

Ph. D. Reading List Early American Literature

The following is a fundamental reading list for doctoral candidates to use as a guide in preparing for their comprehensive examination in the field of Early American Literature. A student is expected to have read widely in the field; to be thoroughly familiar with the major writers; and to read widely in the journal literature. The following reading list is suggestive rather than definitive, a list for the student and Committee on Studies to begin with. The list has three sections:

- Colonial and Early Republican Literature
- American Renaissance
- Helpful Anthologies, Reference Works, Literary Histories, and Literary Criticism

NOTE: ** denotes that the item can be selected by the graduate committee for master's reading list/exam.

COLONIAL AND EARLY REPUBLICAN LITERATURE

Christopher Columbus (1451-1506).

Journal of the First Voyage to America (selections).

From Letter to Luis de Santangel Regarding the First Voyage [February 15, 1493]

From Letter to Ferdinand and Isabella Regarding the Fourth Voyage [July 7, 1503]

John Winthrop (1588-1649).

A Model of Christian Charity

From *The Journal of John Winthrop*

William Bradford (1590-1657).

Of Plymouth Plantation

Book I, Chapter I. [The Separatist Interpretation of the Reformation in England, 1550–1607]

Book I, Chapter IV. Showing the Reasons and Causes of Their Removal

Book I, Chapter VII. Of Their Departure from Leyden [Mr. Robinson's Letter]

Book I, Chapter IX. Of Their Voyage and How They Passed the Sea; and of Their Safe Arrival at Cape Cod

Book I, Chapter X. Showing How They Sought Out a Place of Habitation; and What Befell Them Thereabout

Book II, Chapter XI. The Remainder of Anno 1620 [The Mayflower Compact], [The Starving Time], [Indian Relations]

Book II, Chapter XII. Anno 1621 [First Thanksgiving]

Book II, Chapter XIX. Anno Dom: 1628 [Thomas Morton of Merrymount]

Book II, Chapter XXIII. Anno Dom: 1632 [Prosperity Brings Dispersal of Population]

Book II, Chapter XXV. [Captain Stone, the Dutch, and the Connecticut Indians]

Book II, Chapter XXVII. [War Threatened with the Pequots]

Book II, Chapter XXVIII. Anno Dom: 1637 [The Pequot War]

Book II, Chapter XXXII. Anno Dom: 1642 [A Horrible Case of Bestiality]

Book II, Chapter XXXIII. Anno Dom: 1643 [The Life and Death of Elder Brewster], [Longevity of the Pilgrim Fathers]

Book II, Chapter XXXIV. Anno Dom: 1644 [Proposal to Remove to Nauset]

Roger Williams (1603?-1683).

A Key Into the Language of America

To My Dear and Well-Beloved Friends and Countrymen in Old And New England

Directions for the Use of the Language

An Help to the Native Language

Chapter XXI. Of Religion, the Soul, etc.

The Bloody Tenet of Persecution

A Letter to the Town of Providence

Anne Bradstreet (1621-1672).

“The Prologue”

“A Dialogue Between Old England and New”

“In Honor of that High and Mighty Princess Queen Elizabeth of Happy Memory”

“To the Memory of My Dear and Ever Honored Father Thomas Dudley Esq.”

“To Her Father with Some Verses”

“Contemplations”

“The Flesh and the Spirit”

“The Author to Her Book”

“Before the Birth of One of Her Children”

“To My Dear and Loving Husband”

“A Letter to Her Husband, Absent upon Public Employment”

“Another” [Letter to Her Husband, Absent upon Public Employment]

“In Reference to Her Children, 23 June, 1659”

“In Memory of My Dear Grandchild Elizabeth Bradstreet”

“In Memory of My Dear Grandchild Anne Bradstreet”

“On My Dear Grandchild Simon Bradstreet”

“For Deliverance from a Fever”

“Here Follows Some Verses upon the Burning of Our House”

“As Weary Pilgrim”

“To My Dear Children”

Mary White Rowlandson (1637?-1711). *A Narrative of the Captivity and Restauration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson* (1682).

Edward Taylor (1642?-1729).

