

Reading List Exam (MA/Diplom)

The reading list exam is a 30-minute oral exam and covers key literary texts from the medieval period to the twenty-first century. Prerequisite for taking the reading list exam is that you have passed the written part of the exam (Klausur zur Vorlesung).

In this exam, you demonstrate – on the basis of selected texts you chose according to the criteria listed below – that you can apply the ‘tool box’ of literary studies to texts from different genres (prose, poetry, drama) and periods. In a successful exam, you will show that you have a firm grasp of the works and the way in which they fit into the literary periods covered. Using the texts on your individual reading list as case studies, you will be asked to comment on cultural background, formal structure, genres, and key images and themes. In particular, you will be expected to be able to situate ‘your’ works in literary history, i.e. to discuss how they relate to larger literary-historical contexts of their period.

When putting together your individual reading list, you may refer to the “core reading list” that has been assembled by the members of the literature and culture section in the English Department. The intention behind this list (which will continually be updated) is to give recommendations for independent study in the course of your enrolment at the English department. The list is necessarily selective and should not limit your reading – you are invited to also explore other texts and authors, and you may suggest such reading for your individual reading list (however, all individual reading lists need to be discussed with and approved by your examiner). Please note that the works that are printed **in bold** on the list are the works that are covered in the BA reading list exam. If you have taken that exam, **you should not include those titles** again in your individual reading list for the MA exam.

The selection of 15 titles for your individual reading list must be spread over the literary periods and genres. Our conversation in the exam will be based on those 15 titles, which we will use as exemplary cases to talk about larger literary-historical concepts and developments.

How to assemble your individual reading list:

- Choose fifteen texts (or, in the case of short texts, text units). To ensure a broad range, you need to include texts from different literary-historical periods, as they are defined in the core reading list. These are the periods:
 - Early English literature (select 1 text)
 - Early Modern era and 17th century before the Restoration (ca. 1500-1660; select 2 texts PLUS one Shakespeare play)
 - Restoration and 18th century (1660-ca 1785; select 3 texts)
 - Romantic period (ca. 1785-ca. 1830; select 2 texts)
 - Victorian age (1830-1900; select 2 texts)
 - Modernism and early 20th century (1900-1945; select 2 texts)
 - Literature from 1945-present (select 2 texts)
- **Within each section**, the texts you choose need to be from **different genres**. Overall, the three main genres (prose, drama, poetry) need to be represented with at least 4 texts each in your list. Short stories or essays do not count as one full text – you are welcome to include them, but you’ll need to supplement with 1 or 2 extra texts to make up one unit. The same applies to short poems.
- **In order to ensure that your reading list features the required range of works, it needs to be approved by your examiner. The final approved list must be submitted and briefly discussed during the office hours at least six weeks before the exam.**
- **Please use the reading list style sheet to format your specialized reading list (to be found online).**

Core Reading List (MA/Diplom)

This list has been assembled by the members of the literature and culture section in the English Department and will continually be updated. The intention behind the list is to give recommendations for independent study in the course of your enrolment at the English department. You may also use it as a basis for putting together your individual lists for the MA/Diplom reading list exam (but please note that you cannot select the titles **in bold**, which are the texts included in the BA reading list exam, if you have already taken that exam). The stars mark works that the examiner sees as having particular resonance in the history of English literature.

Many of the shorter works listed below can be found in *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, ed. Stephen Greenblatt, 2 vols., 9th ed., New York: Norton, 2012.

I EARLY ENGLISH LITERATURE

Poetry

“Cædmon’s Hymn”

Anon., *Beowulf*

William Langland, *Piers Plowman*

Anon., *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*

*Geoffrey Chaucer, **“Prologue”* (from *The Canterbury Tales*), tale from *The Canterbury Tales*, e.g. “The Merchant’s Tale”, “The Wife of Bath’s Prologue and Tale”, “The Miller’s Prologue and Tale”, “Pardoner’s Prologue and Tale”, etc. (text unit is Prologue plus one tale)

Sir Thomas Malory, *Le Morte d’Arthur* (Norton selection)

Drama

Anon., *The Castle of Perseverance*

Anon., *Mankind*

Anon., *The Second Shepherds’ Play*

*Anon., **Everyman*

II EARLY MODERN ERA & EARLY 17TH CENTURY (1500-1660)

Poetry

Sir Thomas Wyatt the Elder, “I Find No Peace”, “My Galley, “Whoso List to Hunt”, “They Flee from Me”

Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, “Love, That Doth Reign”, “The Soote Season”, “Alas! So all Things Now Do Hold Their Peace”

*Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*

***Sir Philip Sidney**, *Astrophil and Stella*, e.g. **“Loving in Truth”**

Christopher Marlowe, “Hero and Leander”

