

Dept. of English & Comparative Literature, SJSU  
MA Exam Reading List: Group 2

**British & American Literature:  
Romanticism to Modernism (the long 19<sup>th</sup> century)**

**Description:** This part of the MA exam focuses on major 19<sup>th</sup> century writers/texts from the U.K. and U.S.A. Students should have a general knowledge of the definitions and rules of the various forms and genres popular during the British Romantic and Victorian literary periods, a

British: Romantic-era (1775-1835) and Victorian-era (1835-1902) Literature

<b>Charlotte Smith</b> (1749-1806)	<i>Elegiac Sonnets</i> (1795)
<b>William Blake</b> (1757-1827)	<i>Songs of Innocence and Experience</i>
<b>Mary Wollstonecraft</b> (1759-97)	<i>Vindication of the Rights of Men, Vindication of the Rights of Woman</i>
<b>William Wordsworth</b> (1770-1850) and <b>Samuel Taylor Coleridge</b> (1772-1834)	<i>Lyrical Ballads</i> (1798 version), Preface to the 1800 edition of <i>Lyrical Ballads</i>
<b>Jane Austen</b> (1775-1817)	<i>Pride and Prejudice</i> or <i>Northanger Abbey</i>
<b>George Gordon, Lord Byron</b> (1788-1824)	<i>Don Juan</i>
<b>Percy Bysshe Shelley</b> (1792-1822)	“Prometheus,” “Hymn to Intellectual Beauty,” “Ozymandias,” “Mutability,” “England in 1819,” <i>A Defence of Poetry</i>
<b>John Keats</b> (1795-1821)	“The Eve of St. Agnes,” <i>La Belle Dame sans Merci</i> ,” “Ode to a Nightingale,” “Ode on a Grecian Urn”
<b>Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley</b> (1797-1851)	<i>Frankenstein</i> (1818) and Introduction to 1831 version of

Purloined Letter,”

*Selected Poetry*

<http://rpo.library.utoronto.ca/poet/262.html>

**Harriet Jacobs** (1813-1897)

*Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*

**Henry David Thoreau** (1817-1862) *Walden*

**Frederick Douglass** (1818?-1895) *Autobiography of Frederick Douglass*

**Louisa May Alcott** (1832-1888) *Little Women*

**Walt Whitman** (1819-1892):

–From the 1855 edition of *Leaves of Grass*: “Song of Myself.”

–From any edition: The “Calamus” sequence, “Crossing Brooklyn Ferry,” “Song of the Open Road,” “Out of the

**Sample Questions:**

1. In 1837, Ralph Waldo Emerson identified “the new importance given to the single person” as a sign of the times. Write an essay that considers Emerson’s statement in the context of three nineteenth-century novels, short stories, and/or poems, at least one American and one British.
2. Using three works from the list (at least one American and one British), write an essay that examines the gendered, economic, social, interpersonal, and/or religious aspects of the marriage market.

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