

## **English Literature Questions**

### **Week 1--Middle Ages Introduction (including “The Persistence of English”), From “An Ecclesiastical History of the English People,” “The Dream of the Rood,” and “Beowulf”**

#### **Questions for “The Persistence of English”**

1. Why do philosophers compare languages to games?
2. How are language and political changes connected?
3. What was the role of Alfred the Great when it came to English?
4. Why was French widely used in England for so long?
5. Why is Old English different from Middle English?
6. What was the “Great Vowel Shift?”
7. Why did Elizabethans coin thousands of new words?
8. How did use of English affect different social classes?
9. How did the rejection of an academy of English affect the English language? How have other countries (i.e. France) been affected by establishing such an academy?
10. How is the English language like the English Constitution?
11. What historical problems are there with the term “English democracy?”
12. Why might some people (i.e. the Irish) resent speaking English?
13. Why is the term “standard English” misleading?
14. What did Johnson mean by the term “a nation of readers?”
15. When did English originate?
16. What factors have changed the English language over the centuries? What languages have played a role in its development?
17. What were some of the arguments for or against the writing of a dictionary?
18. What role does “common literature” play in the creation of a “common language?”

### **Questions for Middle Ages Introduction**

1. What does the word “medieval” mean?
2. What was the Norman Conquest?
3. What is the “heroic code?”
4. How are pagan and Christian ideals used in Anglo Saxon literature?
5. What is a “kenning?”
6. What languages dominated after the Norman Invasion?
7. What is “blood vengeance?”
8. What was the spiritual climate of the Middle Ages? In other words, what religions played a role during that time period in Britain?

### **Questions for “An Ecclesiastical History of the English People”**

1. Who is Caedmon?
2. Who trains him to sing?

### **Questions for “The Dream of the Rood”**

1. What is this poem about?
2. What descriptions are given of the rood and how does the writer draw parallels to Christ in his descriptions?
3. How is Christ described as the Anglo Saxon heroic ideal?
4. How are Anglo Saxon terms (i.e. kennings) used to describe things?
5. List several examples of personification.
6. List several examples of metaphor.

### **Questions for “Beowulf”**

1. What is an epic poem? How does this poem compare to the Iliad and the Odyssey?
2. Look for kennings throughout this poem.

3. Be able to summarize the fight with Grendel, the battle with Grendel's mother, and the fight with the dragon, as well as Beowulf's burial.
4. What evidence do we have of the influence of pagan culture on this poem? Christian culture?
5. Compare and contrast Beowulf and Grendel. How does the writer reveal Beowulf as the Christian figure and Grendel as the Satanic figure?
6. Examine the relationships between kings and subjects throughout the poem.
7. What is the role of the poet throughout the poem?
8. Why does Beowulf spend so much time recounting his exploits to King Hygelac? Does he have an ego problem?
9. Why does Wiglaf risk his life for Beowulf?
10. Why does Beowulf choose to help Hrothgar?
11. Using the Middle Ages introduction section's descriptions of Anglo Saxon ideals, find examples which show that Beowulf is an Anglo Saxon hero. What other elements of the Anglo Saxon world are revealed?

## **Week 2—Sir Gawain and the Green Knight**

Note: The words “courteous” and “courtesy” appear throughout this story. Pay attention to their context and be ready to discuss what they mean.

### **Questions on Part 1**

1. Why won't Arthur eat with his guests?
2. How are Gawain and Arthur related?
3. What is the nature of the game the Green Knight proposes (lines 289-300)?
4. Why does Gawain volunteer?
5. What does this tell us about his character?
6. What happens to the Green Knight after the blow is struck?
7. Where does he tell Gawain to meet him?
8. What is Arthur's response to the incident?

## **Questions on Part 2**

1. When does Gawain set out on his quest?
2. What sign does Gawain wear on his shield?
3. What does the symbol signify?
4. Where does Gawain stay during Christmastide?
5. Describe the two ladies he meets at the castle.
6. When Gawain describes his quest to his host, how far away does he discover he is from the Green Chapel?
7. What does Gawain agree to do while his host is out hunting?
8. What do they agree to exchange in the evenings?

## **Questions on Part 3**

1. Where does the lady visit Gawain?
2. What does she offer him?!
3. How does Gawain respond?
4. Why is the lady stern at the end of the first morning?
5. What does Gawain accept on the first day?
6. What do the host and Gawain give each other the first evening?
7. What animals are hunted the second day?
8. What does the lady complain about on the second day?
9. How many kisses does Gawain give his host the second evening?
10. Why can't Gawain just rebuff the lady's advances? (line 1661)
11. What do the hunters chase on the third day?
12. How is the lady dressed on the third day?
13. When Gawain refuses the lady's ring, what does she offer instead?
14. Why does Gawain accept it?

15. What does Gawain give his host on the third evening? What does he NOT give him?

#### **Questions on Part 4**

1. What does Gawain's guide tell him as they approach the Green Chapel? How does he tempt Gawain?

2. How many times does the Green Knight swing his axe?

3. Who is the Green Knight?

4. What does the Green Knight say is the cause of Gawain's failing?

5. Why does Gawain agree to keep the girdle when the knight offers it?

6. Who was the withered lady and what role did she have in the magical adventure?

7. When Gawain confesses his failing, how do Arthur and the court respond?

#### **Week 3—"Morte D'Arthur" and Everyman**

##### **Questions on "Morte D'Arthur"**

1. What is "chivalry?"

2. Who are Sir Agravain and Sir Mordred? Why do they dislike Lancelot?

3. What plot do they hatch against Lancelot?

4. Do you think Lancelot is responsible in any way for the success of their plot?

5. How does Lancelot view his actions towards Guinevere (and ultimately Arthur)?

6. What is Malory's view of Lancelot's behavior with Guinevere? (p. 424)

7. What is Arthur's view of his wife? (p. 428)

8. How does Sir Gawain get revenge?

9. How is the word "worshipfully" used? (What is being described?)

10. What is Sir Bedivere asked to do with Excalibur? Why do you think he hesitates to do this?

11. How does Arthur die?

12. Where does Guinevere go after she leaves Arthur? Do you believe she has changed over the years?

13. Do you believe Lancelot has changed?

14. How do Guinevere and Lancelot die?

15. What role does the French legend play in Malory's work? (i.e. What authority does Malory give to it?)

16. In reading about Malory's life, how do you think his own life may have affected his personal views of certain characters?

### **Questions for Everyman**

1. What is a "morality play?" How does Everyman fit this genre?

2. Is Everyman taken by surprise when Death appears? What effect does this have on the audience?

3. How do the different virtues seek to help Everyman as he faces death?

4. Ultimately, what is Everyman able to take with him to the grave?

5. What is the moral of this morality play?

6. If you were to direct this play, how would you costume the characters so that the audience had a clear idea of who they were?

7. Compare and contrast the worldviews of Everyman and "Morte D'Arthur."

### **Week 4--16th Century Introduction, from More's "Utopia"**

#### **Questions on 16th Century Introduction**

1. What major change in perception about the English language took place from the beginning of the 16th century to its end?

2. What were the Wars of the Roses? How did they affect England?

3. What is "sprezzatura?" Describe the manners of those at court.

4. What major changes occurred in the city of London during this century?

5. How did the Renaissance take root in England? What philosophies were admired?

6. What do “sola scriptura” and “sola fide” mean? How are these phrases connected to the Reformation and Martin Luther?
7. What role did Henry the VIII play in the Reformation in England?
8. Why did Protestants flee when Mary took the throne?
9. How did Elizabeth I seek to restore the Church of England?
10. What are the “body natural” and the “body politic” and how did they affect Elizabeth’s role as monarch?
11. Describe some of the things Elizabeth I did to gain favor with the people and to portray herself as a symbol of England.
12. What were some of the dangers facing Elizabeth I during her lifetime?
13. How did writers earn money for their work during the 16th century?
14. How did different writers use “ornament, plainness, and wonder” in their work?
15. What literary conventions were common in this period?
16. Which of Sidney's ideas of theater were broken during the Elizabethan era and beyond? If you have read “Poetics,” what Aristotelian rules of theatre did Shakespeare break?
17. Why were Puritans opposed to theatre?
18. What is “humor comedy?”
19. Who was crowned king after Elizabeth died? What were his religious leanings and how did this impact England?

