

Ph.D. Field Examination
Nineteenth-Century British Literature
*** SPECIALIZATION: 1845-1900 ***

Spring 2002

INSTRUCTIONS

This examination has three sections defined by time period:

- Part A: 1790-1845
- Part B: 1845-1900
- Part C: 1790-1900

During the four hours of this examination, please answer ONE question from each of the three sections.

The question in your area of specialization is worth 40% of your total mark. The other two questions are each worth 30% of your total mark.

If you focus on a particular author in one question, you cannot focus on that author in any other question unless instructed otherwise. Your answers should have a clear thesis and demonstrate both familiarity with the texts themselves and knowledge of debates and issues in the field.

SECTION A: 1790-1845 (worth 30% of your total mark)

1. Romantic poets were not collectively described as such until 1850. Rather, they were most commonly described as 'modern' writers. Is the term 'modern' a fitting descriptor for the best known romantic poets or other authors of the period? Discuss with reference to at least three writers.
2. Explain the characteristics of the Ode, and discuss the larger significance of how at least three romantic poets use it.
3. What is the role of history in at least three writers of this period?

Section B: 1845-1900 (worth 40% of your total mark)

1. With reference to at least four authors, explain the contribution of the pre-Raphaelite movement to Victorian society, showing why some writers welcomed it and others were scandalized.
2. In what ways, if any, are the Victorian concerns with faith and with the status of women related? Discuss with reference to at least four authors.
3. Some Victorian writers express hope, others disillusionment about Victorian life. Explore the roots of these assessments in four writers, referring to at least two of the major genres of poetry, essay and novel.

Section C: 1790-1900 (worth 30% of your total mark)

Note: In your answer to this section, you must focus on at least one author from Section A and at least one author from Section B.

1. Explain the nature of Gothic and illustrate its role in the literature of the Romantic and the Victorian periods, referring to at least three writers.
2. Discuss the portrayal of the working class in nineteenth-century writing, by referring to the works of at least one poet, one essayist, and one novelist. In what ways does form influence, or fail to influence, the presentation of the working class in these works?
3. How central to nineteenth century writing is the elegiac form? Answer this question in part by explaining the characteristics of the elegy, and show how three or more nineteenth-century poets use it.