

Final Examination Review Sheet

The final exam will be 100 minutes long, and it will be worth 100 points. Please bring a blank blue book or blank loose-leaf paper for your answers. You may not use your books or your notes. There will be three parts to the exam.

Part 1. Identifications. This section will be worth twenty-four (24) points. I will give you nine quotations from texts we've read this semester. You will need to identify *eight* of them by providing the name of the author, the title, and an explanation of the quotation's significance.

Part 2. Short Answer. This section will be worth six (6) points. I will give you *two* questions about the historical or chronological place of texts in American literary history. You will answer both of them.

Part 3. Essay Questions. This section will be worth seventy (70) points. It will be divided into two sections. Each section will contain two or three questions from the following list. You will need to write an essay in response to *one* (1) question in each of the *two* (2) sections. *Please make your answers specific and use examples from texts we read this semester.*

1. How has the literary past shaped and influenced antebellum nineteenth-century American literature? In what ways did previous eras (such as the Puritans or the Enlightenment) exert an influence on nineteenth-century American literature before the Civil War? In what ways did earlier forms, genres, and techniques (for example, sermons, fixed form poetry, hymns, personal narrative, non-fiction works, etc.) continue to be an essential part of nineteenth-century American literature? Write an essay that examines the place of the literary past in nineteenth-century American literature prior to the Civil War.

2. In what ways did American poetry change with the emergence of Walt Whitman and Emily Dickinson? Compare previous poetry and traditions with the poems of Whitman and Dickinson. Please pay attention to changes and differences, but you may also want to note continuities or similarities between previous poetry on the one hand and Whitman and Dickinson on the other. Please consider both formal elements (such as sound, line, rhythm, meter, stanza, etc.) and thematic ones.

3. Besides providing extensive nautical information and telling the exciting story of Ahab's attempt to kill the white whale known as Moby Dick, what is Melville's *Moby-Dick* about? Identify the two or three most important themes in the novel and explain what you see as Melville's main point when treating that theme.

4. Benjamin Franklin and Ralph Waldo Emerson are sometimes considered partial authors of the myth of the optimistic, freedom-loving, self-made, self-reliant, pull-yourself-up-by-your-own-bootstraps American. Select one of the two authors and explain why you think his text (*The Autobiography* or "Self-Reliance") has become associated with this myth. Then select another text that we've read and explain in what ways it contradicts or challenges this myth.

5. The Puritans believed strongly in the basic Calvinist doctrines of original sin, unconditional election, limited atonement, salvation by grace, and God's omnipotence, omnipresence, and omniscience. They also believed in witches, demons, the evil in the human heart, hell fire, and much more. Despite the powerful influence of these ideas on American culture, not all American writers shared these beliefs. Using any of the texts we studied this semester, write an essay that examines three different alternative views of religion and/or the spiritual.

6. Using texts from this semester's reading, describe the major stylistic differences between American literature of the colonial period (from the beginnings up to around 1776) and American literature of the antebellum period (1820-1860). Be specific in your use of examples to support your answer.

7. Which authors that we studied this semester seemed most interested in what we might call the "dark side" of American life? What cultural fears and anxieties did they express? *How* did they express those fears, submerged desires, anxieties, and impulses? Write an essay that considers and compares three such authors?

8. Choose two of the following protagonists and compare them:

Narrator of "Song of Myself"

Ahab in *Moby-Dick*

Queequeg in *Moby-Dick*

Brown in "Young Goodman Brown"

Petalesharo in either of his speeches

Douglass in *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*

Equiano in *The Interesting Narrative ...*

Franklin in *The Autobiography*

Mary Rowlandson in *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God*

Narrator of "Ligeia"

Who has the most "freedom"? And what does he or she do with this freedom? Who has the least? And what constrains him or her? And what in the world would "freedom" mean to each of these characters?

9. D. H. Lawrence describes classic American literature as a literature of "subterfuge," by which he means that American writers "refuse everything explicit and always put up a sort of double meaning." Discuss Lawrence's thesis using two or three texts we've read in this course this semester.

10. It can be argued that from the framing of the Constitution to the Civil War the issue of slavery is the single most important force shaping, directing, and creating American culture and American politics. Write an essay in which you discuss the ways in which at least two selected American authors position themselves in opposition to slavery. What is the nature of their opposition to slavery? What are their reasons for being opposed to slavery? And *how* do they make their case for ending slavery?