Dokuz Eylül University American Culture And Literature Department

Ma and Phd Entrance Exam

Study and Reading Guide

Scope and Preparation

The examinations assess foundational knowledge, historical understanding, and critical thinking.

Exam questions are not necessarily limited to the authors, works, or topics included here. Where several works are listed for one author, candidates should prioritize representative texts and their significance.

Expectations for MA Applicants

Identify and relate major periods, genres, authors, and works of American literature within their historical contexts.

Discuss selected primary texts in terms of form, theme, character, narration, language, and cultural context.

Explain major concepts in American history and culture with specific textual examples.

Additional Expectations for PhD Applicants

Critically assess literary periods, canon formation, ideology, and American identity through relevant scholarship.

Compare two or more theoretical approaches to the same text, historical event, or cultural phenomenon.

Connect a research question to an appropriate theoretical framework and feasible methodology

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PART I: CORE READING LIST BY PERIOD

BEGINNINGS TO 1820

01 Colonial Writing and Puritan Thought

c. 1607–1750 · Exploration, settlement, covenant theology and the Great Awakening

Author / Source	Selected Work(s)
Captain John Smith	A Map of Virginia
William Bradford	Of Plymouth Plantation
John Winthrop	"A Model of Christian Charity"
Jonathan Edwards	"Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God"

02 Enlightenment, Revolution and the Early Republic

c. 1750–1820 · Natural rights, republicanism, independence and national identity

Author / Source	Selected Work(s)
J. Hector St. John de Crèvecœur	Letters from an American Farmer
Thomas Paine	Common Sense
Thomas Jefferson	The Declaration of Independence
James Madison	The Federalist Papers (Nos. 10 and 51)
Washington Irving	"Rip Van Winkle"; "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow"

1820–1865

03 Romanticism, Transcendentalism and Reform

c. 1820–1865 · Imagination, self-reliance, the American Gothic, abolition and women's rights

Author / Source	Selected Work(s)
Ralph Waldo Emerson	Nature; "Self-Reliance"
Henry David Thoreau	Walden; "Civil Disobedience"
Margaret Fuller	Summer on the Lakes, in 1843
Edgar Allan Poe	"The Fall of the House of Usher"; "The Tell-Tale Heart"; "The Raven"
Nathaniel Hawthorne	The Scarlet Letter; "Young Goodman Brown"
Herman Melville	Moby-Dick; "Bartleby, the Scrivener"
Walt Whitman	"Song of Myself"; "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry"
Emily Dickinson	"Because I could not stop for Death"; "I heard a Fly buzz – when I died"; "Tell all the truth but tell it slant"
Harriet Beecher Stowe	Uncle Tom's Cabin; or, Life Among the Lowly
Frederick Douglass	My Bondage and My Freedom
Harriet Jacobs	Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl
Seneca Falls Convention	Declaration of Sentiments

1865–1914

04 Realism, Regionalism and Naturalism

c. 1865–1914 · Vernacular speech, social observation, determinism, race, gender and industrial America

Author / Source	Selected Work(s)
Mark Twain	Adventures of Huckleberry Finn
Henry James	The Portrait of a Lady; “The Turn of the Screw”
William Dean Howells	The Rise of Silas Lapham
Kate Chopin	The Awakening; “The Story of an Hour”
Charlotte Perkins Gilman	“The Yellow Wallpaper”
Charles W. Chesnutt	“The Wife of His Youth”
Booker T. Washington	Atlanta Exposition Address
W. E. B. Du Bois	The Souls of Black Folk (esp. “Of Our Spiritual Strivings”)
Stephen Crane	Maggie: A Girl of the Streets
Jack London	The Call of the Wild
Upton Sinclair	The Jungle

1914–1945

05 Modernism

c. 1914–1945 · Formal experiment, fragmentation, and the Lost Generation,

Author / Source	Selected Work(s)
F. Scott Fitzgerald	The Great Gatsby; “Babylon Revisited”
Ernest Hemingway	The Sun Also Rises; “Hills Like White Elephants”
William Faulkner	As I Lay Dying
John Steinbeck	The Grapes of Wrath
Abraham Cahan	The Rise of David Levinsky
Anzia Yezierska	Bread Givers
Robert Frost	“The Road Not Taken”; “Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening”
Wallace Stevens	“Sunday Morning”; “The Idea of Order at Key West”
William Carlos Williams	“The Red Wheelbarrow”
Ezra Pound	“In a Station of the Metro”; “A Retrospect”
T. S. Eliot	“The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock”; The Waste Land
Marianne Moore	“Poetry”; “The Fish”
Hart Crane	The Bridge (esp. “To Brooklyn Bridge”)
Eugene O’Neill	The Hairy Ape