### **Questions for “Utopia”**

1. Who is Raphael Hytholoday, and what does his name mean? With whom did he travel?
2. Why is he uninterested in joining in the king’s service?
3. Why don’t cities in Utopia want to enlarge their boundaries?
4. How do farms operate in Utopia?
5. Why is gold and silver precious in our world?

6. Why is it important for Utopians to not place value on gold and silver? What impact does this have on their society?
7. How are Utopians kept from being in awe of gold and silver—in other words, what are they used for there?
8. What happens if a Utopian is caught in adultery or fornication?
9. How does a Utopian obtain a divorce?
10. What are the Utopians' religious beliefs?
11. How do they respond to Christianity?
12. Why is the Utopian “preacher” punished?
13. What were King Utopus' laws about religion in Utopia?
14. What impact does it have on a man to believe that his soul has no eternal value?
15. How do Utopians deal with death?
16. What are the two sects of people who fully devote themselves to religious life?
17. Who do Utopians believe they owe their children to?
18. What is considered “wealth” in Utopia?
19. Why can it truly be called a “common” wealth, according to Hythloday?
20. What happens to people who are no longer able to work?
21. Why do the Utopians not struggle with greed?
22. How might we avoid famine?
23. In your opinion, is this type of society possible in light of what the Bible says about humanity?
24. What real world governments have tried some of these ideas? Have they succeeded or failed? Why or why not?
25. If you have read anything along the lines of *1984*, *Brave New World*, *Animal Farm* or Plato's *Republic*, what parallels do you see? How do ideals applied to

“real” life tend to pan out in the end according to whichever book you are familiar with?

### **Week 5-- Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, Book I, cantos 1-5**

(We will be using the modernized version of this poem in *Fierce Wars and Faithful Loves* by Roy Maynard. Try to read it in the original in the anthology after reading the modernized text, though—you'll get the real flavor of Spenser that way.)

#### **Questions on Canto 1**

1. Spenser created his own meter and rhyme scheme for *The Faerie Queene*. Today, this is known as a Spenserian stanza. See if you can figure out his rhyme and meter on your own and then check the dictionary in the back of the anthology.
2. There are many characters in this poem. It will help you to keep a record for yourself of these characters.
3. This poem begins with a call to the Muse. This is a common way for epic poems to begin. If you have read *The Iliad* or *Odyssey*, look for connections.
4. Why are the Redcrosse Knight and Una traveling together?
5. Who is Phoebus?
6. What does Redcrosse symbolize? What does Una symbolize?
7. Why/what is Redcrosse called to fight? (stanza 5)
8. Why do they enter the woods? (the “shady grove”) What mistakes do they make there?
9. What gives Redcrosse the strength to continue? (stanza 12)
10. Describe the encounter with Error. What does Spenser say about the Catholic church here? (stanza 18)
11. How does Error die and what do her babies do afterwards? What effect does this image have on the reader?
12. How do the Hermit's appearance and reality differ? Again, what does this reveal about Spenser's view of the Roman Catholic church?

13. What evil tricks does the Hermit play on Redcrosse as he sleeps? Who helps him with his tricks?

14. How does Redcrosse respond to these tricks?

### **Questions on Canto 2**

15. How does Archimago finally divide Redcrosse and Una?

16. How does Una respond when falsely accused?

17. What form does Archimago take?

18. What does the Saracen symbolize?

19. What does Duessa symbolize? Describe her.

20. In Duessa's tale, who was she engaged to?

22. What happens to her beloved?

23. What happens when Redcrosse plucks a branch from a tree?

24. What is Fradubio's mistake?

25. How does Duessa distract Redcrosse from Fradubio's warning?

### **Questions on Canto 3**

26. What does the lion represent?

27. Why does he not attack Una?

28. Who does Una compare him to? (stanza 7)

29. What does Abessa's mother symbolize?

30. What is Kirkrapine's mistake?

31. Who does Corceca meet on her way home? How is he dressed?

32. How does Una react to him? (stanza 27)

33. Why does Sansloy attack Archimago?

34. What does Sansloy symbolize?

### **Questions on Canto 4**

35. What does the Palace of Pride look like?
36. What are the roads like? What does that mean?
37. What does the queen hold in her hand instead of a sceptre?
38. Who leads them to her throne?
39. The first of her counselors is Idleness. Describe him.
40. What steed does Gluttony ride?
41. What disease plagues Avarice?
42. What is Envy chewing on?
43. Who does Redcrosse meet in the Palace?
44. Describe how Duessa shows her falseness at the end of Canto IV.

### **Questions on Canto 5**

45. What is Duessa's role at the beginning of the duel between Sansjoy and Redcrosse?
46. What is Sansjoy's motive for fighting?
47. What is Redcrosse's motive?
48. What happens to prevent Redcrosse from finishing off his opponent?
49. Who helps Duessa transport Sansjoy to hell?
50. Who is the messenger of death? (stanza 30)
51. Who is Tantalus?
52. Who is Aesculapius?
53. How does Duessa convince him to help Sansjoy?
54. What do the people in the Princess's dungeon have in common?

### **Week 6--*Faerie Queene* Questions, Book I, Cantos 6-12**

#### **Questions for Canto 6**

1. How does Sans Loy attempt to gain his desires from Una?

2. How does Una escape from him?
3. Which descriptions of Una and the woodland folk are particularly vivid? Choose your two favorite lines and why they struck you.
4. Describe Satyrane's upbringing and abilities.
5. What does Una fear has happened to Redcrosse?
6. How does Satyrane attempt to avenge Redcrosse for Una?
7. Compare and contrast Una and Duessa—think about what each represent as you do this.

### **Questions for Canto 7**

8. What contributes to Redcrosse's weakness and what might it represent?
9. Who is rebuked by the speaker more harshly (Redcrosse or Duessa) for what happens? What do you think about this?
10. How does the Geaunt overtake Redcrosse?
11. When Duessa becomes Geaunt's mistress, what do her new clothes symbolize?
12. What is Una's reaction to what has become of Redcrosse? What does this reveal about her?
13. Why might we compare our first glimpse of Prince Arthur to the glorified rood in "Dream of the Rood?"
14. If indeed Arthur is a Christ figure, what support can you find in the text?
15. What does Una share with Arthur about her past? What biblical connection can be made from her place of origin?
16. Who is Una's "onely foe?"

### **Questions for Canto 8**

17. From what Arthur tells Una to do before he fights the "Gyant" (Hey, I didn't spell that inconsistently—Spenser did) what is his apparent confidence level?
18. What descriptions of Duessa and the Gyant/Geant/Geaunt in canto 8 cause them to appear even more despicable than they were before?

19. Describe the battle between Arthur and the misspelled Giant.
20. What effective similes are used to describe the defeat of the Gyant?
21. Describe the inside of Orgoglio's castle and the release of Redcrosse.
22. What does Duessa really look like?

### **Questions for Canto 9**

23. Describe Arthur's upbringing and his great loss. Considering that Arthur was supposedly an ancestor of Queen Elizabeth I (and also that he was a popular mythical figure during Spenser's lifetime) and that the Faerie Queene represents QE, what significance might this have?
24. What did Arthur scorn? What happened?
25. What gifts are exchanged between Arthur and Redcrosse and what might they symbolize?
26. What did Sir Trevisan wear around his neck?
27. Who is Sir Terwin and what happened to him?
28. What do you consider Despair's best argument? How would you answer it?

