Suggested Readings for the Comprehensive Exam of the English Department of the University of the South

(updated October 2013)

Given the limited time we have with our majors, we must acknowledge that the readings they undertake in the English curriculum are only a stone's skip across a wide and rich expanse of literary waters. The following list is likewise not a comprehensive list of literary touchstones, but it is intended as a guide as you follow your own intellectual interests and curiosities. We expect that in your courses you'll read substantially but not exhaustively from the works listed here, and that you'll also read a number of works that do not appear on the list. Let your preparation for the comprehensive exam be an occasion to revisit the novels, poems, and plays that you've read closely in your classes as well as an opportunity to extend your independent explorations of the literary canon. Your professors recommend this guide as a useful map for you in these explorations, both while you are in Sewanee and in the years to follow.

Students are encouraged to purchase *The Norton Anthology of English Literature* (2 volumes) and *The Norton Anthology of American Literature* and to familiarize themselves with their contents. These anthologies include a generous sampling of the works mentioned below, and they contain introductions to different literary periods and movements can help you refine your sense of periods and connections. Recommended histories of English literature include Albert C. Baugh's *A Literary History of England* and Alastair Fowler's *A History of English Literature*. A useful popular history is available in a Norton paperback edition: *The Land and Literature of England*, by Robert M. Adams. An excellent *History of the English Language* was written by Albert C. Baugh and Thomas Cable. *The Columbia Literary History of the United States*, ed. Emory Elliot, is standard. Marcus Cunliffe's *Literature of the United States* is short, perceptive, and readable. Other useful books are *A Handbook to Literature* by William Harmon and *The Oxford Companion to English Literature* by Margaret Drabble.

I. Background

Aeschylus, The Oresteia

Apuleius, The Golden Ass

Aristotle, Poetics

Augustine, Confessions

The Bible, especially Genesis, Ecclesiastes, Job, The Psalms, Song of Solomon, and the Gospels (The King James Authorized Version)

Boccaccio, Decameron

Boethius, The Consolation of Philosophy

Dante, The Divine Comedy

Homer, The Iliad and The Odyssey

Horace, Ars Poetica

Lucretius, On the Nature of Things

Ovid, The Metamorphoses

Petrarch, Rime Sparse, 23, 90, 133, and 190

Plato, Apology, Symposium, The Republic

Sophocles, Oedipus Rex and Antigone

Vergil, The Aeneid

II. Medieval Literature

Beowulf

"Caedmon's Hymn"

Chaucer, Troilus and Criseyde, The Canterbury Tales, Parliament of Fowls

Everyman, The Wakefield Second Shepherd's Play

Julian of Norwich, Norton selections from The Showings of Divine Love

Margery Kempe, Norton selections from The Book of Margery Kempe

Malory, Morte Darthur (I, VII, VIII)

Pearl, Sir Gawain and the Green Knight

Selected Plays from the York Mystery Cycle

"The Dream of the Rood," "The Wanderer," "The Seafarer," "The Battle of Maldon"

III. Renaissance Literature

Bacon, "Of Truth," "Of Studies," "Of Death," "Of Gardens," "Of the Vicissitude of Things"

Browne, "Urn Burial," "Garden of Cyrus," Religio Medici

Burton, Norton selections from Anatomy of Melancholy

Campion, "My Sweetest Lesbia" and "There is a Garden in her Face"

Carew, "Elegy," "A Rapture"

Cavendish, Norton selections from The Blazing World

Crashaw, "The Weeper," "The Flaming Heart"

Donne, "The Good-Morrow," "The Canonization," "The Bait," "Song [Go and Catch a Falling Star]," "The Relic," "The Sun Rising," "The Apparition," "The Funeral," "Satire 3 [Kind Pity Chokes My Spleen]," "The First Anniversary," "A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning," "Elegy 19: To His Mistress Going to Bed," "Good Friday, 1613," "Death, be not proud,"

