

Dept. of English & Comparative Literature, SJSU  
MA Exam Reading List: Group 1

## Classical and Medieval Literature

Description: This area of the exam focuses on western Classical and Medieval literature. Students should be familiar with the texts and contexts of the authors listed below.

### Classical

- Plato** Excerpts from *Republic* (as found in Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism)  
**Aristotle** *Poetics*, (excerpts from Norton)  
**Homer** *Iliad*, Books 1, 6, 9, 18, 22, 24;  
*Odyssey*. Books 1, 2, 5, 6, 9, 10, 11, 12, 16, 17, 21, 22, 24  
**Ovid** from *Metamorphoses*: Creation, Apollo and Daphne, Jove and Io, Pygmalion  
**Aeschylus** *The Oresteia*  
**Sophocles** *Oedipus Rex*  
**Euripedes** *Medea*  
**The Bible:** Genesis; Exodus, Job, Psalm 19, Song of Songs, Isaiah 1-10, 40, 52-56, Luke; John 1-2; Revelation 1, 2, 4-6

### Medieval

- Old English** *Beowulf*, *The Wanderer*, *The Seafarer*, *The Dream of the Rood*, *The Wife's Lament*, *The Battle of Maldon* (with some attention to Anglo-Saxon language and verse forms)  
**Dante** *Il Convivio* (excerpts in Norton)  
*Inferno* 1-5, 31-34; *Purgatorio* 1-3, 28-33; *Paradiso*, 1-2, 16-19, 23, 30-33  
**Chaucer** *The Canterbury Tales*, selections (General Prologue, Knight's Tale, Miller's Tale, Wife of Bath's Prologue and Tale, Clerk's Tale, Pardoner's Prologue and Tale, Nun's Priest's Tale)  
*Troilus and Criseyde*  
***Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*** (with attention to Middle English and poetic form)  
**Julian of Norwich**, *Revelations of Divine Love* (excerpts in Norton)  
***Book of Margery Kempe*** (excerpts in Norton)  
***Everyman***  
***Second Shepherd's Play*** (Wakefield Cycle)  
**Sir Thomas Malory**  
selections from *Le Morte Darthur* (ed. Shepherd, Norton Critical Edition)  
The Tale of King Arthur (I. Merlin), p. 3-13  
The Book of Sir Launcelot and Queen Guinevere (I-V) pp. 599-645  
The Most Piteous Tale of the Mort Arthur Saunz Guerdon (I-V) pp. 646-698

## Sample Questions

1. In epic and other forms of narrative poetry women often play the role of temptresses who use their guile to threaten the hero's completion of his journey. At the same time, the feminine often personifies the object of a hero's quest. Discuss these two problematic aspects of representations of women in at least three epic or narrative poems from the Classical and Medieval periods.

Updated 2/29/20