

ENGL 304 / Comprehensive Exam #2

Exam #2 will include three of the eleven prompts listed below, and you will select one prompt to respond to in a 350-500 word essay. You may write more if you write quickly, but plan on giving each of the three required texts equal time and attention. *Time Estimate: 45-55 min.*

The exam will also include a sixteen-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: 5-10 min.*

Essay (70%): your essay, complete with narrowly defined and debatable thesis, should be around 350-500 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 call 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): Dante G. Rossetti, George Eliot, William Morris, Charlotte P. Gilman, Christina Rossetti, Alfred Tennyson.
2. Would it be best to class the following texts as examples of Naturalism, Realism, Sentimentalism, or the Romance? 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 Yellow Wall-Paper,” 2) “Mr. Gilfil’s Love-Story” (20%), and “The Real Thing” (20%)
3. Does marriage appear to equally benefit both partners in the literature we’ve read thus far? Discuss: 1) “The Yellow Wall-Paper” (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) public legislation in Britain and/or America, 2) a poem by one of the Rossetti siblings (20%), and 3) “Mr. Gilfil’s Love Story” or “The Yellow Wall-Paper” (20%).
5. What is the purpose of art? Answer this question with a closely structured argument that *integrates* the writings of three of the following writers (20% each): George Eliot, John Ruskin, Walter Pater, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Robert Browning.

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? Incorporate works by three of the following authors in your response: Emily Dickinson, Matthew Arnold, Charlotte P. Gilman, John Ruskin, Gerard M. Hopkins.
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" (20%), 2) either "I taste a liquor never brewed" or "Some keep the Sabbath going to Church" (20%), and 3) "Dover Beach (20%). *Be sure to define "Nature" somewhere in your introduction.*
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) "The Yellow Wall-Paper" (20%), 2) "Andrea del Sarto," and 3) Dickinson's "#448"
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--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) "There's a certain Slant of light" / #320 (20%).