"Batter my heart," "Hymn to God My God, in My Sickness," "The Flea," *Devotions upon Emergent Occasions*

Dekker and Middleton, The Roaring Girl

Drayton, "Since there's no help, come let us kiss and part"

Herbert, "Easter Wings," "The Altar," "The Flower," "The Collar," "The Pulley," "The Temper (I) and (II)," "Jordan (I) and (II)," "Love (III)," "Redemption," "Prayer (I)," "Denial," "Time," "The Bunch of Grapes"

Herrick, "The Argument of His Book," "To the Virgins, to Make Much of Time," "Corinna's Going A-Maying," "Upon Julia's Clothes," "Delight in Disorder," "The Vine"

Jonson, "To Penshurst," "On My First Son," "To the Memory of My Master William

Shakespeare," "Come, My Celia, Let Us Prove," "Kiss me, sweet," "Drink to Me Only with Thine Eyes," "To Heaven," "Inviting a Friend to Supper," "Celebration of Charis," *Volpone, Every Man in His Humour, The Alchemist*

Kyd, The Spanish Tragedy

Lanyer, Amelia, "The Description of Cooke-ham"

Lovelace, "To Althea From Prison," "The Grasshopper," "To Lucasta, Going To the Wars"

Marlowe, *Doctor Faustus*, *Tamburlaine* Parts 1 & 2 "The Passionate Shepherd to his Love," *Hero and Leander*, *All Ovids Elegies* 1.5

Marvell, "The Nymph Complaining for the Death of Her Fawn," "To His Coy Mistress," "The Garden," "Upon Appleton House," "A Dialogue Between the Soul and Body," "The Picture of Little T. C. in a Prospect of Flowers," "An Horatian Ode," "The Mower's Song," "On a Drop of Dew"

Middleton, The Changeling, The Revenger's Tragedy

Milton, "Lycidas," "L'Allegro," "Il Penseroso," selected sonnets, *Paradise Lost, Samson Agonistes*, Nativity Ode

More, Utopia

Nashe, Pierce Penniless, His Supplication to the Devil

Raleigh, "The Nymph's Reply to the Shepherd"

Sidney, An Apology for Poetry, Astrophil and Stella

Spenser, *The Shepheardes Calendar* (January, April, October, November, December), *The Faerie Queene* (I, II, III), *Amoretti*, "Epithalamion"

Surrey, "Love, That Doth Reign and Live Within My Thought," "The Soote Season"

Vaughan, "Regeneration," "The Retreat," "They Are All Gone Into That World of Light," "The World," "Unprofitableness," "The Waterfall"

Webster, The Duchess of Malfi

Wroth, Pamphilia to Amphilanthus

Wyatt, "Whoso List to Hunt," "They Flee from Me," "Unstable Dream, According to the Place," "My Lute, Awake!"

IV. Shakespeare

A Midsummer-Night's Dream	Antony and Cleopatra	As You Like It
Hamlet	Henry IV, Part 1	Henry IV, Part 2
Henry V	Julius Caesar	King Lear
Love's Labour's Lost	Macbeth	Measure for Measure
The Merchant of Venice	Much Ado About Nothing	Othello
Richard II	Romeo and Juliet	The Sonnets
The Tempest	Troilus and Cressida	Twelfth Night
The Winter's Tale	Richard III	Taming of the Shrew

V. Restoration and Eighteenth-Century British Literature

Addison and Steele, Norton selections from The Tatler and The Spectator

Behn, "The Disappointment," The Rover, Oroonoko

Blake, Songs of Innocence and of Experience, Marriage of Heaven & Hell

Boswell, Life of Johnson, London Journal

Bunyan, The Pilgrim's Progress

Burns, "To a Mouse," "Epistle to John Lapraik," "To a Louse," "Holy Willie's Prayer, "A Red, Red Rose," *Tam O'Shanter*

Collins, "Ode to Evening," "Ode to Fear," "Ode on the Poetical Character"

