

Midterm Examination Review Sheet

The midterm exam will be 50 minutes long, and it will be worth 50 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 two parts to the exam.

Part 1. Identifications. This section will be worth 15 points. I will give you six quotations from texts we've read this semester. You will need to identify five of them by providing the name of the author, the title, and an explanation of the quotation's significance.

Part 2. Essay Questions. This section will be worth 35 points. I will provide you with two of the following questions. You will write an essay in response to one of the two. Please make your answer as specific as possible.

1. Choose any of the pre-1914 authors we've studied this semester and write an essay that examines how she or he has used literature to respond to the social conditions or political issues of her or his own era.
2. Imagine that in an attempt to improve the overall literacy of Kansas State graduates, Pat Bosco and Jon Wefald are preparing for distribution a "List of Books That Every Student Should Read Before They Leave College." After hearing about your expertise in late-nineteenth-century United States literature, they have emailed you with a query that asks, "Do you think we should include Alcott's *Little Women* and/or Mark Twain's *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* on the list? If so, which texts and why? If not, why not?" Write a detailed response that provides your suggestions as well as a rationale for your decisions.
3. How do Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. Du Bois try to persuade readers? Examine the rhetorical strategies Du Bois and Washington use to persuade listeners or readers to their points of view. How do they establish their authority? What types of relationship do they construct with readers? In what ways might it be difficult to argue with them? How do they treat opposing points of view?
4. Select and compare two of the following female characters from different decades in American literature: Marmee or Jo March (1860s), Daisy Miller (1870s), the widow Douglas or Miss Watson (1880s), Calixta (1890s), Judy Jones (1920s), or Mrs. Rosicky or Polly (1930s). In what ways do the differences in the portrayal of these two characters reveal or point to meaningful changes in American society, history, or culture in the time between the two decades.
5. Which of the following fiction writers would you consider the best representative of modernism: Cather, Stein, Wright, or Fitzgerald? Defend your selections by defining modernism and showing how the author you've selected epitomizes modernist aesthetics, themes, or principles.
6. Using examples taken from American literature written between 1865 and 1914, explain the difference between "realism" and "naturalism."