The American Section’s Comprehensive Examination addressing postbellum nineteenth-century literature and culture evaluates students’ expertise as future professionals in the field. The primary and secondary texts listed below represent the breadth and diversity needed for an understanding of the field with which students begin work on a dissertation.

As part of their preparation for the exam students will consult with their exam directors to develop a personalized list. While the list below is meant to be broadly comprehensive, it is not meant to be exhaustive. Students and directors may also decide to refine the list by adding thematic, theoretical, or historical emphases that lead more directly to work on a doctoral dissertation.

**PRIMARY WORKS**

William Wells Brown  
*Clotel, or The President’s Daughter* (1853)  
*The Rising Son* (1873)

Rebecca Harding Davis  
*Life in the Iron Mills* (1861)

Louisa May Alcott  
*Little Women* (1868)

Bret Harte  
“Tennessee’s Partner” (1869), “That Heathen Chinee,” “The Luck of Roaring Camp”

Charles Sanders Peirce  
selected prose

Nicholas Said  
*The Autobiography of Nicholas Said* (1873)

George Washington Cable  
“Sieur George” (1873)

Mark Twain  
*Huckleberry Finn* (1883)  
*Pudd’nhead Wilson* (1894)

Mary Noailles Murfree  
*In the Tennessee Mountains* (1884)

Helen Hunt Jackson  
*Ramona* (1885)

Henry James  
*Portrait of a Lady* (1881)  
*The Bostonians* (1886) or *What Maisie Knew* (1897)  
*The Ambassadors* (1903) or *The Wings of the Dove* (1902)  
*The Golden Bowl* (1904)  
*The American Scene* (1907)  
shorter works: *Daisy Miller* (1878), *The Turn of the Screw* (1898), *The Beast in the Jungle* (1903)

Jacob Riis  
*How the Other Half Lives* (1890)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Title and Publication Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mary E. Wilkins Freeman</td>
<td>“A New England Nun” (1891)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Charlotte Perkins Gilman</td>
<td>“The Yellow Wallpaper” (1892)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anna Julia Cooper</td>
<td>A Voice from the South (1892)</td>
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<td>Frances Harper</td>
<td>Iola Leroy (1892)</td>
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<td>Sarah Orne Jewett</td>
<td>The Country of the Pointed Firs (1896)</td>
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<td>“A White Heron” (1886)</td>
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<td>Kate Chopin</td>
<td>Bayou Folk (1895)</td>
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<td>A Night in Acadie (1897)</td>
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<td>The Awakening (1899)</td>
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<td>“Desiree’s Baby” (1893)</td>
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<td>William Dean Howells</td>
<td>The Rise of Silas Lapham (1885)</td>
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<td>A Modern Instance (1882)</td>
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<td>A Hazard of New Fortunes (1889)</td>
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<td>Stephen Crane</td>
<td>Maggie: A Girl of the Streets (1893)</td>
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<td>The Red Badge of Courage (1895)</td>
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<td>shorter works: “The Open Boat,” “The Blue Hotel,” “The Bride Comes to Yellow Sky,” “The Monster”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Theodore Dreiser</td>
<td>Sister Carrie (1900)</td>
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<td>Frank Norris</td>
<td>McTeague (1899)</td>
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<td>The Octopus (1901)</td>
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<td>Thorstein Veblen</td>
<td>The Theory of the Leisure Class (1899)</td>
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<td>Charles Chesnutt</td>
<td>The Conjure Woman (1899)</td>
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<td>The Wife of His Youth (1899)</td>
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<td>The House Behind the Cedars (1900)</td>
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<td>The Marrow of Tradition (1901)</td>
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<td>Sutton Griggs</td>
<td>Imperium in Imperio (1899)</td>
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<td>Alice Dunbar Nelson</td>
<td>Violets and Other Tales (1895)</td>
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<td>Pauline Hopkins</td>
<td>Contending Forces (1900)</td>
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<td>Hagar’s Daughter (1902)</td>
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<td>Of One Blood: Or, The Hidden Self (1903)</td>
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<td>George Santayana</td>
<td>Interpretations of Poetry and Religion (1900)</td>
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<td>The Age of Reason (1905)</td>
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<td>Booker T. Washington</td>
<td>Up from Slavery (1901)</td>
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<tr>
<td>W. E. B. Du Bois</td>
<td>The Souls of Black Folk (1903)</td>
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Edith Wharton  
*The House of Mirth* (1905)  
*Ethan Frome* (1911)  

Jack London  
*The Sea Wolf* (1904)  

Paul Laurence Dunbar  
selected poems, *Sport of Gods* (1902)  

Henry Adams  
*The Education of Henry Adams* (1907)  

Mary Austin  
*The Land of Little Rain* (1903)  
“The Walking Woman” (1907)  

William James  
*The Principles of Psychology* (1890)  
*The Will to Believe* (1897)  
*Pragmatism* (1907)  

Willa Cather  
*O Pioneers!* (1913)  

Gertrude Stein  
*Tender Buttons* (1914)  

Zitkala-Sa  
*American Indian Stories* (1921)  

**SECONDARY WORKS**  

**General Works**  


**Suggested Critics**  

Jonathan Arac  
Paul Giles  
Donald Pease  
Nina Baym  
Michael T. Gilmore  
Richard Poirier  
Michael Davitt Bell  
Teresa Goddu  
Lloyd Pratt  
Sacvan Bercovitch  
Audrey Goodman  
John Carlos Rowe  
Richard Brodhead  
Robert M. Greenberg  
Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick  
Marshall Brown  
John Irwin  
Shirley Samuels  
Lawrence Buell  
Amy Kaplan  
Mark Seltzer  
Sharon Cameron  
Harold Kaplan  
Hortense Spillers  
Stanley Cavell  
Paul Lauter  
Eric Sundquist  
William Charvat  
R.W.B. Lewis  
Claudia Tate  
Richard Chase  
Leon F. Litwack  
Jane Tompkins  
Michael Colacurcio  
Walter Benn Michaels  
Alan Trachtenberg  
Wai Chee Dimock  
Perry Miller  
Yvor Winters  
Judith Fetterley  
Toni Morrison  
Cynthia Griffin Wolff  
Henry Louis Gates  
Dana D. Nelson  
Larzer Ziff