

PH.D. EXAMINATION IN RENAISSANCE POETRY AND PROSE  
Georgia State University Department of English

A specialist examination in Renaissance Poetry and Prose gives a student an opportunity to demonstrate a broad and deep understanding and thus a readiness to begin work on a dissertation in the field. A secondary-specialization exam gives a student an opportunity to demonstrate a solid understanding in this field to complement the student's expertise in a primary specialization.

Every student who intends to take a Ph.D. exam in this area should study the works listed below.

In addition, a student who intends to take a *specialist* exam in the field should compile a list of further items reflecting the student's special interests. This supplemental list should include both primary and secondary works and should entail an amount of reading approximately *one-third* the amount entailed by the basic list. This supplemental list should be submitted for approval to a member of the Renaissance faculty at least one semester before the student intends to take the exam. Members of the Renaissance faculty may suggest revisions to the supplemental list.

Even though a student taking a Ph.D. exam presumably will have read numerous primary and secondary works not found on either the basic or (in the case of a specialist exam) the supplemental list, the exam questions will be constructed with this finite material in mind in order to give focus to the student's preparation for the exam. No exam question will require a detailed knowledge of primary works not on the lists. No exam question will require a detailed command of information not found in the secondary works on the lists. In *answering* a question, a student may, where appropriate, discuss works that are not on the lists. A student should consult members of the Renaissance faculty for advice about preparing for the exam.

A *specialist* exam has four parts. The first part requires a series of short essays (of approximately one fully developed paragraph each) about, for example, a character, a person, a crucial date, a primary text or critical work, a well-known quotation from a primary text or critical work, or a term or concept associated with the Renaissance or with Renaissance poetry or prose. The second part of the exam requires a substantial essay on some aspect of the editorial, critical, or scholarly history of Renaissance poetry or prose. The third part requires a wide-ranging and detailed essay on a theme, genre, artistic technique, or other element in a variety of primary texts. The final part requires an in-depth essay on a narrower topic, such as an element of an individual primary text or a small group of texts. A *secondary-specialization* exam has three parts, which are the same as Parts 1, 3, and 4 of the specialist exam. Each part of the exam involves a choice of topics.

A student who opts to take a Ph.D. examination in Renaissance Poetry and Prose may select as a second Ph.D. examination the one in Renaissance Drama but *not* the more general examination in Renaissance Literature.

#### PRIMARY WORKS

The "selections" are those found in the latest edition of *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*.\*

Thomas More, *Utopia* (in English translation)

Thomas Wyatt, selections\*

Edmund Spenser:

*The Shepherds Calendar*, April and October

*The Faerie Queene*, Book 1; Book 2, canto 12; Book 3; Proems to remaining books.

*Amoretti*, selections\*

Philip Sidney:

*Astrophil and Stella*, selections\*

*The Defence of Poesy* (aka *An Apology for Poetry*)

Francis Bacon, *Essays*, selections\*

Christopher Marlowe, *Hero and Leander*

William Shakespeare:

*Sonnets*, selections\*

*Venus and Adonis*

Aemilia Lanyer, selections\*

John Donne, selections\*

Ben Jonson, selected poems\*

Robert Burton, *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, "Democritus Junior to the Reader"

Robert Herrick, selections\*

George Herbert, selections\*

John Milton:

*Paradise Lost*

*Paradise Regain'd*

*Samson Agonistes*

*Areopagitica*

selected lyric poems\*

Andrew Marvell, selections\*

Margaret Cavendish, *The Description of a New World, Called The Blazing World*

Katherine Philips, selections\*

## SECONDARY WORKS

Colie, Rosalie. *Resources of Kind: Genre-Theory in the Renaissance*. Berkeley: U California P, 1973.

Corns, Thomas M., ed. *The Cambridge Companion to English Poetry, Donne to Marvell*, 1993.

Danielson, Dennis, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Milton*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 1999.

Dobranski, Stephen B. *Milton, Authorship, and the Book Trade*. Cambridge UP, 1999.

Erickson, Wayne. *Mapping the Faerie Queene: Quest Structures and the World of the Poem*. NY: Garland, 1996.

Greenblatt, Stephen. *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*. U Chicago P, 1980.

Lewalski, Barbara Kiefer. *Protestant Poetics and the Seventeenth Century Religious Lyric*. Princeton UP, 1979.

Smith, Hallett. *Elizabethan Poetry*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1952.

Voss, Paul J. *Elizabethan News Pamphlets: Shakespeare, Spenser, Marlowe, and the Birth of Journalism*. Pittsburgh: Duquesne UP, 2001.

Woodbridge, Linda. *Women and the English Renaissance*. Urbana: U Illinois P, 1986.