FIELD XI: BRITISH AND AMERICAN WOMEN’S LITERATURE SINCE 1750

STATEMENT OF EXPECTATIONS
AS PUBLISHED ON MAY 19, 2014

The committee expects the examinee to demonstrate scholarly expertise and acumen as well as cogent and cohesive argumentative skills. The examinee’s written arguments should highlight an awareness of critical issues while also exhibiting detailed knowledge of the texts on which they choose to focus. Potential approaches the examinee may wish to consider include:

- The difference between sex and gender; shifting definitions of “woman”
- Women’s contributions to literature; historical, cultural, and political contexts for these contributions
- Variation in women’s experiences across nations, cultures, time, class, race, sexual orientation, etc., including the experiences of indigenous women and those in colonized or formerly colonized places.
- Intersectionality of race, class, gender, ethnicity, sexuality; interlocking oppressions and identities
- Standpoint theory; importance of location; situated knowledge
- Social construction of gender
- Gendered construction of knowledge and social institutions
- White privilege, male privilege, heterosexual privilege
- Feminism/Womanism/mestizaje
- the history of feminism and women’s movement
- Major issues or “big questions” pertaining to women’s writing, eg. domestic violence, abortion, redefining motherhood
- Key figures and concepts in feminist literary theory, eg. Audre Lorde and Adrienne Rich
- The relationship between women’s literature and women’s activism/efforts for social change.

The examinee’s essays should include responses to each part of the exam questions and should demonstrate the following qualities:

- Clear and logical organization (introduction with thesis statement(s), presentation of argument and evidence, conclusion)
- Clear and grammatical prose
- Accurate information about primary texts, relevant literary criticism and theory, and historical contexts
- Logical and persuasive argumentation
- Engagement with and response to current issues in literary criticism
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READING LIST
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PRIMARY WORKS
Selections from the work of many of the authors listed below may be found in The Norton Anthology of Literature by Women. S. Gilbert and S. Gubar, eds., a work that also contains useful background information, biographies, and bibliographies.

1750 – 1800
Burney, Fanny. Evelina
Edgeworth, Maria. Belinda
Lennox, Charlotte. The Female Quixote
Radcliffe, Ann. The Romance of the Forest
Rowson, Susanna. Charlotte Temple
Wheatley, Phillis. Selections in the Norton
Wollstonecraft, Mary. Maria: or the Wrongs of Woman or Vindication of the Rights of Woman

1800 – 1900
Alcott, Louisa M. Little Women
Austen, Jane. Emma or Pride and Prejudice
Brontë, Charlotte. Jane Eyre
Brontë, Emily. Wuthering Heights
Child, Lydia Maria. Hobomok
Chopin, Kate. The Awakening
Dickinson, Emily. Selected poems in Norton
Eliot, George. Middlemarch
Freeman, Mary Wilkins. “Revolt of Mother,” “Old Woman Magoun,” “A New England Nun”
Gilman, Charlotte Perkins. “The Yellow Wallpaper” and “Why I Wrote the Yellow Wallpaper”
Hopkins, Sarah Winnemucca. Life Among the Paiutes (Selections from Norton)
Jacobs, Harriet. Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl
Jewett, Sarah Orne. Country of the Pointed Firs or “The White Heron”
Sedgwick, Catherine Maria. Hope Leslie
Shelley, Mary. Frankenstein
Stanton, Elizabeth Cady. "Address to the New York State Legislature, 1860" and "The Solitude Of Self"
Stowe, Harriet Beecher. Uncle Tom’s Cabin
Truth, Sojourner. Selections in Norton
Wilson, Harriet. Our Nig
Since 1900
Abu-Jaber, Diana. Arabian Jazz or Crescent
Allison, Dorothy. Bastard Out of Carolina
Alvarez, Julia. In The Time of the Butterflies, Saving the World, or How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents
Bechdel, Alison. Fun Home
Bishop, Elizabeth. Selections in the Norton
Boland, Eavan. Selections in the Norton
Brooks, Gwendolyn. Selected poems in the Norton
Butler, Octavia. Kindred
Byatt, A.S. Possession
Castillo, Ana. So Far From God
Cather, Willa. My Antonia
Churchill, Caryl. Top Girls
Cisneros, Sandra. The House on Mango Street
Danticat, Edwidge. Breath, Eyes, Memory
H.D.. Selections in Norton
Glaspell, Susan. Trifles or "A Jury of Her Peers"
Hansberry, Lorraine. Raisin in the Sun
Hurston, Zora Neale. Their Eyes Were Watching God
Jen, Gish. Mona in the Promised Land
Kincaid, Jamaica. The Autobiography of My Mother or Lucy
Kingston, Maxine Hong. The Woman Warrior
Larsen, Nella. Passing
Lorde, Audre. Selected Poems or Zami
Marshall, Paule. Brown Girl, Brownstones or PraiseSong for the Widow
Morrison, Toni. The Bluest Eye, Beloved, or Jazz
Naylor, Gloria. Mama Day
Nye, Naomi Shihab. Selections in Norton
O’Connor, Flannery. Selections in Norton
Plath, Sylvia. Selections in Norton
Rhys, Jean. Wide Sargasso Sea or Voyage in the Dark
See, Lisa. Shanghai Girls
Smith, Zadie. White Teeth or On Beauty
Silko, Leslie Marmon. Ceremony or Almanac of the Dead
Stein, Gertrude. Tender Buttons or The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas
Tan, Amy. The Joy Luck Club
Walker, Alice. The Color Purple or In Love and Trouble
Each student must also choose ten additional works from the list below.

