

ENGL 304 / Comprehensive Exam #1 / [sec 01](#)

Exam #2 will include three of the six bold-faced prompts listed below, and you will select one prompt to respond to in a 400-500 word essay (70%). You may write more if you write quickly, but plan on giving each of the three required texts equal time and attention. *Time Estimate: 50-55 min.*

The exam will also include a 30-question objective section (30%) requiring a scantron, to be completed after writing the essay. These questions will be drawn from points for reflection, lectures, in-class small group exercises, and class discussion. *Time Estimate: 15-20 min.*

Essay (70%): your essay, complete with narrowly defined and debatable thesis, should be at least 400-500 words long. Please include a brief, 2-4 sentence introduction (10%), and three separate sections (20% each) addressing each required text. *Write about texts you know well, and for which you can recall considerable detail.*

- 1. A number of female characters in our readings find their mobility forcibly limited by men. Do Victorian authors provide these protagonists the power to improve their own situations? Include three texts in your response, drawing from works by three of the following authors (20% each): Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Dante G. Rossetti, George Eliot, William Morris, Frances Ellen Watkins Harper, Christina Rossetti, Alfred Tennyson.**
- 2. Would it be best to class the following texts as examples of Naturalism, Realism, Sentimentalism, or the Romance? (You need not reach the same conclusion about all three.) The accuracy of your answer will be determined by 1) demonstrating awareness of the distinctive features of those categories you discuss, and 2) the ability to recall specifics from the texts in question to use as evidence. (It matters little to me *which* text you assign to *which* narrative modality.). Discuss: 1) “The Defence of Guinevere” (20%), 2) “The Runaway Slave at Pilgrim’s Point” (20%), and 3) “Mr. Gilfil’s Love-Story” (20%).**
- 3. Does marriage appear to equally benefit both partners in the literature we’ve read thus far? Discuss: 1) “Andrea del Sarto” (20%), 2) “Mr. Gilfil’s Love Story” (20%), and 3) “My Last Duchess” (20%)**
- 4. Does the route inscribed by nineteenth-century literature map onto the path walked by actual Victorian women? Plot a course of either progress or regress that examines issues surrounding women’s rights via: 1) policy & legislation in Britain and/or America (20%), 2) “Jenny” (20%), and 3) “Mr. Gilfil’s Love Story” (20%).**
- 5. What is the purpose of Art? Answer this question with a closely structured argument that integrates three of the following texts (20% each): 1) “The Misanthropist” or “A Musical**

Instrument,” (20%), 2) the sonnets “The Soul’s Expression” **and** “Exaggeration” (20%), and 3) *The Stones of Venice* **and** *Studies in the History of the Renaissance*.

6. **Does Nature, represented either figuratively (through metaphor, simile, etc.) or physically (via organic nature, animals, the seasons, weather, etc.) serve primarily as friend or foe in our texts? Incorporate at least one work by each of three of the following authors in your response (20% per author): Emily Dickinson, James Monroe Whitfield, Gerard Manley Hopkins, John Ruskin, and Matthew Arnold.**
7. Does apprehension of *beauty* (in Nature and/or in Art) feed one’s moral nature, or starve it? In your response, consider: 1) “Andrea del Sarto” (20%), 2) *The Stones of Venice* **or** *Studies in the History of the Renaissance* (20%), and 3) “The Defence of Guenevere” (20%).
8. **Do our writers suggest a teleological view of the universe—one in which the design of Nature somehow reveals God? Discuss 1) “Pied Beauty” **and** “Exaggeration” (20%), 2) “I taste a liquor never brewed” **and** “Some keep the Sabbath going to Church” (20%), and 3) “Dover Beach **or** “Stanzas from the Grande Chartreuse” (20%). *Be sure to define “Nature” somewhere in your introduction (10%).***
9. Does the appropriation of a resurgent medievalism empower those characters surrounded by medieval motifs and mores? Discuss Ruskin’s *The Stones of Venice* (20%), 2) “Mr. Gilfil’s Love Story” (20%) and 3) **one** of the following poems: “The Lady of Shalott,” “The Defence of Guenevere,” or “The Blessed Damozel” (20%).
10. **Do the Arts (visual, literary, musical, etc.) provide *both* female and male characters the means to endure and flourish? Discuss: 1) “In an Artist’s Studio” (20%), 2) “Andrea del Sarto,” and 3) “Mr Gilfil’s Love Story”**
11. Do the central characters in the following narratives deserve categorization as “mad” (mentally ill)? Take a few moments to articulate a carefully shaped definition of madness at the outset of your argument (10%)--a single yardstick against which you will measure the central voices in each of the following texts: 1) “Porphyria’s Lover” (20%), “The Runaway Slave at Pilgrim’s Point” (20%), and 3) “The Misanthropist” / #320 (20%).