Guidelines for the M.A. Exam
Saint Louis University
Department of English

In order to graduate with a master’s degree in English, all candidates must pass a one hour, oral exam covering a list of 12 works. This list is chosen periodically by the department, and represents a variety of periods and genres. The outstanding candidate will move with dexterity between close readings of a text, the critical heritage, and the list’s cultural and historical contexts. The examining committee for M.A. exams consists of three faculty members of the candidate’s choice; in their second year of study, master's candidates are responsible for approaching faculty members to serve on their exam committee, with the objective of assembling examiners covering a range of areas. A 13th work, to be chosen by the student, will consist of an influential theoretical or critical text. This work will be selected from a list of 10, compiled by the department as a whole, and which will be reviewed and revised at three-year intervals.

Reading List for the M.A. Exam
for the master’s class entering in the fall of 2012
(exclusive of the theoretical/critical text):
The Book of Margery Kempe (ca. 1438, 1996 ed. Lynn Staley)
William Shakespeare, Hamlet (1600-1623)
John Milton, Lycidas (1638, 1645)
Jane Austen, Mansfield Park (1814, Longman Cultural, ed. Marilyn Gaull)
Alfred Tennyson, Idylls of the King (1859-1885, Penguin, ed. J.M. Gray)
Mark Twain, Adventures of Huckleberry Finn (1884-1885)
W.E.B. Du Bois, The Souls of Black Folk (1903)
Elizabeth Bowen, The Last September (1929)
Allen Ginsberg, Howl and Other Poems (1956)
Leslie Marmon Silko, Ceremony (1977)
Derek Walcott, Omeros (1990)

Theory and Criticism List for the M.A. Exam
(The Candidate selects ONE Text)
Philip Sidney, Defense of Poetry (1595)
Edmund Burke, Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful (1757)
Kenneth Burke, A Rhetoric of Motives (1950)
Frantz Fanon, The Wretched of the Earth (1968)
Louis Althusser, “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatus” (in his For Marx, 1969);
Walter Ong, Rhetoric, Romance, and Technology (1971)
Michel Foucault, Discipline and Punish (1977)
Luce Irigaray, Speculum of the Other Woman (1985)
Toni Morrison, Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination (1992)
Judith Halberstam, Female Masculinity (1998)