Everything That Rises Must Converge" "The Displaced Person," "The Life You Save May Be Your Own," "The Artificial Nigger" 5b. Eudora Welty: "A Visit of Charity," "Powerhouse," "At the Landing," "The Petrified Man," "Moon Lake"

5c. Raymond Carver: "The Student's Wife," "The Bridle," "So Much Water So Close to Home," "Why Don't You Dance?," "Where I'm Calling From"

6. Modern Drama

6a. Arthur Miller: Death of a Salesman

6b. Tennessee Williams: *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* 6c. Eugene O'Neill: *Long Day's Journey into Night*

7. Early Modernist Poetry

7a. T.S. Eliot: *The Wasteland*, "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock"

7b. William Carlos Williams: "Spring and All," "To Elsie," "Danse Russe," "The Great Figure," "The Widow's Lament in Springtime"

7c. Robert Frost: "Mending Wall," "Home Burial," "The Oven Bird," "Out, Out—'," "Directive"

8. Mid-Century Poetry

8a. Gwendolyn Brooks: "A Bronzeville Mother Loiters in Mississippi. Meanwhile, a Mississippi Mother Burns Bacon," "To Be in Love," "Gay Chaps at the Bar" (entire sequence), "The Lovers of the Poor," "The Ballad of Rudolph Reed"
8b. Elizabeth Bishop: "Poem," "The Moose," "The Armadillo," "Sandpiper," "Arrival at Santos"

8c. Robert Lowell: "The Quaker Graveyard in Nantucket," "To Speak of Woe That Is in Marriage," "Skunk Hour," "For the Union Dead," "Mr. Edwards and the Spider"

2.7. PHILOSOPHY

- 1. Plato's Republic
- 2. Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics
- 3. Anselm's *De Concordia*
- 4. Aquinas' On Being and Essence
- 5. Descartes' *Meditations on First Philosophy*
- 6. Hume's An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding
- 7. Kant's Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics
- 8. Husserl's *Cartesian Meditations*
- 9. Simone de Beauvoir's The Ethics of Ambiguity
- 10. Quine's "Two Dogmas of Empiricism"

2.8. MODERN LANGUAGES

In consultation with the graduate coordinator and the Modern Languages graduate faculty member of the supervisory committee, the student will draft a list of ten literary works representing her or his area of graduate study within the Modern Languages. A work shall be defined as one novel, epic poem, or piece of substantial non-fiction prose; three dramas chosen for coherence by period, author, or genre; three short stories chosen for coherence by period, author, or style; or fifteen lyric poems chosen for coherence by period, author, or genre. The final list must be approved by the supervisory committee.