### **Questions for Canto 10**

29. Compare and contrast the House of Holiness to the House of Pride, especially the residents.
30. Who was queen of the House of Holiness?
31. If the door was locked, how did they get in?
32. What does this symbolize?
33. What does Fidelia teach Redcrosse?
34. What does Speranza teach Redcrosse to hold?
35. What is sent for to help cure the knight?
36. What does Charissa teach to Redcrosse?
37. Compare Charissa and her babies to Errour and her babies.
38. Who leads Redcrosse up the mountain?

39. Why is Redcrosse not allowed to go straight to the New Jerusalem?

### **Questions for Canto 11**

40. To what does Spenser compare the dragon's wings?

41. How long is his tail?

42. Who draws his "first blood" in the battle?

43. What does the dragon's flame do to Redcrosse's armor?

44. How long does Una pray?

45. What saves the knight?

46. When Redcrosse reappears the next morning, how does the dragon react?

47. What saves the knight this time?

48. How does Redcrosse slay the dragon?

49. Whose victory is it?

### **Questions for Canto 12**

50. Who tells the king and queen the dragon was dead?

51. What does the king offer to Redcrosse in verse 17?

52. Why does Redcrosse turn it down?

53. Who shows up to spoil the party?

54. What does this say about the nature of sin?

55. What does she claim and by what right?

56. How does the king respond?

57. Who bails out Redcrosse (again)?

58. When the party resumes, who performs the betrothal ceremony?

59. Why doesn't this end with "and they lived happily ever after?"

## **Week 7—The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus**

### **Questions for Dr. Faustus**

1. Where does Faustus live during the play (town) and what historical significance does this town have?
2. What subject is his degree in?
3. What subject interests him most?
4. Why are logic, medicine (physic), religion, and law worthless subjects to Faustus?
5. What do Cornelius and Valdes tell Faustus he will gain if he sells his soul?
6. When Faustus summons up a demon (Mephistophilis), he asks him to appear as a "Franciscan friar." What might this reveal about Faustus' view of the Church?
7. What does Mephistophilis tell Faustus about his (M's) own eternity?
8. What is the clown willing to sell his soul for? Compare this scene to the scene of Faustus selling his soul. How does each character weigh the pros and cons of doing so?
9. What arguments does Faustus use for and against the selling of his soul? (This is a question that can draw answers from the entire play). Are there verses in the Bible to support or disprove his arguments? (Be ready with them)
10. What happens when Faustus first tries to sign his name in blood?
11. What question does Faustus ask Mephistophilis after he sells his soul? Why do you think he asks this questions AFTER he has signed his soul away?
12. Who does Faustus blame for his actions?
13. Compare Faustus to Lucifer. What similarities to the devil do you see in why he chooses to sell his soul and what he does afterwards? Look for verses from the Bible to reveal Lucifer's character versus Faustus'.
14. What delightful vision does Faustus compare the seven deadly sins to?
15. Describe the seven deadly sins as compared to the seven deadly sins in *Faerie Queene*.
16. What tricks does Faustus play on the Pope during his invisible visit?
17. What curse do the friars proclaim on "whoever" did these things to the Pope?

18. How do Robin and Rafe use Faustus' necromancy books?
19. How does Faustus punish the Knight for doubting his skills?
20. What images does he conjure for the emperor?
21. Describe the trick that Faustus plays on the horse-courser.
22. What makes the above scene so humorous?
23. What arguments does the Old Man use with Faustus to get him to change his mind?
24. Why do you think Faustus asks Mephistophilis to bring him "heavenly Helen" when he is facing death? (l. 75 and surrounding lines, act 12)
25. When has Faustus truly lost all hope? Do you think he should still have mercy at the end of his life? What does the Bible say about God's mercy?

### **Week 8—Shakespeare's sonnets**

#### **Questions for the Sonnets**

1. Be able to explain what a Shakespearean sonnet is. (meter, rhyme scheme, subject matter)
2. Identify the theme of each sonnet on the reading list, plus the most effective usages of literary devices (metaphor, simile, rhyme, alliteration).
3. Spend a longer period of time examining two sonnets of your choice. Look up unfamiliar words (you should do this when you read anything, anyway) and then "translate" these two sonnets into modern English. You do not need to follow the rhyme scheme or the meter, but focus on the meaning. It would be good to choose the sonnet that you understand the least on a first reading.

### **Weeks 9 and 10--Shakespeare**

#### **Questions for Twelfth Night, Acts I-V**

1. What happens when Sebastian and Viola sailed near Illyria?
2. What does Viola decide to do when she landed on the coast?
3. Why is Viola sent to visit Lady Olivia?
4. What happens when Viola visits Lady Olivia?

5. How does Olivia attempt to see Viola/Cesario again?
6. What does Viola say about men and women and their love for each other?
7. What trick is played on Malvolio?
8. Why would Shakespeare portray Malvolio, a very unlikeable fellow, as a Puritan, considering what you know about the sixteenth century? (Think back a few weeks)
9. What do people dislike about Malvolio?
10. What does Malvolio do the day after he reads the letter supposedly from Olivia?
11. What is Olivia's reaction?
12. What does Toby tell Cesario and Sir Andrew about Malvolio when they come to call?
13. A duel between Cesario and Sir Andrew begins and both are terrified. Who steps in and why did this person stop the fight?
14. What is Viola's reaction at hearing the name Sebastian?
15. Why is Olivia angry with Viola after the duel?
16. Do you find it odd that Orsino marries Viola so quickly after his melancholy love for Olivia?
17. Do you find it odd that Sebastian is willing to marry Olivia so quickly?
18. Consider the previous two questions. What is Shakespeare saying about the nature of love in this play?
19. Does Malvolio deserve the treatment he receives? Why or why not?
20. What can Viola do dressed as a man that she cannot do as a woman?
21. How is music used in the play? Are the lyrics of the songs significant to the scenes in which they appear? Explain.
22. What is the significance of drunkenness, revelry and madness in the play?
23. In what ways do characters of lesser rank become "masters" of their superiors in this play?

24. What is the role of Feste in this play?

25. In your opinion, who speaks the most truth throughout the play?

### **Week 11—The Seventeenth Century and John Donne Poems**

#### **Questions for The Introduction to the Seventeenth Century**

1. What were some differences between Elizabeth I and James I, concerning views of the monarchy, interests, etc.
2. Contrast James I and his son, Charles.
3. What were some changes in the scientific world during this time?
4. What sets apart the poetry of John Donne (and the Metaphysical poets), Ben Jonson (and the Cavaliers or “Sons of Ben”), and George Herbert?
5. What were some causes of the English Revolution?
6. Who was Oliver Cromwell and what was his role?
7. What happened in the world of theatre during this time period?
8. What was Milton’s view of the Revolution and what were some of the subjects about which he wrote?
9. What is a “metaphysical conceit?”

#### **Questions on John Donne’s Poems**

1. What is the flea compared to in “The Flea?”
2. Name two things love is compared to in “The Good-Morrow.”
3. What is the difference in theme in both “Songs?”
4. What does the speaker say about love in “The Indifferent?”
5. What is a “valediction” and what does the speaker say about tears in “A Valediction: Of Weeping?”
6. What does it mean for a person to be “canonized” and why does the speaker think he and his love should be canonized in “The Canonization?”
7. Who is “the bait” in the poem by the same title?

