

American Literature: 1830-1910 Ph.D. Exam

Primary Works

Students taking the exam in American literature 1830-1910 should be able to demonstrate broad knowledge of the primary works listed below, especially in terms of the historical development of American literature over the period covered, as well as recollection of specific details, incidents, passages, etc. as necessary to support a critical argument.

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| Adams, Henry | <i>The Education of Henry Adams</i> |
| Alcott, Louisa May | <i>Little Women</i> “Transcendental Wild Oats” |
| Austin, Mary | “The Walking Woman” |
| Brent, Linda (Harriet Jacobs) | <i>Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl</i> |
| Brown, William Wells | <i>Clotel; or, The President’s Daughter</i> |
| Cable, George Washington | <i>The Grandissimes</i> or <i>Old Creole Days</i> , selected stories |
| Cahan, Abraham | “The Imported Bridegroom” |
| Chesnutt, Charles W. | <i>The Conjure Woman</i> <i>The Marrow of Tradition</i> |
| Chopin, Kate | <i>The Awakening</i> “The Storm” “Story of an Hour” “At the ‘Cadian Ball” |
| Clemens, Samuel Langhorne | <i>Adventures of Huckleberry Finn</i> <i>Life on the Mississippi</i> “The Mysterious Stranger” “The Man that Corrupted Hadleyburg” |
| Crane, Stephen | <i>Maggie</i> <i>The Red Badge of Courage</i> “The Bride Comes to Yellow Sky” “The Open Boat” |
| Davis, Rebecca Harding | <i>Life in the Iron Mills</i> “A Faded Leaf of History” |
| Dickinson, Emily | A healthy selection of poems, R.W. Franklin edition |

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| Douglass, Frederick | <i>Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass</i> |
| Dreiser, Theodore | <i>Sister Carrie</i> “True Art Speaks Plainly” |
| DuBois, W.E.B. | <i>The Souls of Black Folk</i> |
| Dunbar, Paul Lawrence | Selections in <i>Norton Anthology</i> <i>The Sport of the Gods</i> |
| Emerson, Ralph Waldo | <i>Nature</i> “Self-Reliance” “The Poet” “Experience” “The American Scholar” “The Divinity School Address” |
| Fern, Fanny (Sarah Willis Parton) | <i>Ruth Hall</i> or selected journalism |
| Frederic, Harold | <i>The Damnation of Theron Ware</i> |
| Freeman, Mary Wilkins | “Old Woman Magoun” “Two Friends” |
| Fuller, Margaret | <i>Woman in the 19th Century</i> |
| Gilman, Charlotte Perkins | “The Yellow Wallpaper” |
| Harper, Frances | <i>Iola Leroy</i> |
| Hawthorne, Nathaniel | <i>The Scarlet Letter</i> <i>The Blithedale Romance</i> Stories collected in <i>The Celestial Railroad</i> |
| Howells, William Dean | <i>The Rise of Silas Lapham</i> or <i>A Hazard of New Fortunes</i> “Novel Writing and Novel Reading” |
| James, Henry | “The Turn of the Screw” <i>Daisy Miller</i> <i>Portrait of a Lady</i> <i>The Ambassadors</i> “The Real Thing” <i>The Art of Fiction</i> |
| Jewett, Sarah Orne | <i>The Country of the Pointed Firs</i> |