Congreve, The Way of the World

Defoe, Moll Flanders

Dryden, An Essay of Dramatic Poesy, Mac Flecknoe, Absalom and Achitophel, "To the Memory of Mr. Oldham"

Etherege, The Man of Mode

Fielding, Joseph Andrews, Tom Jones

Gay, Beggar's Opera

Goldsmith, She Stoops to Conquer, "The Deserted Village"

Gray, "Sonnet on the Death of Mr. Richard West," "Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College," "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard." "The Bard," "The Progress of Poetry"

Johnson, Preface to *Dictionary*, selections from *The Rambler*, *Rasselas*, "The Vanity of Human Wishes," "London," Preface to *Shakespeare*, *The Lives of the Poets* (Cowley, Pope, Gray)

Pepys, Norton selections from the *Diary*

Pope, An Essay on Criticism, An Essay on Man, The Rape of the Lock, "An Epistle to Miss Blount," Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot, Eloise to Abelard, The Dunciad (I, IV)

Richardson, Pamela, Clarissa

Rochester, "Satyr of Charles II," "The Imperfect Enjoyment," "The Disabled Debauchee," "Satyr Against Reason and Mankind"

Sheridan, The Rivals

Sterne, Tristram Shandy, A Sentimental Journey

Swift, *Tale of a Tub*, *Gulliver's Travels*, "A Modest Proposal," "Verses on the Death of Dr. Swift," "A Lady's Dressing Room," "A Beautiful Young Nymph Going to Bed," "The Progress of Beauty," "Description of a City Shower"

Walpole, The Castle of Otranto

Wollstencraft, Vindication of the Rights of Women

Wycherley, The Country Wife

VI. Nineteenth-Century British Literature

Arnold, *Empedocles on Etna*, "The Scholar-Gypsy," "Stanzas from the Grand Chartreuse," "Thyrsis," "Dover Beach," Preface to *Poems* (1853), "The Function of Criticism at the

Present Time," selections from Culture and Anarchy

Austen, Pride and Prejudice, Emma

Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Sonnets from the Portuguese

Robert Browning, "My Last Duchess," "Soliloquy of the Spanish Cloister," "Childe Roland," "The Bishop Orders His Tomb," "Fra Lippo Lippi," "Andrea del Sarto," "Cleon"

Byron, *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* (III), *Don Juan* (I), "She Walks in Beauty," "So, We'll Go No More a Roving"

Charlotte Bronte, Jane Eyre

Emily Bronte, Wuthering Heights

Carlyle, Selections from Sartor Resartus

Coleridge, "This Lime-Tree Bower My Prison," "Frost at Midnight," "Kubla Khan," *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, "Dejection: an Ode," *Biographia Literaria* (XIII, XIV)

Dickens, Bleak House, Hard Times, David Copperfield

Eliot, George, Middlemarch

Fitzgerald, The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam

Hardy, Tess of the D'Urbervilles

Hopkins, *The Wreck of The Deutschland*, "The Windhover," "Pied Beauty," "God's Grandeur," "Spring and Fall," "Carrion Comfort"

Housman, "To An Athlete Dying Young," "Terence, This Is Stupid Stuff," "Oh, Loveliest of Trees, the Cherry Now," "On Wenlock Edge"

Keats, "On First Looking into Chapman's Homer," "On Seeing the Elgin Marbles," "When I Have Fears," *The Eve of St. Agnes*, "La Belle Dame sans Merci," "Ode to a Nightingale," "Ode on a Grecian Urn," "Ode on Melancholy," "To Autumn," "Bright Star," selected letters

Newman, Selections from Apologia Pro Vita Sua and The Idea of a University

Pater, Conclusion to The Renaissance

Christina Rossetti, Christina, Goblin Market, "In an Artist's Studio," "When I Am Dead"

Dante Gabriel Rossetti, "The Blessed Damozel," "Jenny"