8. What does the speaker say he will do to his mistress after his death in “The Apparition?”
9. How is the image of a compass used in “Valediction: Forbidden Mourning?”  
\*Spend some extra time on this one—the compass conceit is one that Donne is most famous for.
10. What is a “relic” and what does the speaker hope a gravedigger will think when he sees the speaker’s bones?
11. Satire 3 contains the musings of Donne as he debates leaving the Roman Catholic Church for Anglicanism. What main question is he asking about religion and what conclusion does he come to?
12. Holy Sonnet 1--What does the speaker ask of God ?
13. Holy Sonnet 5-- What does the speaker say should be done to his “little world?”
14. Holy Sonnet 7-- Why does the speaker ask God to “let them sleep?”
15. Holy Sonnet 9-- What does the speaker complain about at the start of the poem and how is his complaint resolved?
16. Holy Sonnet 10--Why is Death not proud?
17. Holy Sonnet 13--What does the speaker say about beauty and pity?
18. Holy Sonnet 14--What images are used to describe the speaker and God?
19. Holy Sonnet 17--What is the speaker seeking comfort for?
20. Holy Sonnet 18--What “spouse” is the speaker referring to?
21. Holy Sonnet 19--Why are the speaker’s best days when he “shakes with fear?”
22. How does the speaker use East and West in “Good Friday, 1613: Riding Westward?”
23. Why does the speaker joy in his “straits” (he plays with more than one meaning of this word) in “Hymn to God, My God, in My Sickness?”
24. How does the speaker use the words “done” and “more” in “Hymn to God the Father?” (Be sure to read the biographical information of Donne, and

remember “Donne” is pronounced “done”—hmmm... maybe I gave away too much)

25. Who does the bell toll for in Meditation 17?

26. How is God a “metaphorical” God in Meditation 19?

27. What does Donne urge his congregation to do at the end of his sermon, “Death’s Duel?”

## **Week 12—Ben Jonson**

### **Questions on Volpone**

1. Pay attention to the names and meanings of the characters and think about what virtues or vices those particular animals might be associated with. Jonson did this intentionally.

2. As the play opens, what does Volpone worship? (Hint: He speaks about it in sacred terms)

3. When Nano and Androgyno speak, they use the meter used in the old morality plays (i.e. Everyman). What “moral” do you think they might be trying to express?

4. Why is a fool able to speak “truth free from slaughter?”

5. What does Corbaccio bring for Volpone on his first visit? Why does Mosca tell him Volpone will not take it?

6. What does Mosca tell Corbaccio he must do in order to be Volpone's heir?

7. Lady and Sir Politic Would-Be are visitors to Venice (where the play is set) from England. They are there to pick up the customs of the Venetians and think very highly of themselves. The word “politic” means “cautious” in this context and it has more to do with being socially appropriate in order to move up in society. One joke that is brought up about them has to do with the fact that King James gave away knighthoods whenever he felt like it. Because of this, many people looked down upon a knight because knighthoods were so easy to come by. However, Sir Politic continues to think he is quite the man and Lady Politic (who is NOT beautiful, though she is called so) believes she is the next Helen of Troy. Picture both of them as washed-up and unattractive in order to read the play properly. They are name-droppers who try to show how “in the know” they are about Venice, but merely reveal their ignorance as they

try to do this. Peregrine is another traveler that Politic meets in the streets and shares too much personal information with. Find several examples of Sir and Lady that reveal what I have just told you about them. For example, from whom is Lady Politic seeking to learn Venetian fashion?

8. What does Volpone dress up as and what does he try to sell on the streets?

9. Who does he see in a window and what emotion overtakes him at this time?

10. What does Mosca tell Corvino (not to be confused with Corbaccio!) Volpone must have from him?

11. Describe the marital relationship between Corvino and Celia.

12. What kind of person is Celia?

13. Who is Bonario? How does Mosca upset him?

14. Does Volpone enjoy Lady Politic's company?

15. How does Mosca get Lady P. to leave Volpone's house?

16. A “cuckold” is a man whose wife has been unfaithful to him and evidence of that was (oddly enough) horns growing out of his head. Remember this when you read Act 3, sc. 7.

17. What is Corvino's view of honor? Celia's?

18. What does Corvino say he will do if Celia does not go to Volpone?

19. As we read the “Cavalier” poets (or “sons of Ben,” who imitate Jonson's style), we will explore the common theme of “carpe diem” in their poetry. This means “seize the day,” or more commonly, is meant to mean “seize the dame.” Read the “song” in Act III, sc. 7 with this theme in mind.

20. Poets often lament the lack of women who are beautiful and honorable. What character represents both in this play and what happens to her?

21. Who does Lady Politic think Peregrine is? \* See question 15.

22. Why is a trial held and why do so many people gang up against Celia in the court trial? What is Bonario's role?

23. When Volpone's death is announced, what is discovered about his inheritance?

24. What disguise does Sir Politic attempt to put on and what is he accused of doing? (This is, in my opinion, the comic highlight of the play-- picturing Sir Politic in this costume is pretty funny :))

25. The second court trial has to do with Volpone's inheritance. It is here that Mosca plays a trick on him in order to get what he wants. Is he successful?

26. How does the fool become the master in the end?

### **Questions on Jonson's poems**

1. Identify the subject and theme of each poem. A hint for "On Something That Walks Somewhere"-- Jonson didn't think a nobleman deserved credit just for inheriting a title. This poem is a comment about someone in the upper class.

2. What does Jonson tempt his prospective guest with in "Inviting a Friend to Supper?"

3. "To Penshurst" is one of the great poems celebrating a "country house." What merits does this house possess?

4. What praise does Jonson give Shakespeare in his poem to his memory?

5. Jonson wrote "Ode to Himself" after his "The New Inn" failed to win public appeal. What does he say about the general public's taste in this poem?

6. What do his devotional poems reveal about his beliefs?

### **Week 13--Herbert, Herrick**

#### **Questions on Herbert**

1. "Emblematic" poetry forms the words of the poem in the shape of what is being written about. George Herbert is one of the English masters of emblematic poems. Pay close attention to the two poems ("The Altar" and "Easter Wings") we are studying. What shapes do they suggest and, more specifically, where are certain words placed within the picture? For example, where does Herbert discuss the heart in "The Altar?" What significance might this have? Similarly, look at which lines are smallest in "Easter Wings." What do these words say?

2. What extended metaphor is used in "Redemption?"

3. “Affliction” is fairly autobiographical to Herbert’s life. He ends the poem with a puzzling statement. Look over the rest of the poem to figure out why he might say this.

4. “Prayer (1)” lists images to illuminate the subject of prayer for us, but the second stanza has me stumped. Please look over this stanza and be ready to tell me what you think it might mean in connection to the rest of the poem.

5. “Church Monuments” refers to something called “memento mori,” or reminders of death. During Herbert’s time, and in previous centuries, paintings often contained images of life, such as flowers, along with images of death, such as dead bugs (I kid you not!) and skulls. You can still see clocks in museums with Latin inscriptions reminding people to remember that time is leading them to death. There were many different types of memento mori, but the basic idea, whatever the medium, was that man should not live life ignorant of death’s approach. Remember that John Donne had a painting made of himself in his funeral shroud to look at on his deathbed. While these “memento mori” may seem morbid to the modern man, there is hope in looking at them from a Christian perspective. What positive message does the speaker draw out of the church monuments?

6. The rhyme scheme in “Denial” is important to the meaning of the poem. The footnote for the seventh edition tells us that all of the concluding lines of the stanzas are unrhymed except for the last one. What does Herbert believe will fix his “heartless breast” which is out of rhyme?

7. “Virtue” places beautiful, vibrant image next to a reminder of death. How does the speaker justify the placement of these two seemingly contradictory things next to each other? (Hint: last stanza!)

8. In “The Collar,” the title has several meanings. The seventh edition footnote tells us it could mean: 1. a clerical collar (like a clergyman would wear), 2. a slave’s collar 3. the poet’s choler (anger) and (perhaps) 4. the “caller” that he hears in the end. Why is the poet angry and what soothes him in the end?

9. Read the poem “Discipline.” Now go back and read John Donne’s poem “Holy Sonnet 14.” Compare the view that each poet has of the subject. Which do you feel is more effective? Why? Be ready to support your idea using both texts.

