

English Ph.D. Examination Reading List

English Renaissance (Early Modern) Literature

This Reading List in English Renaissance Literature is meant to provide students a greater role in shaping their own exams and preparing their own lists of material. Students who wish to take the exam should contact examiners 6-8 weeks in advance of the exam date in order to discuss the material to be covered in the examination. Ordinarily the student will be expected to deal with at least two of the following genres: lyric poetry, narrative poetry, drama, and prose.

I. Major Authors

Students are expected to be familiar with the major works of authors who have historically been central figures in early modern studies. Students will choose a representative selection of the major works by each author (for example, 7-10 plays by Shakespeare), subject to the approval of the examiners. For Spenser and Milton, the works must include, respectively, at least one book of *The Faerie Queene* and the whole of *Paradise Lost*. In addition to reading primary works, students should be able to situate authors and works in their literary and cultural contexts.

Sidney Marlowe

Herbert Donne

Shakespeare Spenser

Milton Jonson

II. Special Field

Students should begin to develop an area of specialization that includes works by different authors that are linked in some way(s), whether by genre, mode, or some other affinity. Students will choose one of the following fields (or develop one of their own), familiarize themselves with their chosen authors, and develop a reading list in consultation with the examiners. (If authors from Section I are repeated here, the same texts should not be central to both.)

1. Lyric Poetry

Three or more authors of the student's choice, at least two not listed in Section I

2. Narrative Poetry

Works by Shakespeare, and at least two others

3. Drama

7-10 plays of the student's choice excluding plays selected in Section I

4. Prose Romance

4-5 texts of the student's choice: 3 if one is either Sidney's *Arcadia* or Wroth's *Urania*

5. Non-Fiction Prose

Bacon, Browne, Fuller, and one additional author of the student's choice

6. Women authors

Cavendish, Wroth, and one additional author of the student's choice

7. Continental Renaissance

Three authors or 7-10 works of the student's choice

SUGGESTED BACKGROUND READING

Students are expected to demonstrate clear, methodologically sophisticated approaches to the field of Renaissance studies. Their examinations should reflect familiarity with the primary texts under consideration and with major currents in traditional and recent criticism.

What follows is a list of traditional and recent critical works. Important critical texts and approaches are too many and diverse to enumerate; the titles listed below are offered as works that make significant and lasting contributions to their areas of study. They are not intended as “required reading,” but as suggestions for review and for further study. They have been organized according to five broad rubrics that offer useful entries into Renaissance studies:

- 1. Humanism, Education, and Courtliness**
- 2. Gender and Material Life: Sexualities, Domestic Life, Class, and Work**
- 3. Religion, Magic, Myth, and Spirituality**
- 4. Pastoral, Landscape, and Environmental Studies**
- 5. Bibliographical and Textual Studies**

1. Humanism, Education and Courtliness

- Hunter, G.K. *John Lyly: The Humanist as Courtier* (Harvard, 1961)
- Lytle, Guy Fitch, and Stephen Orgel, eds. *Patronage in the Renaissance* (Princeton, 1981)
- Crane, Mary Thomas. *Framing Authority: Sayings, Self, and Society in 16th Century England* (Princeton, 1993)
- Greenblatt, Stephen. *Renaissance Self-Fashioning* (Chicago, 1980)

- Helgerson, Richard. *Self-Crowned Laureates: Spenser, Jonson, Milton and the Literary System* (California, 1983)
- Javitch, Daniel. *Poetry and Courtliness in Renaissance England* (Princeton, 1978)
- Kinney, Arthur F. *Humanist Poetics: Thought, Rhetoric and Fiction in 16th Century England* (Massachusetts, 1986)
- Smuts, R. Malcolm. *Court Culture and the Origins of a Royalist Tradition in Early Stuart England* (Pennsylvania, 1987)
- Whigham, Frank. *Ambition and Privilege: The Social Tropes of Elizabethan Courtesy Theory* (California, 1984)

2. Gender and Material Life: Sexualities, Domestic Life, Class, and Work

- Agnew, Jean-Christophe. *Worlds Apart: The Market and the Theatre in Anglo-American Thought 1550-1750* (Cambridge, 1986)
- Amussen, Susan. *The Ordered Society: Gender and Class in Early Modern England* (Blackwell, 1988)
- Davis, Natalie Zemon. *Society and Culture in Early Modern France* (Stanford, 1975)
- Ferguson, Margaret, et. al., eds. *Rewriting the Renaissance* (Chicago, 1986)
- Orlin, Lena Cowen. *Private Matters and Public Culture in Post-Reformation England* (Cornell, 1994) ,
- Smith, Bruce. *Homosexual Desire in Shakespeare's England: A Cultural Poetics* (Chicago, 1991)
- Stone, Lawrence. *The Family, Sex, and Marriage in England 1500-1800* (abridged ed.) (Harper and Row, 1979)
- Wayne, Valerie, ed. *The Matter of Difference* (Cornell, 1991)
- Wright, Louis B. *Middle Class Culture in Elizabethan England* (North Carolina, 1935)
- Wrightson, Keith. *English Society 1580-1680* (Rutgers, 1982)

3. Religion, Myth, Magic, and Spirituality

- Nohrberg, James. *The Analogy of the Faerie Queene* (Princeton, 1979) (counts as two books)
- Thomas, Keith. *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (Scribner's, 1971) (counts as two books)
- Kerrigan, William. *The Sacred Complex: On the Psychogenesis of Paradise Lost* (Harvard, 1983)
- Cassirer, Ernst. *The Individual and the Cosmos in Renaissance Philosophy* (Harper and Row, 1964 [1st ed. 1927])
- Dickens, A.G. *The English Reformation* (2nd ed.) (Penn State, 1991)
- Couliano, Ioan. *Eros and Magic in the Renaissance* (Chicago, 1987)

4. Pastoral, Landscape, and Environmental Studies

- Empson, William. *Some Versions of Pastoral* (Chatto and Windus, 1935)
- Helgerson, Richard. *Forms of Nationhood* (Chicago, 1992)
- Alpers, Paul. *What is Pastoral?* (Chicago, 1996)
- Bernard, John. *Ceremonies of Innocence* (Cambridge, 1989)
- Herendeen, Wyman. *From Landscape to Literature* (Duquesne, 1986)

5. Bibliographical and Textual Studies

- Eisenstein, Elizabeth L. *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change* (Cambridge, 1979)
- Elsky, Martin. *Authorizing Words: Speech, Writing and Print in the English Renaissance* (Cornell, 1989)
- Marotti, Arthur. *Manuscript, Print, and the Renaissance English Lyric* (Cornell, 1995)
- Tribble, Evelyn B. *Margins and Marginality: The Printed Page in Early Modern England* (Virginia, 1993)
- Wall, Wendy. *The Imprint of Gender: Authorship and Publication in the English Renaissance* (Cornell, 1993)
- Watt, Tessa. *Cheap Print and Popular Piety, 1550-1640* (Cambridge, 1991)