05 The Harlem Renaissance

c. 1919–1940 · Black modernity and immigrant urban life

Author / Source	Selected Work(s)
Zora Neale Hurston	Their Eyes Were Watching God
Nella Larsen	Passing
Langston Hughes	“The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain”

1945 TO THE PRESENT

06 Postwar and Midcentury America

c. 1945–1970 · Cold War anxiety, Southern Gothic, civil rights, confessional and Beat poetry, postwar theatre

Author / Source	Selected Work(s)
J. D. Salinger	The Catcher in the Rye
Ralph Ellison	Invisible Man
Flannery O’Connor	“A Good Man Is Hard to Find”; “Good Country People”
Shirley Jackson	“The Lottery”
Langston Hughes	“Harlem”
John Updike	Rabbit, Run
James Baldwin	“Sonny’s Blues”; Go Tell It on the Mountain
Harper Lee	To Kill a Mockingbird
Robert Lowell	Life Studies (esp. “Skunk Hour”)
Sylvia Plath	“Lady Lazarus”
Allen Ginsberg	“Howl”; “A Supermarket in California”
Frank O’Hara	“The Day Lady Died”; “Personism: A Manifesto”
Gwendolyn Brooks	“kitchenette building”; “The Bean Eaters”
Adrienne Rich	“Breakfast in a Bowling Alley in Utica, New York”
Amiri Baraka (LeRoi Jones)	“How You Sound??”
Tennessee Williams	The Glass Menagerie
Arthur Miller	The Crucible
Edward Albee	The Zoo Story

07 Postmodernism and Late-Twentieth-Century Fiction

Author / Source	Selected Work(s)
Kurt Vonnegut	Player Piano
Thomas Pynchon	The Crying of Lot 49
Don DeLillo	White Noise
Paul Auster	The New York Trilogy
Ursula K. Le Guin	The Left Hand of Darkness
Octavia E. Butler	Parable of the Sower

Author / Source	Selected Work(s)
Toni Morrison	Jazz
Philip Roth	American Pastoral; The Human Stain
Raymond Carver	“Cathedral”
August Wilson	Fences

08 Contemporary and Multi-Ethnic Literatures

Author / Source	Selected Work(s)
Gayl Jones	Corregidora
Louise Erdrich	Love Medicine
Sherman Alexie	Reservation Blues
Paula Gunn Allen	The Sacred Hoop: Recovering the Feminine in American Indian Traditions
Amy Tan	The Hundred Secret Senses
Bharati Mukherjee	“The Management of Grief”
Lynn Nottage	Sweat; Ruined
Ayad Akhtar	Disgraced
Branden Jacobs-Jenkins	An Octoroon
Cherríe Moraga	Heroes and Saints
David Foster Wallace	“Consider the Lobster”

PART II: CORE READING LIST BY THEME

The thematic classifications are intended to be illustrative rather than exhaustive. Individual works may address multiple themes and should not be considered exclusively associated with the categories under which they are listed.

A National Identity, Myth and the American Dream

City upon a hill, exceptionalism, the self-made individual and the democratic experiment

Author / Source	Selected Work(s)
John Winthrop	"A Model of Christian Charity"
J. Hector St. John de Crèvecœur	Letters from an American Farmer
Thomas Jefferson	The Declaration of Independence
Alexis de Tocqueville	Democracy in America (Vol. 1, selected chapters)
Ralph Waldo Emerson	Nature; "Self-Reliance"; The American Scholar
Mark Twain	Adventures of Huckleberry Finn
F. Scott Fitzgerald	The Great Gatsby; "Babylon Revisited"
Arthur Miller	The Crucible
Philip Roth	American Pastoral; The Human Stain

B Nature, Wilderness and the Frontier

Settlement, the sublime, the pastoral ideal and the machine in the garden

Author / Source	Selected Work(s)
Captain John Smith	A Map of Virginia
William Bradford	Of Plymouth Plantation
Ralph Waldo Emerson	Nature; "Self-Reliance"
Henry David Thoreau	Walden; "Civil Disobedience"
Margaret Fuller	Summer on the Lakes, in 1843
Herman Melville	Moby-Dick; "Bartleby, the Scrivener"
Jack London	The Call of the Wild
Robert Frost	"The Road Not Taken"; "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening"
Paula Gunn Allen	The Sacred Hoop: Recovering the Feminine in American Indian Traditions