“Psalm Two” (First Version)

“Preparatory Meditations”

“Prologue”

“Meditation 8” (First Series)

“Meditation 16” (First Series)

“Meditation 22” (First Series)

“Meditation 38” (First Series)

“Meditation 42” (First Series)

“Meditation 26” (Second Series)

“God’s Determinations”

“The Preface”

“The Soul’s Groan to Christ for Succor”

“Christ’s Reply”

- “The Joy of Church Fellowship Rightly Attended”
 “Upon Wedlock, and Death of Children”
 “[When] Let by Rain”
 “Upon a Wasp Chilled with Cold”
 “Huswifery”
 “A Fig for Thee, Oh! Death”
 “Treatise Concerning the Lord’s Supper”
 “From Sermon VI”
 Cotton Mather (1663-1728).
Wonders of the Invisible World (1692)
Magnalia Christi Americana
 “Galeacius Secundus: The Life of William Bradford, Esq., Governor of Plymouth Colony”
 “Nehemias Americanus: The Life of John Winthrop, Esq., Governor of the Massachusetts Colony”
Pillars of Salt
 “[Execution of James Morgan for Murder]”
 “[Execution of Two Women for Murdering Their Infants]”
 “[Execution of “A miserable Indian, called Zachary” for Murder]”
Ecclesiastical History of New England (1702).
The Bay Psalm Book (1640)
The New England Primer (1683?)
 Ebenezer Cook (1667-1733). *The Sot-Weed Factor; or, A Voyage to Maryland* (1708).
 William Byrd (1674-1744)
 The History of the Dividing Line Betwixt Virginia and North Carolina
 “[The Other British Colonies]”
 “From October”
 The Secret History of the Line (selections).
 Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758).
 A Faithful Narrative of the Surprising Work of God (1737)
 “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God” (1741)
 Benjamin Franklin (1706-1790)
 Poor Richard’s Almanac (1733-38)
 “The Way to Wealth” (1757)
 Autobiography
 J. Hector St. John de Crevecoeur (1735-1813). *Letters from an American Farmer* (1782).
 Annis Boudinot Stockton (1736–1801)
 “A Sarcasm against the ladies in a newspaper; An impromptu answer”
 “To my Burrissa”
 “To Laura—a card”
 “An Ode on the birth day of the illustrious George Washington President of the United States”
 “Sensibility[,] an ode”
 “Tears of friendship[,] Elegy the third.—to a friend just married, and who promised to write, on parting, but had neglected it.”
 Thomas Paine (1737-1809)

Common Sense (1776)
The Rights of Man (1791-92)

Thomas Jefferson (1743-1826)

Notes on the State of Virginia (selections)

"Declaration of Independence" ("finished" version, and the annotated version presented in Jefferson's *Autobiography*).

The Federalist Papers

No. 1 [Alexander Hamilton]

No. 10 [James Madison]

Olaudah Equiano (Gustavus Vassa) (1745-97)

The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African, Written by Himself (1789).

Philip Freneau (1752-1832).

The House of Night

"From A Vision"

"On the Emigration to America and Peopling the Western Country"

"The Wild Honey Suckle"

"The Indian Burying Ground"

"To Sir Toby"

"On Mr. Paine's Rights of Man"

"On the Religion of Nature"

"On Observing a Large Red-streak Apple"

"To a New England Poet"

"On the Civilization of the Western Aboriginal Lands"

Timothy Dwight (1752-1817)

Greenfield Hill: A Poem in Seven Parts (1794).

from "Part IV: The Destruction of the Pequods"

"Part II: The Flourishing Village"

Joel Barlow (1754-1812)

Selection from *The Vision of Columbus* (1787).

"The Hasty Pudding, A Poem, in Three Cantos" (1793)

Phillis Wheatley (1753-84)

"On Being Brought from Africa to America"

"To Maecenas"

"To the Right Honorable William, Earl of Dartmouth"

"To the University of Cambridge, in New England"

"On the Death of the Rev. Mr. George Whitefield, 1770"

"Thoughts on the Works of Providence"

"To S.M., A Young African Painter, on Seeing His Works"

"To His Excellency General Washington"

Letters

To John Thornton (April 21, 1772) [The Bible My Chief Study]

To Arbour Tanner (May 19, 1772) [A Sense of the Beauties and Excellence of the Crucified Saviour]

To John Thornton (December 1, 1773) [The Gift of God Is Eternal Life]

To Rev. Samson Occom (February 11, 1774) [The Natural Rights of Negroes]

To John Thornton (March 29, 1774) [The Death of Mrs. Wheatley]

Charles Brockden Brown (1771-1810). *Wieland* (1798)

Washington Irving (1783-1859)

"Rip Van Winkle"

"The Legend of Sleepy Hollow"

James Fenimore Cooper (1789-1851). *The Last of the Mohicans*

The Cherokee Memorials

[Note on the Accompanying Memorials, February 15, 1830]

[Memorial of the Cherokee Council, November 5, 1829]

[Memorial of the Cherokee Citizens, December 18, 1829]

William Cullen Bryant (1794-1878)

"Thanatopsis"

"The Prairie"

"To a Waterfowl."