10. In “Love (3),” when the speaker says “A guest...worthy to be here” (line 7), he is saying that he lacks, or needs, a guest who is worthy to be there—he is

not saying that he IS a guest who is worthy to be there. What does the Lord tell him to assuage his fears of unworthiness?

### **Questions for Herrick**

1. Compare Herrick's "Delight in Disorder" to the sixteenth century view of fashion and to Jonson's "Still to Be Neat."
2. "Corinna's Going A-Maying" and "To the Virgins..." are both classic "carpe diem" (seize the day, seize the dame) poems. What common images do they use? Think about what the speaker says about the seasons. What does the speaker tell the reader he (or she) must do in order to enjoy life to its fullest?
3. In "His Prayer to Ben Jonson," what images are used to turn Ben into "Saint Ben?"
4. In "Upon Julia's Clothes," how is the word "liquefaction" used? (Look it up!) What effect does it have on our view of her dress?

### **Week 14—Marvell and Milton**

#### **Questions for Marvell**

1. What imagery do you find the most striking in "The Coronet?"
2. What do "Soul" and "Body" lament in "A Dialogue Between Soul and Body?"
3. The two "Mower" songs are about a mower (Yes, a grass-cutting fellow!). According the footnote in the Seventh Edition, since the mower wields a scythe, he can also call to mind other figures such as Time or Death. (The Grim Reaper carries a scythe) What role does Juliana play in these poems?

#### **Questions for "On the Morning of Christ's Nativity"**

1. How are Milton and Spenser's allusions (look this word up if you don't know it!) similar?
2. How does Milton personify the Earth?
3. What setting is described for Christ's birth?
4. Why do you think Milton uses so many references to pagan gods as he is describing the birth of the one true God?

#### **Questions for "On Shakespeare"**

1. Why would kings wish for a tomb such as Shakespeare's? (Do not think literally about this question.)

### **Questions for "Areopagitica" (say this one five times fast)**

1. This piece was written as Milton sought to publish his not-so-accepted views on divorce. Please look up any words you are not familiar with and read all of the definitions—the first definition is not always the meaning intended. One word you may not find is "stationer"—the stationers that Milton refers to were the 20 official printers, appointed by the government. These stationers acted as censors of any printed material. "Licensing" is censorship.

2. What gives books "life," according to Milton?

3. Milton suggests (strongly) that those in pursuit of true virtue should pursue, rather than avoid, all kinds of knowledge. What does he think this pursuit does to one's virtue?

4. Why is a writer to be trusted when he presents his ideas?

5. What ways does Milton personify Truth?

6. What does Milton think censorship does to a man's "desire to learn?"

7. What does Milton say about Freedom and Truth?

### **Questions for "How Soon Hath Time"**

1. Milton wrote this sonnet on his 23rd birthday and Milton was a young-looking 23. What is said about destiny in this poem?

### **Questions for "When I Consider How My Light Is Spent"**

1. This poem was written after Milton went completely blind.

2. How does Milton use the parable of the talents in this poem? You might reread that parable as you look at this poem.

### **Questions for "On the Late Massacre in Piedmont"**

1. This poem was written after many Italian Protestants were brutally slaughtered.

2. Who does Milton compare to the whore of Babylon in this poem?

### **Questions for "Methought I Saw My Late Espoused Saint"**

1. This poem was most likely written about Milton's second wife, who he never saw because he married her after he went blind.
2. What vision does he describe?

## **Week 15—Introduction to the 18th Century, Bunyan, and Butler**

### **Questions on the Introduction to the 18th Century**

1. As Great Britain became a "nation of readers," what types of literature became popular?
2. What rulers came to power to calm the instability in Britain?
3. Why were the Georges not particularly interested in England? (i.e. where did their sympathies lie?)
4. What was the behavior (morally) of the nobility during Charles' rule?
5. What were some of the key philosophies circulating during the Restoration period?
6. What defines the "modern individual," according to the 7th edition? (If you don't have the 7th, guess!)
7. What is "neoclassical" literature?
8. What were some of these writers views on Nature? (This background is particularly important as we head into next semester and the Romantic poets)
9. How did the 18th century bring "poetry down to earth?"
10. What changes took place in theater?
11. What writer helped popularize the novel as a literary genre?

### **Questions for Bunyan's "Grace Abounding"**

1. When Bunyan was struggling with his conscience, what did God show him?
2. What book was most helpful to him in his struggles?
3. Describe the "sell Christ" temptation that Bunyan went through. What simile does he use to describe his despair when he fails to rise to this temptation?

4. Why do you suppose the Norton Anthology has chosen to excerpt only the passages revealing Bunyan's despair, rather than choosing to show us any of the hope he later realizes?

### **Questions for "Pilgrim's Progress"**

1. Please look up the word "allegory," even if you are familiar with it. (It's in the back of the book in the terms section) How does this piece fit the definition?

2. Why does Christian leave his wife and family?

3. What does Evangelist reveal to him?

4. What is the difference between Christian and Dr. Faustus' reaction to the verse "Fly from the wrath to come?" In other words, what actions does each man take after hearing/seeing these words?

5. What do the words "Obstinate" and "Pliable" mean and how do the characters by those names exemplify the definitions?

6. What excuses does Obstinate give for not accompanying Christian on the journey?

7. What happens in the "Slough of Despond?"

8. What "burden" is Christian carrying on his back and why does it hinder his escape from the Slough? How does this scene compare to the excerpts from "Grace Abounding?"

9. What is Vanity Fair and how long has it been in existence?

10. What set the pilgrims apart at Vanity Fair?

11. What happens to the pilgrims in the River of Despair as they almost reach the Celestial City? How is Christian helped through his trial? What encouragement is offered by Hopeful?

12. What is the fate of Ignorance and what verse(s) does this fate bring to mind?

*And now for something completely different...*

### **Questions on Samuel Butler from "Hudibras"**

1. What is a "travesty" or "burlesque" and how do these definitions fit "Hudibras?"

2. List the several “qualities” possessed by Sir Hudibras. How does Butler reveal that these qualities are really to be despised and ridiculed? (Go through each stanza on each quality and pick out specific quotes that reveal Butler’s disdain for Sir H.)

3. What is Butler’s final description of the sect which Sir. H. belongs to?

## **Week 16—Swift and Pope**

### **Questions for “Abolishing of Christianity in England”**

1. Swift wrote this piece of satire (look up this term) to voice his disagreement with the repeal of the Test Act (see footnote in book). Instead of discussing the Test Act, what does Swift act as if the Parliament is REALLY proposing?

2. What criticisms of the gospel does he put forward?

3. What advantages will arise out of abolishing Christianity?

4. What is Swift’s opinion of “freethinkers?”

5. What does Swift reveal about his opinion of the state of Christianity in his day?

6. What is the purpose of a “superior power?”

7. Why does he compare Jesuits to Presbyterians, Anabaptists, Independents, and Quakers?

8. What does Swift ultimately propose in this essay?

### **Questions for “A Modest Proposal”**

1. Swift based this piece on a popular metaphor, “The English are devouring the Irish.” He takes this metaphor to its extreme conclusion. Pay attention to adjectives in this essay, as well as other means Swift uses to manipulate his audience.

2. What do Irish children grow up to become?

3. What words does he use to describe Irish mothers? If you are unfamiliar with these words, you must look them up to understand what he means. How do these words cause us to view these mothers?

4. When he refers to his American friend, what does he imply about Americans in general?

5. What does he say about landlords and Papists? (Catholics)
6. What can the carcasses of children be used for?
7. Why does he argue against replacing deer-hunting with child-hunting?
8. What benefits will be gained if his plan is implemented?
9. Who does he urge politicians against his plan to talk to and why?
10. Why will Swift gain nothing from this proposal?
11. What is Swift really trying to say in this piece? Do you think he was successful or unsuccessful? Why or why not?

