

Dept. of English & Comparative Literature, SJSU
MA Exam Reading List: Group 1

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Description: This area of the exam focuses on the study of the history of the English language and literature from the Middle Ages to the present. It includes the study of the development of the English language and the history of English literature from the Middle Ages to the present.

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Jonathan Swift

Gulliver's Travels

Sample Questions

1. After 1492, European colonization and new realms of exploration became a popular source for literary inspiration. Compare and contrast three texts of your own choosing (plays, poems, or prose) from the early modern/neoclassical periods that specifically thematize the impact of the New World. You should consider the nature of the New World land and the native peoples that inhabit them and the potential it represents both as a literary device for the authors and a site of escape or exile for the protagonists of the texts
2. Choose two sonnets from Wyatt, Surrey, Philip Sidney, or Spenser and two religious lyrics (including sonnets) from Mary Sidney, Donne, or George Herbert. Write an essay in which you compare and contrast how the sonnet or lyric is adapted by each author for erotic or devotional ends. Discuss any overlap with or development from the erotic/amorous lyric tradition to the devotional mode.

Updated 2/29/20