**SAMPLE Comprehensive Exam (Rhetoric-Based; Focus: Rhetorical New Materialisms and Water)**

**Instructions**

The examination has three parts; you must answer one question from each part.

Your answers should have a clear thesis and demonstrate both familiarity with the texts themselves and knowledge of issues in the field.

You will answer a total of THREE questions on this exam: one from Part A (Breadth), one from Part B (Depth), and one from Part C (Dissertation).

Each question should be answered using at least THREE texts from your reading list unless stated otherwise.

Note that to satisfy these minimum requirements, you may not refer to the same item on more than one answer unless you have already satisfied the minimum for that particular answer.

All questions are weighted equally.

**Part A: Breadth**

Answer ONE of the three questions below.

1. Discuss the differences between posthumanism, new materialism, and object-oriented ontology, and review at least 2 common criticisms leveled at these theories.
2. Compare and contrast theories of new materialism and animism.
3. Weigh the benefits and drawbacks of at least three methods in your reading list designed to address posthuman agency, concluding with some consideration of what posthumanism/new materialism offers in terms of complications to traditional concepts of method.

**Part B: Depth**

Answer ONE of the three questions below.

1. Discuss the role of gender in theories of materialism on your reading list.
2. How does experimentation with formal methods figure into posthumanist philosophy and/or new materialism? In your discussion, provide specific examples of formal experimentation from texts on your reading list.
3. How are the “hydrohumanities” defined, and how might rhetorical scholars contribute to this definition?

**Part C: Dissertation**

Answer ONE of the questions below.

1. In your dissertation proposal, you suggest that shorelines are rhetorical. Articulate this claim further, defining what scholars who work with water across disciplines might gain from adapting this viewpoint.
2. How might a scholar “listen” and then go about “speaking” on behalf of a watershed using a mixed-method approach of inquiry?
3. Thinking with water necessitates careful attention to understanding time, yet not all understandings of time are linear. Discuss that disconnect using at least three texts on your list while building toward a framework for working with water.