C Religion, Guilt and the Gothic

Puritan legacy, sin and conscience, haunted pasts and Southern Gothic

Author / Source	Selected Work(s)
Jonathan Edwards	"Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God"
Washington Irving	"Rip Van Winkle"; "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow"
Edgar Allan Poe	"The Fall of the House of Usher"; "The Tell-Tale Heart"; "The Raven"
Nathaniel Hawthorne	The Scarlet Letter; "Young Goodman Brown"
Herman Melville	Moby-Dick; "Bartleby, the Scrivener"

Author / Source	Selected Work(s)
Henry James	The Portrait of a Lady; “The Turn of the Screw”
William Faulkner	As I Lay Dying
Flannery O’Connor	“A Good Man Is Hard to Find”; “Good Country People”
Shirley Jackson	“The Lottery”
James Baldwin	“Sonny’s Blues”; Go Tell It on the Mountain
Arthur Miller	The Crucible

D Slavery, Race and the African American Tradition

Bondage and emancipation, the color line, passing, vernacular culture and Black Arts

Author / Source	Selected Work(s)
Frederick Douglass	My Bondage and My Freedom
Harriet Jacobs	Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl
Harriet Beecher Stowe	Uncle Tom’s Cabin; or, Life Among the Lowly
Mark Twain	Adventures of Huckleberry Finn
Charles W. Chesnutt	“The Wife of His Youth”
Booker T. Washington	Atlanta Exposition Address
W. E. B. Du Bois	The Souls of Black Folk (esp. “Of Our Spiritual Strivings”)
Zora Neale Hurston	Their Eyes Were Watching God
Nella Larsen	Passing
Langston Hughes	“Harlem”; “The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain”
Ralph Ellison	Invisible Man
James Baldwin	“Sonny’s Blues”; Go Tell It on the Mountain
Gwendolyn Brooks	“kitchenette building”; “The Bean Eaters”
Harper Lee	To Kill a Mockingbird
Amiri Baraka (LeRoi Jones)	“How You Sound??”
Toni Morrison	Jazz
Gayl Jones	Corregidora
August Wilson	Fences
Branden Jacobs-Jenkins	An Octoroon

E Gender, Domesticity and the Body

Separate spheres, confinement and awakening, motherhood, sexuality and feminist critique

Author / Source	Selected Work(s)
Seneca Falls Convention	Declaration of Sentiments
Kate Chopin	The Awakening; “The Story of an Hour”
Charlotte Perkins Gilman	“The Yellow Wallpaper”

Author / Source	Selected Work(s)
Henry James	The Portrait of a Lady; “The Turn of the Screw”
Zora Neale Hurston	Their Eyes Were Watching God
Tennessee Williams	The Glass Menagerie
Sylvia Plath	“Lady Lazarus”
Adrienne Rich	“Breakfast in a Bowling Alley in Utica, New York”
Ursula K. Le Guin	The Left Hand of Darkness
Cherríe Moraga	Heroes and Saints

F Immigration, Class, Labor and the City

Assimilation, industrial exploitation, the Depression and urban modernity

Author / Source	Selected Work(s)
Walt Whitman	“Song of Myself”; “Crossing Brooklyn Ferry”
Stephen Crane	Maggie: A Girl of the Streets
Upton Sinclair	The Jungle
Abraham Cahan	The Rise of David Levinsky
Anzia Yezierska	Bread Givers
Hart Crane	The Bridge (esp. “To Brooklyn Bridge”)
John Steinbeck	The Grapes of Wrath
Eugene O’Neill	The Hairy Ape
Raymond Carver	“Cathedral”
Lynn Nottage	Sweat; Ruined

G Modernity, Technology and Formal Experiment

Alienation, fragmentation, metafiction, consumer culture and dystopia

Author / Source	Selected Work(s)
Ezra Pound	“In a Station of the Metro”; “A Retrospect”
T. S. Eliot	“The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock”; The Waste Land
William Carlos Williams	“The Red Wheelbarrow”
Wallace Stevens	“Sunday Morning”; “The Idea of Order at Key West”
Marianne Moore	“Poetry”; “The Fish”
Ernest Hemingway	The Sun Also Rises; “Hills Like White Elephants”
William Faulkner	As I Lay Dying
J. D. Salinger	The Catcher in the Rye
Allen Ginsberg	“Howl”; “A Supermarket in California”
Frank O’Hara	“The Day Lady Died”; “Personism: A Manifesto”