*William Shakespeare, *Sonnets*, e.g. **“Sonnet 18”**, ***“Sonnet 130”**

Aemilia Lanyer, “Eve’s Apology”, “The Description of Cooke-ham”

Ben Jonson, “To Penshurst”

*John Donne, ***“The Sun Rising”**, **“Holy Sonnet X”*, “The Flea”

George Herbert, “Easter Wings”, “Prayer (I)”, “The Altar”

Andrew Marvell, “An Horatian Ode upon Cromwell’s Return from Ireland”, “Upon Appleton House”, **“To his Coy Mistress”**

Margaret Cavendish, “A World Made by Atomes”

Katherine Philips, “To My Excellent Lucasia, on Our Friendship”, “On the 3rd of September, 1651”, “Upon the Double Murder of King Charles”

*John Milton, **Paradise Lost* (Books I and IX), “On His Blindness”

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Drama

*William Shakespeare, **Richard III*, **A Midsummer Night's Dream*, ****Much Ado About Nothing***,
The Merchant of Venice*, **Hamlet***, **The Tempest*
Thomas Kyd, *The Spanish Tragedy*
*Christopher Marlowe, **Doctor Faustus*, *The Jew of Malta*
Ben Jonson, *Volpone*, *The Alchemist*
John Webster, *The Duchess of Malfi*
Thomas Middleton, *The Changeling*, *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside*

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Prose Fiction

*Thomas More, **Utopia* (Norton selection)
Sir Philip Sidney, *Arcadia* (selections)
* John Bunyan, *The Pilgrim's Progress* (Norton selection)

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Non-Fiction

Sir Philip Sidney, *The Defence of Poesy* (Norton selection)
Thomas Hobbes, "Introduction" to *Leviathan*

III RESTORATION & 18TH CENTURY (1660-1785)

Poetry

John Dryden, *Absalom and Achitophel*
Sarah Fyge Egerton, "The Liberty"
Jonathan Swift, "A Description of a City Shower", "The Lady's Dressing Room",
"The Bubble"
*Alexander Pope, *The Rape of the Lock*, *The Dunciad* (Book IV), *An Essay on Man* – Epistle
1 and 2 (Norton selection), "Summer"
Anne Finch, "Introduction"
Mary Leapor, "Man the Monarch"
Thomas Gray, "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard"

Drama

William Wycherley, *The Country Wife*
George Etherege, *The Man of Mode*
*Aphra Behn, ****The Rover***
John Dryden, *All for Love*
William Congreve, *The Way of the World*
Susannah Centlivre, *A Bold Stroke for a Wife*
John Gay, ***The Beggar's Opera***
George Lillo, *The London Merchant*
*Oliver Goldsmith, **She Stoops to Conquer*

Prose Fiction

Aphra Behn, *Oroonoko, or The Royal Slave*
Eliza Haywood, *Fantomina; or Love in a Maze; The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless*
Jonathan Swift, *A Tale of a Tub*, ***Gulliver's Travels***
*Daniel Defoe, **Robinson Crusoe*, *Moll Flanders*
*Samuel Richardson, *Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded*
Sarah Fielding, *The Adventures of David Simple*
*Henry Fielding, *Shamela*, *Tom Jones*
Lawrence Sterne, *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman*
*Frances Burney, *Evelina*, *Cecilia*

Non-Fiction

John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (Norton selection)

Jonathan Swift, “**A Modest Proposal**”

Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Inquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*
(Norton selection)

IV ROMANTIC PERIOD (1785-1830)

Poetry

*William Blake, **“The Lamb”, “The Little Black Boy”, “The Chimney Sweeper”, **“The Tyger”, “The Sick Rose”, “London”, further selected poems from *Songs of Innocence and Experience***

Mary Robinson, “January, 1795”

Robert Burns, “Holy Willie’s Prayer”, “Tam o’Shanter”, “A Red, Red Rose”

*Anna Letitia Barbauld, “The Rights of Woman”, “Inscription on an Ice-House

Charlotte Smith, “Beachy Head”

*William Wordsworth, “Lines Composed a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey”, “Old Man Travelling”, “The Tables Turned”, *The Prelude* (selections), “Michael”, ***“I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud”, “Composed upon Westminster Bridge”**

*Samuel Taylor Coleridge, “The Rime of the Ancient Mariner”, “Frost at Midnight”, “Dejection”, **“Kubla Khan”, “Christabel”*

Lord Byron, “Solitude” in *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage*, “She Walks in Beauty”, *Manfred*, *Don Juan* - Canto I