### **Questions for “The Rape of the Lock”**

1. This poem is written as a mock-heroic. (Look it up) Pope uses many elements of epic poetry in order to get his point across. If you are unfamiliar with epic poetry, here are some things to look for: asking the “muses” for help in telling the tale, giving the heroes a god-like appearance, retelling a story and giving it mythical proportions, nature similes, and an elevated tone.
2. Who are the Sylphs?
3. What real life incident inspired Pope to write this poem?
4. How is Belinda described?
5. Who warns her and what warning is she given?
6. What things “early taint the female soul?” (canto I, line 87)
7. Who is Shock?
8. What, besides her natural beauty, makes Belinda so attractive? This has to do with her “toilet” (not the same meaning as today—look it up!) and is similar to several scenes in the *Odyssey*.
9. Describe Belinda’s character when it comes to dealing with men.
10. Why does Pope spend so much time describing her beauty and virtue?
11. Who is the Baron and what does he want from Belinda?
12. What role do the Sylphs play in the battle for the Lock?

13. How does Pope make social activities at court sound like actions on a battlefield? Why do you think he does this?
14. What “honors” does Belinda receive and how are they “snatched away?” (canto 3, line 103)
15. How does Pope use myths throughout the poem? (The footnotes explain the mythological allusions.)
16. What happens to the Sylph who tries to interfere with the cutting of the Lock?
17. Reread Canto 3, lines 155- to the end of Canto 3. What images does Pope combine here and to what effect?
18. What is Belinda’s reaction to the cutting of the Lock?
19. What social repercussions does Belinda fear as she is shorn of her Lock?
20. What adjectives are used to describe the Lock and the hands that cut it?
21. How does Pope describe the interaction between men and women in canto 5? How can a woman “kill” a man?
22. What family heirloom becomes a weapon for Belinda and how does she use it?
23. What does Belinda demand of Baron?
24. What is the ultimate fate of the Lock?
25. Compare this poem to Butler’s “Hudibras.” How do burlesques and mock-heroics differ? Do you think Butler or Pope is more successful in achieving his ends, or do both do well with the mediums they choose?

### **Week 17-- Johnson, Boswell, Cowper**

#### **Questions on Samuel Johnson, from A Dictionary of the English Language**

##### **Preface**

1. What is laughable about writing a dictionary?
2. What happened in Italy and France when dictionaries were introduced? (i.e., how long were they “valid?”)
3. What things transform a language?

4. What type of society would be able to prevent a language from changing?
5. What do you think Johnson means by “illiterate” (p. 2721)?
6. What future use does Johnson hope his dictionary will have, even if it is outdated by modern standards?
7. Choose three words from the Dictionary excerpt that have different meanings than you might expect. Think about why these meanings have changed from the meaning that Johnson recorded for them. Be ready to share your words and thoughts.

### **Questions for “The Life of Samuel Johnson, LL.D.”**

1. Boswell is admired for his amazing ability to remember and record conversations without taking notes during a conversation. His biography of Johnson is one of the best records we have of that time period. As you read the excerpts from it, think about why it was chosen as a significant piece of literature. What do the anecdotes he chooses to tell reveal to us about the character of Johnson? Also, what does the writing reveal about Boswell himself?
2. Describe Johnson’s family and upbringing.
3. Describe his personal appearance.
4. What does he think of Lord Chesterfield?
5. What are his views of death?
6. What does the dinner with Wilkes reveal about his character?
7. What are his views on politics and their effect on individuals?
8. Would Johnson be a person you would like to meet? Why or why not?

### **Questions for “The Task”**

For more biographical information on Cowper and a good article on his despair from a Christian perspective (a good counter to the brief bio in our Norton!), please read John Piper’s “Insanity and Spiritual Songs in the Life of a Saint” at

[http://www.desiringgod.org/ResourceLibrary/Biographies/1463\\_Insanity\\_and\\_Spiritual\\_Songs\\_in\\_the\\_Soul\\_of\\_a\\_Saint/](http://www.desiringgod.org/ResourceLibrary/Biographies/1463_Insanity_and_Spiritual_Songs_in_the_Soul_of_a_Saint/)

1. Considering that this was originally written as a mock-heroic about a sofa, do you find any trace of humor in this excerpt?
2. What is the main idea of the section from Book I?
3. Why is Kate crazy?
4. What does the speaker say about hopes and fears in Book 3?
5. What is the speaker's view of a quiet evening in Book 4?

### **Questions for "The Castaway"**

1. What literally happens to the castaway in this poem?
2. What "sea" do you think the speaker is "whelmed in?" (Think of Cowper's life for ideas)
3. Compare and contrast the rhyme scheme of these two poems. Why do you think Cowper chose the rhyme scheme (and meter) he did for each poem? Think about the subject of each poem as you answer this question.

Bonus: In what movie is the last stanza quoted?

### **Week 18--The Romantic Period and Blake**

#### **Questions for Background to the Romantic Period**

1. Does the Romantic Period fit a single definition? Why or why not?
2. How were economics and the political structure changing?
3. What was the "Industrial Revolution" and how did it impact the world?
4. What changes occurred in Parliament?
5. What was the "spirit of the age?"
6. Where did many Romantic poets believe the source of poetry was? How did this differ from the views of past poets?
7. What is the difference between Wordsworth's idea of good poetry versus the classical ideals of good poetry?
8. What role did feelings play in poetry, according to Coleridge?
9. What did Wordsworth (and others) believe about nature and God?

10. What types of people did Wordsworth choose to write about? How was this viewed by Byron?
11. What views did many Romantics take of society?
12. How were periodicals used during this time period?
13. Why was there little performed drama during this time?
14. What does “gothic” mean, according to the Norton Anthology?
15. Why did Jane Austen write in what some saw as a “conventional” manner, rather than trying to buck tradition?

### **Questions on William Blake**

The following website has extensive background on Blake that is very helpful, along with the drawings that were to accompany his poetry.

<http://www.gailgastfield.com/Blake.html>

1. Examine “To Spring,” “To Autumn,” and “To the Evening Star.” Blake uses a great deal of personification in these poems. What types of “persons” does he create for each poem? Are they similar or vastly different? How does he create them?
2. Look at “All Religions Are One” and “There is No Natural Religion” (a and b). These poems contain a great deal of Blake’s religious philosophy. What does Blake believe about God? About Man? About how we learn things? How do his views differ from orthodox (generally accepted by the Christian world) Christianity?
3. Read the poems from “Songs of Innocence” with the poems from “Songs of Experience” that correspond. Though the topics are the same, what is different about them? For instance, Blake ends “The Lamb” by saying “God bless thee.” “The Tyger” is the corresponding poem—is it possible for Blake to say “God bless thee” to the tiger? What contrasts do you see in the two characters?

### **Weeks 19 and 20—Jane Austen**

#### **Questions for *Sense and Sensibility***

1. One of Austen’s greatest strengths is the personality of her characters. As you read, keep a running list of characters and briefly describe their personalities. Pay special attention to Elinor and Marianne and their admirers.

2. Austen is also beloved for her exquisite sense of humor. Some of my all-time favorite Austen quotes are from this novel. Jot down some of your favorites and be prepared to share them in class.
3. Family relationships are a key theme in this novel. Note how the Dashwoods, Ferrars, Middletons, and Steeles relate to each other.
4. Compare and contrast Sir John and Lady Middleton's behavior (upon meeting the Dashwoods and in subsequent social interactions). How do you suppose they managed to become married to one another? Is their marriage a happy one? Why or why not?
5. What are Marianne's responses to Willoughby's departure? How are they in keeping with her nature?
6. Compare Marianne's behavior to Elinor's response at Edward's departure.
7. Describe the Palmers' marriage.
8. What is Lucy Steele's secret revelation, and why do you think she tells Elinor?
9. What aspects of Romanticism do you see in this novel?
10. Is Mrs. Dashwood a good mother?
11. Describe Marianne's behavior in London.
12. What is the history between Col. Brandon and Willoughby?
13. Why are Mrs. John Dashwood and Lady Middleton attracted to each other?
14. Why is so difficult for Elinor to tell Edward about Col. Brandon's offer?
15. Do you think that Willoughby is truly repentant?
16. Who is the most disagreeable character, in your opinion? We will debate this in class, so be prepared to defend your position!

