

ENGL 459 / Apocalypse & Dystopia
Midterm Exam: Study Guide

Exam #1 will include three of the seven prompts listed below, and you will select one prompt to respond to in a 600-700 word essay. You may write more if you write quickly, but plan on giving each of the three required texts equal time and attention. Detailed evidence will win more points! *Time Estimate: 75-90 min.*

Your essay, complete with narrowly defined and debatable thesis, will include a *substantial introduction* that positions your argument by providing appropriate context (10%). Please weave into your introduction details drawn from relevant notes on such topics as Mary Shelley & Her Circle, Wollstonecraft's *Vindication, Utopia, The Abolition of Man*, and assigned poems.

Please note that each question below contains *different text lists*.

1. Does the boundary between sanity and madness dissolve or grow thicker under duress? Discuss *The Last Man*, *Herland* *Memoirs of a Survivor*, and *Twelve Monkeys*.
2. Does the exchange of personal affection help one survive in our texts? Be sure to define "affection" and "survival" somewhere in your introduction. Discuss three of the following five titles: *The Last Man*, *The Time Machine*, *Brave New World*, *Memoirs of a Survivor*, *Twelve Monkeys*.
3. How resistant to change are traditional conceptions of romance, friendship, and the family when faced with radically altered physical and societal circumstances? Provide a traditional conception of each of these three relational bonds in your introduction—a baseline against which to measure the any changes you discuss in *The Last Man*, *Herland* and *Memoirs of a Survivor*.
4. In *Memoirs of a Survivor* (1974), the narrator frequently runs across old words and phrases whose significance has recently shifted. Select three examples from the list below and discuss *how* each of these concepts have or have not changed amidst the crises of *The Last Man*, *Brave New World*, and *Memoirs of a Survivor*. You may organize the three parts of your essay according to either novel or concept but apply whichever three you select from the list below to all three novels.
 - a. loss of virginity (39)
 - b. falling in love (83)
 - c. seduction is immoral (97)
 - d. "little girl" (100)
 - e. "precocity" (111)
 - f. "squatters" (125)
 - g. "harem" (163)
 - h. "well-grown" (184)
5. Does the presence of men in a dystopic world prove more helpful than harmful? Consider three of the following four titles: *The Last Man*, *Herland*, *Brave New World*, *Memoirs of a Survivor*.
6. Do the new cultures envisioned by our writers empower more than they marginalize women? Consider three of the following four titles: *The Last Man*, *Herland*, *Brave New World*, *Memoirs of a Survivor*.
7. Is the human intellect capable of solving problems and overcoming obstacles under extreme circumstances? Discuss three of the following four titles: *The Last Man*, *Herland*, *Memoirs of a Survivor*, *Twelve Monkeys*.