English Renaissance Literature

The works which are numbered and marked with asterisks represent the core list for which all graduate students taking the Renaissance exam are responsible. The list as a whole is a fuller list from which students may wish to supplement the core list, according to their particular interests.

(1) *Sir Thomas More, Utopia
Sir Thomas Wyatt the Elder, Complete Poems (consult Norton)

Edmund Spenser
The Shepheardes Calendar

(2) *The Faerie Queene, Books 1 and 3 and the author’s introduction ("A Letter of the Author’s")

Sir Walter Ralegh
“The Nymph’s Reply to the Shepherd”
“Methought I saw the grave where Laura lay”
“The Author’s Epitaph, Made by Himself”

Sir Philip Sidney
(3) *Astrophil and Stella
(4) *Defense of Poesy
The Countess of Pembroke’s Arcadia, Books I and II

Thomas Nashe, The Unfortunate Traveler
Thomas Kyd, The Spanish Tragedy

(5) *Christopher Marlowe, all of the below:
The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus
“The Passionate Shepherd to His Love”
“Hero and Leander”

William Shakespeare
(6) *The Sonnets
The Comedy of Errors
(7) *Twelfth Night
(8) *Measure for Measure
(9) *Henry IV, Part 1
Richard III

(10) *Hamlet
(11) *Othello
(12) *King Lear
(13) *Macbeth
(14) *The Tempest

Mary Sidney Herbert, Countess of Pembroke
The Psalms of Sir Philip Sidney and the Countess of Pembroke

Amelia Lanyer
(15) *“Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum”
“The Description of Cook-ham”
(16) *John Donne, from Complete Poems, all of the below:
   Holy Sonnets
   “A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning”
   “The Flea”
   “The Sun Rising”
   “The Ecstasy”
   “The Canonization”

Ben Jonson
   The Alchemist
(17) *Volpone
(18) *“To Penshurst”
   “Inviting a Friend to Supper”
   “Ode to Himself”
(19) *Lady Mary Wroth, “Pamphilia to Amphilanthus”
Francis Bacon
   “Of Truth”
   “Of Marriage and the Single Life”
   “Of Superstition”
   “The Advancement of Learning” (“The Abuses of Language”)
(20) *John Webster, The Duchess of Malfi
Elizabeth Cary, The Tragedy of Maryam, the Fair Queen of Jewry
John Marston, The Malcontent
John Ford, 'Tis Pity She's a Whore
Thomas Middleton and William Rowley, The Changeling
Thomas Middleton, The Revenger’s Tragedy
*(21) Robert Herrick, Poems, all of the below:
   “To the Virgins, To Make Much of Time”
   “Corinna’s Gone A-Maying”
   “Delight in Disorder”
*(22) George Herbert, The Temple, all of the below:
   “Easter Wings”
   “The Collar”
   “Love III”
   “The Pulley”
   “The Altar”
   “Jordan I”
   “Jordan II”

Andrew Marvell, including:
(23) *“To His Coy Mistress”
(24) *“The Nymph Complaining for the Death of her Fawn
(25) *“An Horatian Ode”
   “The Mower’s Song”
   “Damon the Mower”
   “The Garden”
   “The Mower Against Gardens”
John Milton
(24)  *“On His Blindness”
(25)  *“On the Late Massacre in Piedmont”
(26)  *“I Though I Saw My Late Espoused Saint”
      “On the Morning of Christ’s Nativity”
      “L’Allegro”
      “Il Penseroso”
(27)  *“Lycidas”
(28)  *Paradise Lost
      “Of Reformation Touching Church Discipline”
(29)  *Areopagatica
Robert Burton, “Democritus Junior to the Reader” (from Anatomy of Melancholy)

Continental Backgrounds

Baldassare Castiglione, The Book of the Courtier
Erasmus, The Praise of Folly
John Calvin, “Election, the Gospel, and Reprobation,” “God’s Ever-Present Hand”
Nicolò Machiavelli, The Prince
Francesco Petrarca, Sonnets
Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, Oration on the Dignity of Man
Michel de Montaigne, from Essays: “On Cannibalism,” “Of the Power of the
   Imagination,” “Of the Affection of Fathers for Their Children”

Secondary Sources

Classical:

(1)  *Aristotle, Poetics
(2)  *Plato, The Republic
Ovid, Metamorphoses

Modern:

N.b.: Works have been categorized for readers’ convenience, but please note that many
categories overlap, and many works could fit more than one category.

Poetics

Patrick Cheney, Marlowe’s Counterfeit Profession: Ovid, Spenser, Counter-Nationhood (1997)

**Drama and Performance**


**Rhetoric**


**Gender Issues**


The Reformation

E. M. W. Tillyard, *The Elizabethan World Picture* (1943)

Print Culture and the Marketplace

Annabel M. Patterson, *Censorship and Interpretation: The Conditions of Writing And Reading in Early Modern England* (1984)

Politics, Nationalism, Law

Christopher Hill, *The World Turned Upside Down: Radical Ideas during the English Revolution* (1972)
Peter Laslett, *The World We Have Lost: England Before the Industrial Age* (1971)

The Body

Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World* (1968)