AMERICAN RENAISSANCE

Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-82)

Essays: *Nature*

"The American Scholar"

"Circles"

"Self-Reliance"

"The Poet"

"Experience"

"Fate"

"Illusions"

Poetry

"The Sphinx"

"Uriel"

"Give all to Love"

"The Probelm"

"Ode: Inscribed to William Ellery Channing"

"Hamatreya"

"Terminus"

Read also: "Letter" to Walt Whitman on the occasion of the publication of the first edition of *Leaves of Grass* (1855).

Nathaniel Hawthorne (1804-64).

The Scarlet Letter

The Blithedale Romance

"Young Goodman Brown"

"Rappacinni's Daughter"

"The May-Pole of Merrymount"

"Roger Malvin's Burial"

"My Kinsman, Major Molineux."

Read also his prefaces to each of his major works.

William Lloyd Garrison (1805-79). Statement of purpose published in the first number of *The Liberator*.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807-1882)

“A Psalm of Life”

“Excelsior”

“The Slave’s Dream”

“The Fire of Drift-wood”

“The Jewish Cemetery at Newport”

“My Lost Youth”

Edgar Allan Poe (1809-49)

"The Raven"

"Sonnet: To Science"

"Israfel"

"To Helen"

"Ulalume -A Ballad"

“The Fall of the House of Usher"

"Ligiea"

"The Purloined Letter"

"Bernice"

"The Pit and the Pendulum"

"The Imp of the Perverse"

"Review of Nathaniel Hawthorne's 'Twice-Told Tales'"

"The Poetic Principle"

"The Philosophy of Composition"

John Greenleaf Whittier (1807-92).

“The Yankee Girl”

“The Slavery-Ships”

“The Hunters of Men”

“Massachusetts to Virginia”

“Ichabod”

“Snow-Bound: A Winter Idyl”

Harriet E. Wilson (1808?-1870). *Our Nig; or, Sketches from the Life of a Free Black*.

Abraham Lincoln (1809-65)

“Address at the Dedication of the Gettysburg National Cemetery” (1863)

“Second Inaugural Address” (1865).

Sarah Margaret Fuller (1810-50). “The Great Lawsuit” (1843).

Harriet Beecher Stowe (1811-96). *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852).

Harriet Ann Jacobs (1813-97). *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*.

Elizabeth Cady Stanton (1815-1902). “Declaration of Sentiments” (from the 1848 Seneca Falls Convention).

Henry David Thoreau (1817-62).

Walden

“Resistance to Civil Government”

“A Plea for Captain John Brown”

“Life Without Principle”

Frederick Douglass (1818-95)

Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass or My Bondage and My Freedom

“What to the American Slave is the Fourth of July?”

(Note: Be aware that Douglass wrote his autobiography three times (1845; 1855; 1881 [expanded 1893]).

James Russell Lowell (1819-1891)

The Bigelow Papers (first series)

A Fable for Critics Or, Better, a Glance At a Few of Our Literary Progenies from the Tub of Diogenes.....

Walt Whitman (1819-92)

Leaves of Grass (1855) including the preface

Also read these sections from the “death-bed” edition of *Leaves of Grass*: “Children of Adam,” “Calamus,” “Drum Taps,” “Memories of President Lincoln.”

Herman Melville (1819-91).

Moby Dick

Typee

Billy Budd

“Bartleby the Scrivener”

“Benito Cereno”

“Hawthorne and His Mosses” (a review of the second edition of Hawthorne's *Mosses From an Old Manse*).

“Chattanooga”

“The Enthusiast”

“Falstaff's Lament Over Prince Hal Become Henry V”

“From, The Conflict of Convictions”

“Gold in the Mountain”

“The House-Top”

“Immolated”

“In the Pauper's Turnip-Field”

“The Maldivian Shark”

“Malvern Hill”

“The Mound by the Lake”

“Sheridan at Cedar Creek”

“Shiloh”

“The Temeraire”

Frances Ellen Watkins Harper (1825-1911). *Poems on Miscellaneous Subjects*, 1854

HELPFUL ANTHOLOGIES, REFERENCE WORKS, LITERARY HISTORIES, AND LITERARY CRITICISM

John Hollander, ed. *Nineteenth Century American Poetry*. New York: Library of America, 1993.

Perry Miller, ed. *The American Puritans: Their Prose and Poetry*

The Heath Anthology of American Literature.

Robert Spiller, ed., et al. *Literary History of the United States*. 3rd ed. 1963.

Emory Elliot, ed., et al. *Columbia Literary History of the United States*. 1988.

Roy Harvey Pearce *The Continuity of American Poetry*. 1961.

Morton Dauwen Zabel, ed. *Literary Opinion in America*. 2 vols. 3rd ed. 1962.