*Percy Bysshe Shelley, “Hymn to Intellectual Beauty”, ***“Ozymandias”, “Ode to the West Wind”**

*John Keats, “On Seeing the Elgin Marbles”, “Ode to Psyche”, **“Ode on a Grecian Urn”, “La Belle Dame sans Merci”, “Ode to a Nightingale”, “The Eve of St. Agnes”, “When I Have Fears That I May Cease to Be”*

Letitia Elizabeth Landon, “The Proud Ladye”, “A Legend of Tintagel Castle”, “Felicia Hemans”

Felicia Hemans, “The Homes of England”, “Properzia Rossi”

Drama

Joanna Baillie, *De Monfort*

Matthew Lewis, *Timour the Tartar*

Percy Bysshe Shelley, *The Cenci*, *Prometheus Unbound*

Prose Fiction

Horace Walpole, *The Castle of Otranto*

Olaudah Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative of Olaudah Equiano*

Ann Radcliffe, *The Mysteries of Udolpho*

*Jane Austen, ***Pride and Prejudice***, *Emma*, *Persuasion*

Walter Scott, *Waverley*

*Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein, or The Modern Prometheus*

Non-Fiction

Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (Norton selection)

Joanna Baillie, “Introductory Discourse” to *A Series of Plays*

William Wordsworth, “Preface” to *Lyrical Ballads*

Percy Bysshe Shelley, “A Defence of Poetry” (Norton selection)

V VICTORIAN AGE (1830-1900)

Poetry

Alfred Lord Tennyson, “Ulysses”, “The Lady of Shalott”, selection from *In Memoriam* (Norton selection)

*Robert Browning, “Porphyria’s Lover”, **“My Last Duchess”*

*Elisabeth B. Browning, **“A Man’s Requirements”**, “Sonnet 21”, “Sonnet 22”, “Sonnet 32”, **“How Do I Love Thee?”* (Sonnet 43) from *Sonnets from the Portuguese*

Coventry Patmore, *The Angel in the House*

*Matthew Arnold, "Lines Written in Kensington Gardens", *"Dover Beach"

*Christina Rossetti, "Goblin Market", "Winter: My Secret", "Remember", "**Up-Hill**"

Dante Gabriel Rossetti, "Aspecta Medusa", "Body's Beauty", "The Sonnet"

Gerard Manly Hopkins, "The Windhover", "The Caged Skylark"

Thomas Hardy, "The Farm Woman's Winter"

Drama

Douglas William Jerrold, *The Rent Day*

*Oscar Wilde, *Salome*, ****The Importance of Being Earnest***

Dion Boucicault, *The Colleen Bawn*

George Bernard Shaw, *Mrs. Warren's Profession*

Prose Fiction

*Charles Dickens, *David Copperfield*, ****Great Expectations***, *Bleak House*

*Charlotte Brontë, ****Jane Eyre***

Emily Brontë, *Wuthering Heights*

William Makepeace Thackeray, *Vanity Fair*

Elizabeth Gaskell, *North and South*

Wilkie Collins, *The Moonstone*

*George Eliot, *The Mill on the Floss*, *Middlemarch*

Lewis Carroll, *Alice in Wonderland*, *Through the Looking Glass*

Robert Louis Stevenson, *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*

Oscar Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*

Thomas Hardy, *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, *Jude the Obscure*

Bram Stoker, *Dracula*

Arthur Conan Doyle, *The Hound of the Baskervilles*

Non-Fiction

Thomas Carlyle, *Past and Present* (Norton selection)

Matthew Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy* (Norton selection)

Charles Darwin, *The Descent of Man* (Norton selection)

VI MODERNISM & EARLY 20TH CENTURY LITERATURE (1900-1945)

Poetry

Siegfried Sassoon, "Glory of Women"

Wilfred Owen, "Dulce et Decorum Est", "Anthem for Doomed Youth"

*William Butler Yeats, "The Second Coming", *"Easter 1916", "Sailing to Byzantium", "High Talk"

T.S. Eliot, ***The Waste Land***

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Drama

George Bernard Shaw, *Pygmalion*, *Man and Superman*

*John Millington Synge, **The Playboy of the Western World*

John Galsworthy, *Justice*

Sean O'Casey, *Juno and the Paycock*

Noël Coward, *Design for Living*

Prose Fiction

H.G. Wells, *The War of the Worlds*

*Joseph Conrad, **Heart of Darkness*, *Lord Jim*

D.H. Lawrence, *Lady Chatterley's Lover*

Ford Maddox Ford, *The Good Soldier*

*James Joyce, *"**The Dead**" (from *Dubliners*), *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, *Ulysses*

Katherine Mansfield, "**The Garden Party**", "The Daughters of the Late Colonel"