Author / Source	Selected Work(s)
Kurt Vonnegut	Player Piano
Thomas Pynchon	The Crying of Lot 49
Don DeLillo	White Noise
Paul Auster	The New York Trilogy
Ursula K. Le Guin	The Left Hand of Darkness
Octavia E. Butler	Parable of the Sower
David Foster Wallace	“Consider the Lobster”

H Memory, Trauma, War and Dissent

Civil disobedience, war and its aftermath, the personal as political, historical memory

Author / Source	Selected Work(s)
Henry David Thoreau	Walden; “Civil Disobedience”
Ernest Hemingway	The Sun Also Rises; “Hills Like White Elephants”
Robert Lowell	Life Studies (esp. “Skunk Hour”)
Sylvia Plath	“Lady Lazarus”
Allen Ginsberg	“Howl”; “A Supermarket in California”
Amiri Baraka (LeRoi Jones)	“How You Sound??”
Toni Morrison	Jazz
Philip Roth	American Pastoral; The Human Stain
Bharati Mukherjee	“The Management of Grief”
Ayad Akhtar	Disgraced

I Indigenous, Ethnic and Multicultural Voices

Sovereignty, diaspora, hybridity and the negotiation of belonging

Author / Source	Selected Work(s)
Louise Erdrich	Love Medicine
Sherman Alexie	Reservation Blues
Paula Gunn Allen	The Sacred Hoop: Recovering the Feminine in American Indian Traditions
Amy Tan	The Hundred Secret Senses
Bharati Mukherjee	“The Management of Grief”
Cherríe Moraga	Heroes and Saints
Ayad Akhtar	Disgraced
Branden Jacobs-Jenkins	An Octoroon

J Turkish-American Encounters

Author	Selected Work(s)
Mary Mills Patrick	Son Sultanların İstanbul'unda: Siyaset, Modernleşme, Yabancı Okullar
Hester Donaldson Jenkins	An Educational Ambassador to the Near East
Eliza Cheney Abbott Schneider	Letters from Bursa: Believers and Infidels in an Ottoman Town
Azade Seyhan	Tales of Crossed Destinies
Ruth Frances Woodsmall	Moslem Women Enter a New World

K Comparative Literature

Author	Selected Work(s)
Margaret Atwood	The Handmaid's Tale
Virginia Woolf	Orlando
Joseph Conrad	Heart of Darkness
Jorge Luis Borges	Labyrinths
Gabriel García Márquez	One Hundred Years of Solitude
J. M. Coetzee	Disgrace
Mary Shelley	Frankenstein

PART III - HISTORICAL KEY EVENTS AND CONCEPTS

Candidates are expected to demonstrate familiarity with major historical developments, political ideas, and cultural transformations in American history and their relationship to American literature and culture.

Historical Period	Key Events and Concepts
Colonial America	European Colonization, Puritanism, City upon a Hill, Great Awakening, Colonial Slavery, Atlantic Slave Trade
Revolution and Early Republic	American Revolution, Declaration of Independence, U.S. Constitution, Bill of Rights, Federalism, Republicanism, American Enlightenment
Expansion and Antebellum America	Jacksonian Democracy, Manifest Destiny, Frontier, Indian Removal, Mexican-American War, Abolitionism, Seneca Falls Convention
Civil War and Reconstruction	Sectionalism, Civil War, Emancipation Proclamation, Reconstruction Amendments, Freedmen's Bureau, Reconstruction
Gilded Age and Progressivism	Industrialization, Urbanization, Immigration, Labor Movement, Social Darwinism, Jim Crow, Progressivism, American Imperialism
World War I and Interwar America	Fourteen Points, Roaring Twenties, Harlem Renaissance, Great Migration, Great Depression, New Deal
World War II and Cold War	World War II, Atomic Age, Truman Doctrine, Marshall Plan, Containment, McCarthyism, Consumer Culture
Civil Rights and Social Change	Civil Rights Movement, Great Society, Vietnam War, Counterculture, Second-Wave Feminism, Watergate
Conservatism and Globalization	Reaganomics, Religious Right, End of the Cold War, Globalization, Multiculturalism, Culture Wars
Contemporary America	9/11, War on Terror, Great Recession, Political Polarization, Populism, Black Lives Matter, U.S.–China Relations