### **Week 21--Burke, Paine, and Wollstonecraft essays**

#### **Questions for Burke, From "Reflections on the Revolution in France"**

It would be helpful for you to do some research on the French Revolution, if you have not studied it. For a quick and interesting view of it, there are several films that are entertaining and also have some good background: Tale of Two

Cities and The Scarlet Pimpernel are two decent books/movies that I would recommend. You can always get an encyclopedia excerpt for a start. The French Revolution was very influential in the lives of writers from this time period.

\*\*\*Edmund Burke is attacking those in support of the Revolution in this essay, on several grounds. While he is not from France, this issue is important because many English people were strongly in support or against the Revolution. Several of the writers we will study actually went to France to help fight. Because of this impact on society, Burke is presenting his views on the subject. He uses language to paint a picture against the supporters of it—be looking for effective phrases utilized for this purpose. When he talks about an “inheritable crown,” he is referring to what has been set in place by monarchical forefathers. Burke is in support of the old views of the monarchy as being divinely appointed. Keep this in mind as you read.

1. What does he believe causes a “spirit of innovation?” Is he favorable towards this spirit?
2. What is the “method of nature?”
3. What rights do men have?
4. Are all men to have a share of power and authority?
5. Why does he tell the story of the capture of the king and queen of France? Is there anything persuasive in the way he tells this story?
6. What is his personal contact with the queen? As a reader, how does his mention of this affect your opinion of her?
7. What is the “decent drapery” of life?
8. Burke states (p. 127), “To make us love our country, our country ought to be lovely.” What will make this country lovely?
9. What makes a king a tyrant? (same page)
10. What are his final statements about the people who support this Revolution? How does he present his opinion of these people?

### **Questions on Thomas Paine, from “Rights of Man”**

This essay is a rebuttal to Burke’s piece.

1. What is Burke's opinion about the spirit of the French? (p. 134)
2. What is Paine's view of government and its stability over time? How would this view impact the "strict Constitutionalists" of today?
3. What is Paine's justification for the Revolution? (p. 135) \* hint: "Augean stable."
4. Why does Paine argue that the people are not against the specific monarch (Louis XVI) but against monarchy in general?
5. What insulting comment does he make about Mr. Burke regarding a "moldy parchment?" How does this adjective effect his statement?
6. Why does Paine state that Burke supports "power over principles?" (p. 136)
7. What does Paine say about Mr. Burke's "tragic paintings?" (p. 136)
8. What is Paine's view of chivalry?

### **Questions on Mary Wollstonecraft, from "A Vindication of the Rights of Woman"**

\*\*\*It is IMPERATIVE that you read the background on this writer. You should ALWAYS read the background. You will have a better understanding of the works if you know about the writers' lives. Wollstonecraft wrote this during a time when women could not own property and they could rise in society only through marriage. It is considered an early feminist document. Look at what she says from a biblical perspective.

1. What has made women's minds unhealthy? (p. 167)
2. What purpose are women of her day made to live for? In other words, what is the only way they can wield power?
3. What comments does Wollstonecraft make about virtue for men and women?
4. Why does Wollstonecraft dislike the term "innocent" when used for men and women? (p. 171)
5. Why does Wollstonecraft compare the women of her day to "standing armies?" (These are armies during peacetime not engaged in battle. Think of Mr. Wickham from *Pride and Prejudice*)
6. What are Rousseau's beliefs about women?

7. Wollstonecraft addresses the ideas of a Dr. Gregory. What are his ideas and why does she disagree with them?
8. What greater benefits will a husband (and children) receive from a woman who is well-educated and independent?
9. What is the difference between friendship and love, according to Wollstonecraft?
10. Why is an “unhappy marriage” often “advantageous” to a family? (p. 179)
11. What view should women take about marriage and husbands in general to prevent unhappiness after marriage? Do you agree or disagree with this view?
12. What does she say about women and souls?
13. What is “sensibility” and why is Wollstonecraft so opposed to it? (Think of *Sense and Sensibility*—the meaning is the same. Think about Marianne Dashwood as a bit of an example...maybe Lucy Steele is more appropriate??)
14. Does Wollstonecraft want women to have power over men? (p. 187)
15. Why can a husband not maintain a woman’s happiness if she suffers from excess sensibility? (p. 189)
16. What two kinds of women who “receive a careful education” (p. 190) exist? What problems does Wollstonecraft see in each type of woman?
17. From what you know of modern-day feminism, would you consider this essay to be feminist? (I realize there is a vast array of feminists and feminist thought, so be ready to define what type of feminist you mean)
18. From a biblical perspective, what do you think of this essay?

## **Week 22--Wordsworth**

### **Questions on Wordsworth**

1. “Preface to Lyrical Ballads” outlines Wordsworth’s philosophy of poetry. It is important that you read this essay before you read his poetry—it will help you to understand his ideas more thoroughly. For what type of people is Wordsworth interested in writing his poetry?

2. Wordsworth states that he wishes to “choose incidents and situations from common life.” (p. 241) How does he present these incidents and what is his reason for choosing “common” incidents?

3. Why are men who live the rural life the best subjects? How do you suppose Wordsworth “purified” their language? (and why?)

4. What is “good poetry?” (p. 242)

5. Why does he feel that people need good poetry particularly during the time period in which he is writing? (p. 243) What will good poetry give to these people?

6. Why does he argue that good poetry must “in no respect differ from that of good prose?” (p. 245)

7. What is a poet? (This should be a longer answer.)

8. How can a poet be considered a “translator?” (p. 247)

9. Why does a poet write?

10. How does he compare a poet to a man of science?

11. When he states that “poetry is the first and last of all knowledge,” it is important to know that the root of the word “poetry” means “to create.” With this thought in mind, how do you interpret the statement?

12. What is “emotion reflected in tranquility?”

\*\*\* Important main ideas to understand about Wordsworth:

\*Children (and “common men” such as shepherds (here we go again with the pastoral theme)) have a privileged view of the world because they are less “spoiled” than other people.

\*Nature is the ultimate teacher about human nature and morality.

\*There is “life and food” for the soul which come from time spent in nature.

13. Next, read “Lines Composed a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey.” Look for Wordsworth’s philosophy coming out in his poetry.

14. What scene is described in the first stanza?

15. What has he thought of “in lonely rooms?”

16. What did he spend his childhood doing? Describe his progress, emotionally, from child to man. (lines 65-110)
17. Who is the “guide, the guardian of my heart, and soul of all my moral being?”
18. What does he see in his “dear, dear Sister’s eyes?”
19. What exhortations does he give to her for future years when he will not be with her?
20. Why does the Child’s insistence that “We Are Seven” upset the speaker?
21. What do you think she has taught him by the end of the poem? (This is implied, rather than stated explicitly, so you may have to guess a bit)
22. In “Lines Written in Early Spring” what do you think he means when he says, “much it grieved my heart to think what man has made of man.”?
23. What is praiseworthy about nature in this poem?
24. “Expostulation and Reply” and “The Tables Turned” are companion poems. What does Matthew urge the speaker to do with his time and what does the speaker urge Matthew to do with his time? What is each of them saying about their personal philosophy? (\*note: “barren leaves” (p. 228, l. 30) refers to pages in a book)
25. In “Strange fits of passion” how does the rhyme scheme affect the tone of the poem?
26. What unusual images are used to describe Lucy in “She dwelt among the untrodden ways?”
27. In “Three years she grew,” Nature is personified as one who chooses to make Lucy his own. What is Lucy given by Nature because of this?
28. Who is the main character in “The Two April Mornings” and what is his tale? How does this poem fit Wordsworth’s philosophy of poetry?
29. Please read the excerpt from Dorothy Wordsworth’s journal (p. 391) with “I wandered lonely as a cloud.” How do the poem and journal entry connect?
30. Read the last stanza. In it, Wordsworth reveals that this daffodil vision has become an “emotion recollected in tranquility.” What emotion does he gain as he thinks of it?