E.M. Forster, *A Passage to India*

*Virginia Woolf, **Mrs Dalloway*, *To the Lighthouse*
Elizabeth Bowen, *The Last September*
Aldous Huxley, *Brave New World*
Mulk Raj Anand, *Untouchable*

Non-Fiction

Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own*

VII 1945-PRESENT

Poetry

*W. H. Auden, "Musée des Beaux Arts", "**Funeral Blues**", "September 1, 1939", "In Memory of W. B. Yeats"
Dylan Thomas, "Fern Hill", "Do Not Go Gentle into that Good Night"
*Ted Hughes, "The Thought Fox", "Hawk Roosting"
Derek Walcott, "A Far Cry from Africa"
Wole Soyinka, "Telephone Conversation"
*Louise Bennett "Colonization in Reverse"
*Seamus Heaney, "Death of a Naturalist", *"**Digging**", "The Tollund Man"
Philip Larkin, "High Windows", "This Be The Verse"
Tony Harrison, "Them and [uz]"
Grace Nichols, "Like a Beacon"
Eavan Boland, "Mise Eire"
Simon Armitage, "Poem"
Benjamin Zephaniah, "Dis Poetry"
Fleur Adcock, "**For a Five-Year-Old**"
Michael Ondaatje, "**The Cinnamon-Peeler**"
Carol Ann Duffy, "Medusa", "**Education for Leisure**"
Patience Agbabi, "Transmatrix"
James Berry, "Devouring", "Empire Day"

Drama

*Samuel Beckett, **Waiting for Godot*, *Endgame*
John Osborne, *Look Back in Anger*
*Harold Pinter, *The Birthday Party*, *The Homecoming*
*Tom Stoppard, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*, *Arcadia*
Peter Shaffer, *Amadeus*
Brian Friel, *Translations*
Caryl Churchill, *Top Girls*
*Sarah Kane, *Blasted*
Mark Ravenhill, *Shopping and Fucking*
Marina Carr, *By the Bog of Cats*
Robin Soans, *Talking to Terrorists*
Bola Agbaje, *Belong*
Sh!t Theatre, *Letters to Windsor House*

Prose Fiction

*George Orwell, *Animal Farm*, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, "**Shooting an Elephant**"
William Golding, *Lord of the Flies*
Sam Selvon, *The Lonely Londoners*
*Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*
Jean Rhys, *Wide Sargasso Sea*
John Fowles, *The French Lieutenant's Woman*

Doris Lessing, **"To Room Nineteen"**, *The Golden Notebook*
Salman Rushdie, *Midnight's Children*
Nadine Gordimer, *July's People*
Fay Weldon, ***Life and Loves of a She-Devil***
Graham Swift, *Waterland*
Margaret Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale*, *Oryx and Crake*, **"Gertrude Talks Back"**
Roald Dahl, **"Genesis and Catastrophe"**
J.M. Coetzee, *Foe*
Julian Barnes, *A History of the World in 10 ½ Chapters*, *The Sense of an Ending*
*Kazuo Ishiguro, *The Remains of the Day*, *Never Let Me Go*
Hanif Kureishi, ***Black Album***, *The Buddha of Suburbia*
Michael Ondaatje, *The English Patient*
Rohinton Mistry, *A Fine Balance*
Arundhati Roy, *The God of Small Things*
Jim Crace, *Being Dead*
*Zadie Smith, *White Teeth*
*Ian McEwan, ***Atonement***
Andrea Levy, ***Small Island***
Michel Faber, *Under the Skin*, *The Book of Strange New Things*
Monica Ali, *Brick Lane*
Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, *Purple Hibiscus*
A.L. Kennedy, *Paradise*
Kate Grenville, *The Secret River*
Ali Smith, *The Accidental*
Aravind Adiga, *The White Tiger*
Hilary Mantel, *Wolf Hall*
Olivia Sudjic, *Sympathy*
Bernardine Evaristo, *Girl, Woman, Other*
Alan Paton, *Cry, the Beloved Country*
Zakes Mda, *Ways of Dying*
Patricia Grace, *Potiki*
Kim Scott, *That Deadman Dance*
Sally Morgan, *My Place*
Thomson Whitehead, *Kiss of the Fur Queen*

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Non-Fiction

Terry Eagleton, "Introduction: What Is Literature?"
Doris Lessing, **"Group Minds"**
Salman Rushdie, **"Commonwealth Literature Does not Exist"**, "Imaginary Homelands"
Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, *Decolonising the Mind*
Caryl Phillips, selected essays from *Colour Me English*
Laurie Penny, *Cybersexism: Sex, Gender and Power on the Internet*