

REVISED COMPREHENSIVE READING LIST AND LITERARY TERMS
English Department, Xavier University
(Updated 2004)

Important Information: During the first semester of the senior year every English and English Education major must register to take the departmental comprehensive examination (ENGL 4999) and the English Senior Colloquium (ENGL 3001). If the student has a 3.5 gpa in English and has received permission from the Chair of the Department to write a senior thesis, the department will waive the essay sections of the comprehensive (parts 2 and 3), but ALL students must complete and pass the multiple choice section of the comprehensive (part 1) and ENGL 3001. The reading list and list of literary terms is meant as a study guide for the exam. In addition to the authors and works listed below, students are responsible for basic knowledge of literary periods and relevant historical or biographical information, such as that which can be found in introductory chapters of the *Norton* anthologies.

AREA 1: BRITISH LITERATURE

Recommended texts: *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, Vols. 1 and 2;
individually published titles

Middle Ages or Medieval Literature (Old and Middle English Literature)

Beowulf

Sir Gawain and the Green Knight

Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Canterbury Tales* (“The General Prologue,” “The Pardoner’s Tale,” “The Wife of Bath’s Tale”)

The Renaissance, 16th and 17th Century Literature

Sir Philip Sidney, *Astrophil and Stella* (7, “When Nature made her chief work, Stella’s eyes”; 9, “Queen Virtue’s court, which some call Stella’s face”; 45, “Stella oft sees the very face of woe”)

John Donne, “The Flea,” “A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning”

Andrew Marvell, “To His Coy Mistress”

John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, Books I, IX

William Shakespeare, *Othello*

Sir Thomas More, *Utopia* (Norton selections)

The Restoration and 18th Century Literature

Alexander Pope, “The Rape of the Lock”

Aphra Behn, *Oroonoko, or The Royal Slave*

Jonathan Swift, *Gulliver’s Travels*, Books I, IV; “A Modest Proposal”

The Romantic Period and Early 19th Century Literature

William Blake, *Songs of Innocence and Experience* (“London,” “The Tyger,” “The Sick Rose,” “The Garden of Love”)

William Wordsworth, “Lines Composed a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey,” “Ode: Intimations of Immortality”)

Samuel Taylor Coleridge, “Rime of the Ancient Mariner”

John Keats, "Ode to a Nightingale," "Ode on a Grecian Urn"
Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*

The Victorian Period

Alfred, Lord Tennyson, "Ulysses"
Robert Browning, "My Last Duchess"
Matthew Arnold, "Dover Beach"
Christina Rossetti, "Goblin Market"
Oscar Wilde, *The Importance of Being Earnest*
Thomas Hardy, *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*

The 20th Century (includes Modern and Postmodern Literature)

Wilfred Owen "Dulce et Decorum Est"
William Butler Yeats, "Sailing to Byzantium," "Leda and the Swan," "The Second Coming"
W.H. Auden, "Musee des Beaux Arts"
Dylan Thomas, "Do not go gentle into that good night"
Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*
Virginia Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway*
James Joyce "The Dead"
Seamus Heaney, "Digging"
Samuel Beckett, *Waiting for Godot*

AREA 2: AMERICAN AND AFRICAN AMERICAN LITERATURE

Recommended texts: *The Norton Anthology of American Literature*, Vols. 1 and 2; *The Norton Anthology of African American Literature*, Vols. 1 and 2; individually published titles

The Colonial and Revolutionary Periods

Anne Bradstreet, "To My Dear and Loving Husband"
Phillis Wheatley, "Thoughts on Imagination"

The 19th Century to the Civil War

Edgar Allan Poe, "The Raven," "The Cask of Amontillado"
Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life . . .*
Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The Scarlet Letter*
Herman Melville, "Bartleby the Scrivener"
Walt Whitman, "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloomed"
Emily Dickinson, "After Great Pain, a Formal Feeling Comes"

The Late 19th Century after the Civil War

Paul Laurence Dunbar, "We Wear the Mask"
Mark Twain, *Huckleberry Finn*
Charles Chesnutt, "The Wife of His Youth"
Kate Chopin, *The Awakening*

The 20th Century to World War II

Robert Frost, "Birches"
William Carlos Williams, "The Red Wheelbarrow"
Ezra Pound, "In a Station at the Metro"
Eugene O'Neill, *Long Day's Journey into Night*
T.S. Eliot, "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock"
F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*
Ernest Hemingway, "The Snows of Kilimanjaro"
Langston Hughes, "The Weary Blues"
Sterling Brown, "Strong Men"

The 20th Century after World War II

Ralph Ellison, *Invisible Man*
Gwendolyn Brooks, "The Lovers of the Poor"
Richard Wilbur, "Juggler"
James Baldwin, "Sonny's Blues"
Allen Ginsberg, "Howl"
Audre Lorde, "Coal"
Toni Morrison, "Playing in the Dark"
August Wilson, *Fences*

AREA 3: WORLD LITERATURE (exclusive of British and American Literature)

Recommended texts: *The Norton Anthology of World Literature*, Vols. 1 and 2;
individually published titles

The Classical or Ancient Period

Gilgamesh
Homer, *The Odyssey*
Euripides, *Medea*
Sappho, all lyrics in the *Norton Anthology*

The Middle Ages or Medieval Literature

Son-Jara or *Sundiata*
Dante Alighieri, *The Inferno*

The Renaissance

Miguel de Cervantes, *Don Quixote*, Part I, Chapters 1-5, 7-10, 18, 22; Part 2, Chapters 3,
17, 64-65, 74 (all included in Norton)

The 18th Century or The Enlightenment

Francois-Marie Arouet de Voltaire, *Candide, or Optimism*

The 19th Century (including Romanticism and Realism)

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Faust*, Prologue and Part I
Gustave Flaubert, *Madame Bovary*
Fyodor Dostoevsky, *Notes from Underground*

The 20th Century (including Modernism and Postmodernism)

Franz Kafka, *The Metamorphosis*

Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*

Gabriel Garcia-Marquez, "A Very Old Man With Enormous Wings"

LITERARY TERMS

Recommended text: M. H. Abrams, *A Glossary of Literary Terms*, 6th ed.

Ancient/Classical Period	point of view
allegory	postmodernism
alliteration	protagonist
allusion	realism
archetype	Renaissance
catharsis	Restoration
chorus	Romantic Period
cliché	romance
comedy	satire
deus ex machine	sentimental
diction	simile
drama	sonnet
dramatic monologue	stream of consciousness
elegy	surrealism
epic	symbol
explication	theme
genre	tone tragedy
hamartia	Transcendentalism
hero	Victorian Period
hubris	understatement
hyperbole	
imagery	
irony	
lyric	
magic realism	
Medieval Literature/Middle Ages	
metaphor	
modernism	
motif	
myth	
naturalism	
oral tradition	
omniscient speaker	
parody	
pastoral	
personification	
poetic justice	