

## 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 American literature since World War II? In what ways have previous styles (such as realism, naturalism, modernism) continued to exert an influence on contemporary or postmodern American literature? In what ways have earlier forms, genres, and techniques (for example, fixed forms in poetry or free verse, autobiographical narrative or stream of consciousness, folk tale and moral tale, etc.) continued to be an essential part of postmodern literature? Write an essay that examines the place of the literary past in American literature since World War II.

2. Did American poetry in the twentieth century become more popular, more open to diverse aspects of American culture, more accessible and flexible, and more engaged with American society in general? Or did it become more elitist, more difficult, more "artistic," and more removed from the social conditions and political issues of the century? Defend your answer using any of the poets we've studied this semester.

3. Time is one of the key themes in Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury*, and several literary critics (Fredric Jameson, for example) have suggested that categories of temporality and time dominate the literature of the modernist era. Does that sound right?

Write an essay that examines Faulkner's exploration of time in *The Sound and the Fury*? Where and *how* does the issue appear in the novel? In what ways is it central to Faulkner's novel? Then consider some other modernist text of the era: Where and *how* does the theme of time and temporality appear in the text? In what ways is it central to the other text you've selected? Finally, using evidence from both texts, discuss the importance of time and temporality to modernism. Why is *time* such an important issue for modernist writers?

4. In *Studies in Classic American Literature* (1923), 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. Include texts written before and after Lawrence's statement.

5. Discuss the representations of men in *three* of the following ten texts published during the course of the twentieth century: *Little Women*, *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, "To Build a Fire," "Neighbor Rosicky," *The Sound and the Fury*, "The Man Who Was Almost a Man," *A Streetcar Named Desire*, "Going to Meet the Man," "Midnight and I'm Not Famous Yet," and "Polar Breath" or "Jack Wilson or Wovoka and Christ My Lord."

What types of male characters populate these stories? How do these writers view these characters of their creation? What purposes do they serve in each story? Be sure to include a look at three texts, and be specific.

6. Using texts from this semester's reading, describe the major stylistic differences between American literature of the modern period and American literature of the contemporary or postmodern period. Be specific in your use of examples to support your answer.

7. Using *three* examples taken from American poetry, drama, and fiction, discuss the role of popular culture and society (including major historical events such as the Viet Nam War or the Civil Rights Movement but also changes in everyday life) within literary texts written since the end of World War II.

Questions you may want to consider: What is the relationship of these literary texts to society and culture? How do these texts treat, represent, or appropriate various aspects of society and culture? What is the function of these elements from popular culture and society within these texts? Why do these authors make use of these extra-literary elements?

8. Consider the following statement about Sylvia Plath: "Seizing a mythic power, the Plath in the poems transmutes the domestic and the ordinary into the hallucinatory, the utterly strange." Using her poems as your evidence, discuss the validity of this claim. Then, selecting one other twentieth-century American poet, compare the ways in which the two use, transform, represent, celebrate, or critique the domestic and the ordinary.

9. Ethnicity and race (as well as racism and discrimination) have been and continue to be pervasive features of the history and culture of the United States. But what exactly has been the role of race and ethnicity in American literary texts? How have American writers since the end of slavery represented race and ethnicity? In what ways have their texts combated racism and ethnic prejudice? In what ways have their texts made use of racist and ethnic stereotypes? What ideas about race and ethnicity circulate in their texts?

Using authors from the lists below, write an essay on the function and place of race and ethnicity in American literature since the end of slavery. Choose at least *three* authors total and *at least one from each group*.

Group I (from the end of slavery to the Civil Rights Movement): Alcott, Twain, Chopin, London, Washington, Du Bois, Wright, Cather, Faulkner, Hughes.

Group II (from the Civil Rights Movement to the present): Momaday, Glancy, Baldwin, Ortiz Cofer, Cisneros, Ginsberg.

10. What are the key features of postmodern literary style? Write an essay that defines postmodern *style* and uses examples from American literature since the 1950s to illustrate your answer.