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| Kemble, Fanny | <i>Journal of a Residence on a Georgian Plantation</i> |
| King, Grace | <i>Balcony Stories</i> |
| London, Jack | <i>The Call of the Wild</i> or <i>The Sea Wolf</i> |
| Longfellow, Henry Wadsworth | Selections in <i>Norton Anthology</i> |
| Norris, Frank | <i>McTeague</i> or <i>The Octopus</i> “Zola as a Romantic Writer” “A Plea for Romantic Fiction” |
| Melville, Herman | <i>Moby-Dick</i> <i>Billy Budd</i> <i>Benito Cereno</i> “Bartleby, the Scrivener” “The Paradise of Bachelors and Tartarus of Maids” |
| Poe, Edgar Allan | “The Cask of Amontillado” “The Fall of the House of Usher” “The Tell-Tale Heart” “Ligeia” “The Murders in the Rue Morgue” “The Purloined Letter” “The Raven” “Annabel Lee” “The Philosophy of Composition” |
| Southworth, E. D. E. N. | <i>The Hidden Hand</i> |
| Stowe, Harriet Beecher | <i>Uncle Tom’s Cabin</i> |
| Sui Sin Far | <i>Mrs. Spring Fragrance</i> |
| Thoreau, Henry David | <i>Walden</i> “Resistance to Civil Government” |
| Washington, Booker T. | <i>Up from Slavery</i> |
| Wharton, Edith | <i>The House of Mirth</i> |
| Whitman, Walt | “Song of Myself” “When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom’d” “Crossing Brooklyn Ferry” “Out of the Cradle, Endlessly Rocking” Calamus poems or “Live Oak, with Moss” sequence |
| Whittier, John Greenleaf | “Snowbound” |

Recommended Secondary Reading

Students should be able to recognize and apply perspectives deriving from the major schools of critical thought to nineteenth-century American literature. Students should also show awareness of key critical debates or points of contention, major scholarly contributions, and the changing preoccupations of criticism over time. The readings listed below are intended to help students achieve these goals.

Literary History and Criticism: Historical Voices

The methods and concerns in these works may at times be dated but they have had a shaping influence over the field.

Baker, Houston A. *The Journey Back: Issues in Black Literature and Criticism* (1980)

Butterfield, Stephen. *Black Autobiography in America* (1974)

Chase, Richard. *The American Novel and Its Tradition* (1957)

Fiedler, Leslie. *Love and Death in the American Novel* (1960)

Kolodny, Annette. *The Lay of the Land: Metaphor as Experience and History in American Life and Letters* (1975)

Marx, Leo. *The Machine in the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America* (1964)

Mathiessen, F.O. *American Renaissance: Art and Expression in the Age of Emerson and Whitman* (1941)

Pizer, Donald. *Realism and Naturalism in Nineteenth-Century American Literature* (1966)

Slotkin, Richard. *Regeneration Through Violence: The Mythology of the American Frontier, 1600-1860* (1973)

Stepto, Robert B. *From Behind the Veil: A Study of Afro-American Narrative* (1979)

Literary History and Criticism: Recent/Current Critical Questions

Andrews, William L. *To Tell A Free Story: The First Century of Afro-American Autobiography, 1760-1865* (1986)

Baym, Nina. *Novels, Readers, Reviewers: Responses to Fiction in Antebellum America* (1984)

Bell, Michael Davitt. *The Problem of American Realism: Studies in the Cultural History of a Literary Idea* (1993)

Burnham, Michelle. *Captivity and Sentiment: Cultural Exchange in American Literature, 1682-1861*, Chapters Five and Six (1999)

Christian, Barbara. *Black Feminist Criticism: Perspectives on Black Women Writers* (1985)

Fetterly, Judith and Marjorie Pryse, *Writing Out of Place: Regionalism, Women, and American Literary Culture* (2003)

Gates, Henry Louis, Jr. *Black Literature and Literary Theory* (1984)

Kaplan, Amy. *The Social Construction of American Realism* (1988)

McGill, Meredith. *American Literature and the Culture of Reprinting, 1834-1853* (2003)

Reynolds, David. *Beneath the American Renaissance: The Subversive Imagination in the Age of Emerson and Melville* (1988)

Thomas, Brook. *American Literary Realism and the Failed Promise of Contract* (1997)

Tompkins, Jane. *Sensational Designs: The Cultural Work of American Fiction, 1790-1860* (1985)

Students should consult individual volumes of the *Cambridge Companion to . . .* series for authors, periods, or movements of particular interest.

Reference Books

The Cambridge History of American Literature, Volumes 2-4 (1994-2005)

The Oxford Handbook of American Literary Naturalism (2011)

The Oxford Handbook of Nineteenth-Century American Literature. Ed. Ross Castronovo (2012), selected essays