

國 立 清 華 大 學 命 題 紙

96 學年度_____外國語文學_____系(所)_____甲_____組碩士班入學考試

科目__美國文學史__ 科目代碼__4102__共__3__頁第__1__頁 *請在【答案卷卡】內作答

GRADUATE ADMISSIONS TEST FOR AMERICAN LITERATURE

PART ONE: IDENTIFICATIONS (30%)

Listed below are important literary terms (category A) and major authors and texts (category B) in US literary history. Please choose **THREE** items from category A and **THREE** items from category B. Write **2-3 SENTENCES** about each literary term and author/text that you choose.

[Category A]

The American Dream

Civil Disobedience

Transcendentalism

Underground Railroad

Naturalism

The Jazz Age

New Criticism

The Harlem Renaissance

[Category B]

The Scarlet Letter

Uncle Tom's Cabin

Herman Melville

Leaves of Grass

Henry James

Emily Dickinson

Invisible Man

Toni Morrison

PART TWO: ESSAY QUESTIONS (60%)

Choose **THREE** of the following questions and answer them to the best of your ability:

1. If the literature of a country reflects the experience of its people, what aspects of the American experience are reflected in its literature? To begin with, define two aspects of the American experience and say why they are characteristically American, and then choose two authors and/or texts (one before the Civil War and one after it) to discuss how their writings reflect the American experience. For the purpose of this question, things which might

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characterize the American experience would be: the immigrant experience from the time of John Smith and Mayflower to the Middle Passage and the era of Angel Island, the American revolution, the Civil War, slavery and abolitionist politics, the westward expansion, the Gold Rush, the Mexican-American War, the annexation of Hawaii, the Great Depression, the Cold War, the Vietnam War and the anti-war movement, and the civil rights movement, or any other major social or political event and/or factor. Focus discussion specifically on how the literary texts you choose reflect on and deal with the social and political issues.

2. Multiculturalism is a term that is sometimes invoked in projects that draw together works by authors from different ethnic or racial groups. Imagining that you were putting together a syllabus of American literature since the Civil War, discuss the principles by which you might want to construct a multicultural reading of American literature since the Civil War. What texts would you teach in this course? In what ways might you find ethnicity a useful category for literary and/or historical analysis? What new understanding would you hope to bring out by teaching a course of this nature? Write a course description in which you explain the guiding principles of this course, and then discuss some of the texts you would include and the particular types of conversations and debates you want to facilitate.

3. One of the major topics in American literary studies is the idea of Manifest Destiny and the emergence of the American empire. Imagining that you were to give a lecture on this subject, what texts would you select to explain to your audience the idea of Manifest Destiny and what historical events would you reference to give an account of the emergence of the American empire. Write a mini-lecture to discuss how the texts you select would reflect on and/or critique the will to empire in American history and culture.

4. Please read the following two passages carefully. Both authors, DuBois and Wheatley, are African American writers, and they both address the plight of the Black people in America. Please compare the two passages and discuss how each author is different or similar in their understanding of the Black presence in America. Is there a gender difference discernible in either passage for instance?

The history of the American negro is the history of this strife,—this longing to attain self-conscious manhood, to merge his double self into a better and truer self. In this merging he wishes neither of the older selves to be lost. He would not Africanize America, for America has too much to teach the world and Africa. He would not bleach

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his Negro soul in a flood of white Americanism, for he knows that Negro blood has a message for the world. He simply wishes to make it possible for a man to be both a Negro and an American, without being cursed and spit upon by his fellows, without having the doors of Opportunity closed roughly in his face. (W. E. B. DuBois, *The Souls of Black Folk*, 1903) ‘

‘Twas mercy brought me from my pagan land, / Taught my benighted soul to understand / That there’s a God, that there’s a Savior, too: / Once I redemption neither sought nor knew. / Some View our sable race with scornful eyes. / “Their color is a diabolic dye.” / Remember, Christians, Negroes, black as Cain, / May be refined, and join the angelic train. (Phyllis Wheatley, “On Being Brought from Africa to America,” 1773)

PART THREE: STATEMENT OF PURPOSE (10%)

Please identify a theme, subject, and/or problematic in American literature that you would like to explore and research on, if you were admitted into our graduate program. Please explain why you are interested in this particular topic and how you plan to study it. Feel free to draw on any other literary and cultural knowledge you have and try to articulate a feasible project as clearly and cogently as possible. You can imagine your answer as a statement of purpose that would outline a future critical project on American literary and cultural studies.