**1750-1900**
Barbauld, Anna Letitia. Selections in the Norton
Brontë, Anne. *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* or *Agnes Grey.*
Child, Lydia Maria. “Slavery’s Pleasant Home”
Davis, Rebecca Harding. *Life in the Iron Mills*
Gaskell, Elizabeth. *Cranford* or *Wives and Daughters*
Rossetti, Christina. Selected works in the Norton
Wordsworth, Dorothy. Selections in the Norton

**Since 1900**
Ali, Monica. *Brick Lane: A Novel*
Allen, Paula Gunn, ed. *Spider Woman’s Granddaughters: Traditional Tales and Contemporary Writing by Native American Women*
Angelou, Maya. *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* and selected poems
Carter, Angela. *Nights at the Circus*
Edson, Margaret. *Wit*
Erdrich, Louise. *Love Medicine* or *Plague of Doves* or *The Painted Drum*
Forna, Aminatta. *Ancestor Stones*
Hall, Radclyffe. *The Well of Loneliness*
Jones, Gayle. Corregidora
Kingsolver, Barbara. *The Poisonwood Bible*
Lahiri, Jhumpa. *Interpreter of Maladies*
Le Guin, Ursula. *Left Hand of Darkness*
Lessing, Doris. “To Room Nineteen”
Lively, Penelope. *Moon Tiger*
Norman, Marsha. *’Night Mother.*
Parks, Suzan-Lori. *In the Blood.*
Petry, Anne. *The Street*
Piercy, Marge. *Woman on the Edge of Time.*
Robinson, Marilynne. *Housekeeping.*
Schwartz, Christina. *Drowning Ruth.*
Sexton, Anne. Selected poems.
SECONDARY WORKS
Students should consult with a faculty member in this area in choosing a representative sample of the criticism in this list. In addition, students are responsible for familiarity with the articles in Feminism(s), ed. Warhol and Prince, a work that also contains useful background information. A History of Feminist Literary Criticism, edited by Gill Plain and Susan Sellers, is also useful.

“Introduction,” “Spiritual Bildung: The Beautiful Soul as Paradigm” (Hirsch), and “The Novel of Awakening” (Rosnowski) in Abel, Elizabeth, et al, ed. The Voyage In: Fictions of Female Development.
Allen, Paula Gunn. “Kochinnenako in Academe,” in Feminism(s)
Anzaldua, Gloria. Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza
Baym, Nina. Woman’s Fiction: A Guide to Novels by and about Women in America. 1820-1870 and "Melodramas of Beset Manhood”.
Boehmer, Elleke. Stories of Women: Gender and Narrative in the Postcolonial Nation
Bow, Leslie. Betrayal and Other Acts of Subversion: Feminism, Sexual Politics, Asian-American Women’s Literature
Badia, Janet and Jennifer Phegley. Reading Women Literary Figures and Cultural Icons from the Victorian Age to the Present
Butler, Judith. “Performative Acts and Gender Constitution” and “Imitation and Gender Insubordination”
Carby, Hazel. Reconstructing Womanhood: The Emergence of the Afro-American Novelist.
Castillo, Debra. Talking Back: Toward a Latin American Feminist Literary Criticism
Castle, Terry. The Apparitional Lesbian: Female Homosexuality and Modern Culture
David, Deirdre. Rule Britannia: Women, Empire, and Victorian Writing
Davidson, Cathy. Revolution and the Word: The Rise of the Novel in America
Farwell, Marilyn. Heterosexual Plots and Lesbian Narratives
Fetterley, Judith. *The Resisting Reader: A Feminist Approach to American Fiction*


Gates, Henry Louis, Jr, ed. *Reading Black. Reading Feminist*


Haggerty, George E. and Bonnie Zimmerman. *Professions of Desire: Lesbian and Gay Studies in Literature*

Haraway, Donna. *The Haraway Reader, selections*

Heilbrun, Carolyn. *Reinventing Womanhood*


Lorde, Audre. *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches*

Miller, Nancy K., ed. *The Poetics of Gender or Subject to Change: Reading Feminist Writing*

Morrison, Toni. *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination*

Newton, Judith and Deborah Rosenfeld, eds. *Feminist Criticism and Social Change: Sex. Class, and Race in Literature and Culture*

Ostriker, Alicia. *Stealing the Language: The Emergence of Women’s Poetry in America*

Radway, Janice. *Reading the Romance*


Rody, Caroline. *The Daughter’s Return: African-American and Caribbean Women’s Fictions in History*

Showalter, Elaine. *Sister’s Choice: Tradition and Change in American Women’s Writing or A Literature of Their Own*

Smith-Rosenberg, Carroll. *Disorderly Conduct: Visions of Gender in Victorian America*

Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. “Three Women’s Texts and a Critique of Imperialism”

Spencer, Jane. *The Rise of the Woman Novelist: From Aphra Behn to Jane Austen*


Walker, Alice. *In Search of Our Mother’s Gardens: Womanist Prose*

Woolf, Virginia *A Room of One’s Own*