Ruskin, Selections from Modern Painters and The Stones of Venice

Scott, The Heart of Midlothian, Ivanhoe

Mary Shelley, Frankenstein

Percy Bysshe Shelley, "Mont Blanc," "Lines Written Among the Euganean Hills," "Ozymandias," "Ode to the West Wind," *Prometheus Unbound*, "The Cloud," "To a Skylark," "Adonais," *A Defence of Poetry*

Swinburne, "Hymn To Proserpine," "Hertha"

Stevenson, The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, Treasure Island

Tennyson, "The Kraken," "Mariana," "Oenone," "The Lotos-Eaters," "Tithonus," "The Lady of Shallot," "Morte d'Arthur," "Ulysses," "Tiresias," In Memoriam, lyrics from Maud

Thackeray, Vanity Fair

Trollope, Barchester Towers

Wilde, The Picture of Dorian Gray

Wordsworth, Preface to *Lyrical Ballads* (1800), "Tintern Abbey," "I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud," "Upon Westminster Bridge," "The World Is Too Much With Us," "London 1802," "Nutting," Lucy Poems, *Michael, Immortality Ode*, "Resolution and Independence," two-part *Prelude* of 1799

VII. American Literature through the Nineteenth Century

Bradstreet, "To My Dear and Loving Husband," "A Letter to Her Husband, Absent upon Public Employment," "Here Follows Some Verses upon the Burning of Our House, July 10th, 1666."

Chesnutt, The Conjure Woman

Cooper, Last of the Mohicans

Crane, "The Open Boat," The Red Badge of Courage.

Dickinson, "After great pain," "Because I could not stop for Death," "A Route of Evanescence," "Title Divine--is mine!", ""There's a certain Slant of light," "One need not be a Chamber--to be Haunted--," "I felt a Funeral, in my Brain," "My Life had stood--a Loaded Gun," "Renunciation--is a piercing Virtue--"

Douglass, Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass

Edwards, Personal Narrative, "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God"

Emerson, Nature, "Self-Reliance"

Franklin, Autobiography

Hawthorne, *The Scarlet Letter*, "Young Goodman Brown," "Rappaccini's Daughter," "My Kinsman, Major Molineux"

Irving, History of New York, "Rip van Winkle," "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow"

Jacobs, Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl

James, "The Beast in the Jungle," *The Bostonians, The Turn of the Screw, The Portrait of a Lady* Longfellow, *Ballads and Other Poems*

Melville, "Benito Cereno," Moby-Dick, Piazza Tales, "Bartleby, the Scrivener"

Poe, "Ligeia," "The Fall of the House of Usher," "The Bells," "Annabel Lee," "The Cask of Amontillado," "The Purloined Letter," "The Raven," "To Helen"

Rowlandson, A Narrative of the Captivity and Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson

Stowe, Uncle Tom's Cabin

Thoreau, Walden, "Civil Disobedience"

Twain, Adventures of Huckleberry Finn

Wheatley, "On Being Brought From Africa to America," "To Maecenas"

Whitman, "Song of Myself," "Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking," "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd." "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry"

Winthrop, "A Model of Christian Charity"

VIII. Modern and Contemporary American Literature

Verse

Berry, Sabbaths, Leavings

Bishop, "The Fish," "Sestina," "In the Waiting Room," "The Moose," "Miracle for Breakfast," "Casablanca"

Bowers, selections

Brooks, "a song in the front yard," "Sadie and Maud," "We Real Cool"

Crane, The Bridge

cummings, "in Just-," "the Cambridge ladies who live in furnished souls," "i sing of Olaf glad and big"

Frost, "Mending Wall," "Home Burial," "After Apple-Picking," "The Road Not Taken," "The Oven Bird," "Birches," "Stopping by Woods," "Acquainted with the Night," "Design," "Provide, Provide," "Directive"

Gunn, "My Sad Captains," "Still Life," "The Missing"

Hayden, "Middle Passage," "O Daedalus, Fly Away Home," "Frederick Douglass," "Those Winter Sundays"

Hecht, "Birdwatchers of America," "The Book of Yolek," "It Out-Herods Herod. Pray You, Avoid It," "More Light! More Light!"