Reference Works

Author	Core Reading
Richard B. Morris	Encyclopedia of American History
L. Joanne Buggey, et al.	America! America!
Mary Beth Norton, et al.	A People & a Nation: A History of the United States
Robert P. Green Jr., et al.	The American Tradition: A History of the United States
Sue Davis	American Political Thought: Four Hundred Years of Ideas and Ideologies
Jack Lane and Maurice O'Sullivan	A Twentieth-Century American Reader (Volume I: 1900–1945)
Merle Curti	The Growth of American Thought

Foundational Concepts in American Studies

American Exceptionalism · American Dream · Individualism · Puritan Work Ethic · Frontier Myth · American Adam · Errand into the Wilderness · Virgin Land · Manifest Destiny · Rugged Individualism · Melting Pot · Cultural Pluralism · Multiculturalism · Race and Ethnicity · Whiteness · National Identity · American Imperialism

PART IV - AMERICAN STUDIES AND CRITICAL APPROACHES

Selected scholarship for building historical, cultural, and theoretical frameworks around primary texts. These readings are intended to support conceptual analysis, especially for PhD students. Candidates should understand the central argument of each work and demonstrate how it may inform textual interpretation.

American Thought and National Myths

Author	Core Reading
R. W. B. Lewis	The American Adam
Perry Miller	Errand into the Wilderness
Henry Nash Smith	Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth
Leo Marx	The Machine in the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America
Frederick Jackson Turner	"The Significance of the Frontier in American History"
Seymour Martin Lipset	American Exceptionalism: A Double-Edged Sword
Richard T. Hughes	Myths America Lives By
Sacvan Bercovitch	Ideology and Classic American Literature, The American Jeremiad

Race, Ethnicity, Gender, and Representation

Author	Core Reading
Oscar Handlin	The Uprooted: The Epic Story of the Great Migrations That Made the American People
Werner Sollors	Beyond Ethnicity: Consent and Descent in American Culture
David R. Roediger	The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class
Ronald Takaki	A Different Mirror: A History of Multicultural America
David A. Hollinger	Postethnic America: Beyond Multiculturalism
Donna Haraway	Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature
Paula S. Rothenberg	Race, Class, and Gender in the United States: An Integrated Study

Ecology, Material Culture, and Comparative Approaches

Author	Core Reading
Greg Garrard	Ecocriticism
Val Plumwood	Feminism and the Mastery of Nature
Alan Trachtenberg	Brooklyn Bridge: Fact and Symbol
Jules David Prown & Kenneth Haltman	American Artifacts: Essays in Material Culture
Bill Brown	Other Things
Susan Bassnett	Comparative Literature: A Critical Introduction

Literary Theory, Criticism, and Intellectual History

Author	Core Reading
Richard Gray	A History of American Literature
Richard Ruland and Malcolm Bradbury	From Puritanism to Postmodernism: A History of American Literature
Robert S. Lavine	The Norton Anthology of American Literature (Vol. A, B, C, D, E)
Jerome Beaty	The Norton Introduction to the Short Novel
Frederick R. Karl	American Fictions, 1940–1980: A Comprehensive History and Critical Evaluation
F. O. Matthiessen	American Renaissance: Art and Expression in the Age of Emerson and Whitman
Rod W. Horton and Herbert W. Edwards	Backgrounds of American Literary Thought
Perry Miller	The Transcendentalists: An Anthology
David Galens	Literary Movements for Students: Presenting Analysis, Context, and Criticism on Literary Movements (Volumes I & II)
Hazard Adams	Critical Theory Since Plato
Julie Rivkin and Michael Ryan	Literary Theory: An Anthology
Dorothy J. Hale	The Novel: An Anthology of Criticism and Theory, 1900–2000
Leslie A. Fiedler	Love & Death in American Literature

Theatre and Film

Author	Core Reading
Annette J. Saddik	Contemporary American drama
Edwin Wilson	The Theater Experience
Glenn Hughes	A History of the American Theatre, 1700–1950
John Belton	American Cinema / American Culture
David Bordwell & Kristin Thompson	Film Art: An Introduction