Hughes, "The Negro Speaks of Rivers," "Mother to Son," "The Weary Blues," "I, Too," "Harlem"

Jennings, selections

Justice, "Psalm and Lament," "Villanelle at Sundown," "Thinking about the Past," "Counting the Mad," "Nostalgia of the Lakefronts"

Lowell, "The Quaker Graveyard in Nantucket," "After the Surprising Conversions," "Memories of West Street and Lepke," "Skunk Hour," "For the Union Dead," "Waking Early Sunday Morning"

Nemerov, "The Goose Fish," "The Blue Swallows," "The Human Condition," "The Loon's Cry," "The View from an Attic Window," "Figures of Thought," "Painting a Mountain Stream," "Holding the Mirror up to Nature"

Plath, "Daddy," "The Colossus," "Lady Lazarus," "Tulips, "Black Book in Rainy Weather"

Pound, "The Return," "The River Merchant's Wife: A Letter," "In a Station of the Metro," *Hugh Selwyn Mauberley, The Cantos* (I, XLV, LXXXI)

Ransom, "Bells for John Whiteside's Daughter," "Captain Carpenter," "Piazza Piece," "Antique Harvesters"

Roethke, "My Papa's Waltz," "The Waking," "I Knew a Woman," "In a Dark Time"

Stevens, "Peter Quince at the Clavier," "Sunday Morning," "The Snow Man," "A High-Toned Old Christian Woman," "The Emperor of Ice Cream," "The Idea of Order at Key West"

Eliot, "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock," The Waste Land, Four Quartets

Tate, "Ode to the Confederate Dead"

Van Duyn, "Leda," "Letters from a Father," "The Vision Test," "Falling in Love at Sixty-Five" Wilbur, "Praise in Summer," "Year's End," "Tywater," "The Undead," "Cottage Street, 1953,"

"Love Calls Us to the Things of this World"

Williams, "Tract," "Queen Anne's Lace," "Spring and All," "The Red Wheelbarrow," "Yachts," "Landscape with the Fall of Icarus"

Fiction

Agee, Death in the Family

Bellow, Seize the Day

Cather, The Song of the Lark

Chopin, The Awakening

DeLillo, White Noise

Ellison, Invisible Man

Faulkner, The Sound and the Fury, Absolom, Absalom!, Go Down, Moses

Fitzgerald, The Great Gatsby

Gaines, The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman, A Lesson Before Dying

Hemingway, The Sun Also Rises

Hurston, Their Eyes Were Watching God

Lytle, The Velvet Horn, A Wake for the Living

McCarthy, All the Pretty Horses, The Road

Morrison, Beloved, Song of Solomon

O'Brien, The Things They Carried

O'Connor, "A Good Man Is Hard To Find," "Parker's Back," "The Life You Save May Be Your Own," "Revelation"

Percy: The Moviegoer, The Last Gentleman

Robert Stone, A Flag for Sunrise

Stegner, Crossing to Safety

Styron, *Lie Down in Darkness*

Taylor, A Summons to Memphis, "A Wife of Nashville," "Dean of Men"

Warren, *All the King's Men*, "To a Little Girl, One Year Old, in a Ruined Fortress," "Bearded Oaks," "Evening Hawk"

Welty, "The Petrified Man," "A Worn Path," "Powerhouse," "The Wide Net"

Wharton, The House of Mirth, The Age of Innocence

Wolfe, Look Homeward Angel

Wright, Native Son

Drama

Edward Albee, Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?

Foote, The Trip to Bountiful

Hansberry, A Raisin in the Sun

Kushner, Angels in America (Part I: The Millennium Approaches)

Miller, Death of a Salesman

Parks, Topdog/Underdog

Williams, The Glass Menagerie, A Streetcar Named Desire, Cat on a Hot Tim Roof

IX. Modern and Contemporary British and World Literature

Verse

Auden, "O where are you going," "As I Walked out One Evening," "Lullaby," "September 1, 1939," "Musée des Beaux Arts," "In Memory of W. B. Yeats," "In Praise of Limestone," "The Shield of Achilles"

Boland, "Anorexic," "Mise Eire," "The Pomegranate"

(Carol Ann) Duffy, "Warming Her Pearls," "Standing Female Nude," "Anne Hathaway," "Medusa"

Hardy, "Neutral Tones," "The Darkling Thrush," "Channel Firing," "The Man He Killed"

Heaney, "Punishment," "The Skunk," "Digging," "Death of a Naturalist," "The Tollund Mand," "Punishment," "The Strand at Lough Beg"

Larkin, "Church Going," "The Whitsun Weddings," "High Windows," "Sad Steps," "This Be the Verse," "Aubade"

Owen, "Dulce Et Decorum Est," "Greater Love," "Mental Cases"

Rosenberg, "Break of Day in the Trenches," "Returning, We Hear Larks"

Sassoon, "Repression of War Experience," "Everyone Sang," "On Passing the New Menin Gate" (Stevie) Smith, "Not Waving But Drowning," "To Carry the Child," "Our Bog is Dood," "Pretty"

Thomas, "The Force That Through the Green Fuse Drives the Flower," selected sonnets from *Altarwise By Owl-Light*, "Fern Hill," "Do Not Go Gentle into that Good Night"

Walcott, "The Gulf," "Frederiksted, Dusk," "Winding Up," "Post of Spain," "A Far Cry from Africa," "The Schooner *Flight*"

Yeats, "The Lake Isle of Innisfree," "Adam's Curse," "September 1913," "The Magi," "The Wild Swans at Coole," "In Memory of Major Robert Gregory," "Easter 1916," "The Second Coming," "A Prayer for My Daughter," "Leda and the Swan," "Sailing to Byzantium," "The Tower," "Among School Children," "Lapis Lazuli," "Under Ben Bulben." "Crazy Jane Talks to the Bishop"

Fiction

Achebe, Things Fall Apart

Barker, Regeneration

Bowen, The Death of the Heart

Coetzee, Disgrace, Foe, Waiting for the Barbarians

Conrad, The Secret Agent, Heart of Darkness

Flaubert, Madame Bovary

Ford, The Good Soldier

Forster, A Passage to India, Howard's End

Gordimer, "Once Upon a Time," "The Ultimate Safari," "Safe Houses," "Keeping Fit"

Joyce, Dubliners, A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man, Ulysses

Lawrence, The Rainbow, Sons and Lovers, "The Rocking-Horse Winner"

Mansfield, "Daughters of the Late Colonel," "The Garden Party," "Bliss"

Nabokov, Pale Fire, Lolita

Ngũgĩ, A Grain of Wheat

Orwell, 1984

Rhys, Jean, Wide Sargasso Sea

Roy, The God of Small Things

Rushdie, Midnight's Children

Selvon, The Lonely Londoners

(Zadie) Smith, White Teeth

Spark, Muriel, The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie

Trevor, "Death in Jerusalem," "Beyond the Pale," "Of the Cloth"

Waugh, A Handful of Dust

West, Return of the Soldier

Wilde, The Picture of Dorian Gray

Winterson, Written on the Body

Woolf, To the Lighthouse, Mrs. Dalloway

Drama

Beckett, Endgame, Waiting for Godot, Krapp's Last Tape

Brecht, Mother Courage and Her Children

Chekhov, The Cherry Orchard

Churchill, Far Away, Cloud Nine

Ibsen, A Doll's House, Hedda Gabler

Friel, Translations

Lady Gregory and W.B. Yeats, Cathleen ni Houlihan

McDonagh, The Cripple of Inishmaan

Pinter, The Homecoming, Betrayal

Soyinka, Death and the King's Horseman

Stoppard, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead, Arcadia, The Real Thing

Synge, Playboy of the Western World

Walcott, Dream on Monkey Mountain