31. In “My heart leaps up,” what do you think he means when he states that “The Child is father of the Man?”

32. Read the selected sonnets (“Westminster Bridge,” “It is a beautiful evening,” “London 1802,” “The World is Too Much with us,” and “Surprised by joy.”) What is Wordsworth’s rhyme scheme for sonnets?

33. Pay special attention to “The world is too much with us.” What criticism does Wordsworth have of mankind and what would he be willing to do in order to gain a “sight of Proteus?”

### **Week 23--Coleridge and Byron**

\*\* This week, in order to have a better understanding of the Byronic Hero, I would recommend either reading or viewing *Wuthering Heights* by Emily Bronte. The film version with Lawrence Olivier strays pretty far from the book, but it does capture the essence of the Byronic hero.

### **Questions for Coleridge**

1. What is the Eolian Harp, literally and figuratively?
2. Lines 26-33 are well-known for the Romantic ideal they capture. What do you think Coleridge is saying in these lines?
3. What example of “emotion recollected in tranquility” do we have in this poem?
4. What happens in Part I of “The Rime of the Ancient Mariner?”
5. What is the albatross a symbol of at the end of Part I?
6. What happens after the albatross is shot?
7. Who is on the skeleton ship in Part 3?
8. Why do you think the Mariner lives on after the others have died?
9. When does the Mariner lose the albatross around his neck?
10. What “moral” does the Mariner give to the wedding guest as the poem closes?
11. How does Coleridge paint a picture in *Kubla Khan* with his use of language? Note especially effective images.

12. Do you think Kubla Khan is a complete poem?

13. Why does Coleridge warn against the attractiveness of the Satanic hero in his essay of the same name? \*\*\* This is helpful as we go into Byron.

### **Questions for Byron**

\*\*\* Please read about Byron's life. It is important to know in connection with his poetry, particularly "Childe Harold."

1. What is the tone of "Written after Swimming from Sestos to Abydos?"

2. What is the "ague?"

3. In "She Walks in Beauty," to what is the lady compared? What images are effective?

### **Questions for "Childe Harold's Pilgrimage"**

A Byronic hero exhibits several characteristic traits, and in many ways he can be considered a rebel. The Byronic hero does not possess "heroic virtue" in the usual sense; instead, he has many dark qualities. With regard to his intellectual capacity, self-respect, and hypersensitivity, the Byronic hero is "larger than life," and "with the loss of his titanic passions, his pride, and his certainty of self-identity, he loses also his status as [a traditional] hero" (Thorslev 187). He is usually isolated from society as a wanderer or is in exile of some kind. It does not matter whether this social separation is imposed upon him by some external force or is self-imposed. Byron's Manfred, a character who wandered desolate mountaintops, was physically isolated from society, whereas Childe Harold chose to "exile" himself and wander throughout Europe. Although Harold remained physically present in society and among people, he was not by any means "social." Often the Byronic hero is moody by nature or passionate about a particular issue. He also has emotional and intellectual capacities, which are superior to the average man. These heightened abilities force the Byronic hero to be arrogant, confident, abnormally sensitive, and extremely conscious of himself. In one form or another, he rejects the values and moral codes of society and because of this he is often unrepentant by society's standards. Often the Byronic hero is characterized by a guilty memory of some unnamed sexual crime. Due to these characteristics, the Byronic hero is often a figure of repulsion, as well as fascination.

\*\*\* Please look for the above characteristics as you read this poem. Note specific stanzas to share in class that capture the characteristics.

1. Look for imitation of Spenser in this poem.
2. Who does the poet ask for help from as the poem begins? (Think about “The Rape of the Lock”)
3. Notice the change of voice in this poem—Byron discusses Harold in the first and third person—he equates himself with his creation.
4. How does Byron connect Napoleon to the idea of the Byronic hero? (In the section of the same name)
5. What views of nature does Byron reveal in stanzas 85-118?
6. In stanzas 134-137, what is the curse and what must be forgiven?
7. Stanzas 179-186 are an “apostrophe” (address to an inanimate object). What is addressed and what is this thing praised for?
8. How does Byron’s life compare to Harold’s?

### **Week 24—Shelley and Keats**

\*\*\*Remember to read the footnotes! Many answers are hiding there.

#### **Questions for Shelley**

1. How does Shelley use the image of the “forgotten lyres” in “Mutability?” How does this connect to the idea of the Eolian Harp? (Coleridge)
2. What is the only thing that endures?
3. In “To Wordsworth,” why is Shelley disappointed with Wordsworth?
4. In “Ozymandias,” who is Ozymandias? What has happened to his pedestal? Why is this ironic?
5. What is the speaker’s opinion of England in “England in 1819?” What images does he use to express his opinion?
6. In “Ode to the West Wind,” what is *terza rima*? How does Shelley use the images of Autumn and fire? How does this compare to Shakespeare’s use of these in his sonnets? What examples of personification are used? Shelley uses

the word “lyre” again. This is a reference to the Eolian harp. What is his purpose in using this image?

7. In “To a Skylark,” what similes and metaphors are used? What is the speaker chiefly expressing to the skylark?

8. How does “The Flower that Smiles Today” compare to “Mutability?”

9. “A Defence of Poetry” was written as a rebuttal to an ironic essay (read the intro) but Shelley is also quite seriously expressing his views of poetry. Keep Wordsworth’s “Preface to Lyrical Ballads” in mind as you read this essay. Shelley tends to be more philosophical and less tangible in his essay, but persevere in your reading of him.

10. What is a poet? (p. 791)

11. Why is a poet’s fame more long-lasting than that of a legislator or founder of religion? (p. 793)

12. What does Shelley believe about traditional form? In other words, what is the most important thing about a poem? (p. 793)

13. What makes poetry so pleasurable? (p. 795)

14. What is Plato’s belief about poetry? (footnote 795) This is an important concept for you to know in order to understand the rest of the essay.

15. On what grounds does Shelley argue that poetry is moral? (p. 796-797)

16. What are the “functions of the poetical faculty?” (p. 798)

17. Why can a man not say, “I will compose poetry?” (p. 798)

18. What does Shelley say (overall) about divinity and poetry? You may find more specifics on p. 799.

19. How does poetry turn “all things to loveliness?” (p. 799-800)

20. Socrates said (through Plato’s writings) that in order to be happy, one must be moral. What benefits does morality have for a poet? (800)

21. Knowing that Shelley was quite immoral by most standards, how does he try to justify his own actions and include himself as one of the great poets? (801) Of course, you have to read about his life in order to answer this question.

22. How are poets “hierophants?” Do you agree or disagree?

### **Questions for Keats**

1. In “Sleep and Poetry,” Keats outlines what he intends to write in the coming years. What does he intend to do? What do you think he means by “real things” in the closing stanza?

2. In “When I have fears that I may cease to be,” what does the speaker do when he struggles with his fears? What does he think about?

3. In “The Eve of St. Agnes,” who are the following people: The Beadsman, Madeline, St. Agnes, Porphyro, the old beldame.

4. What is supposed to happen on St. Agnes’ Eve for young virgins?

5. How does Porphyro intend to gain Madeline’s love? Is he successful?

6. In “La Belle Dame Sans Merci,” why does the speaker “sojourn here?”

7. In “Sonnet to Sleep,” sleep can be compared to death. How does Keats make that connection clear?

8. In “Ode to a Nightingale,” what does the nightingale represent? What does her song cause the speaker to think about?

9. In “Ode on a Grecian Urn,” which “still” do you think fits better? (see footnote)

10. What does the speaker say about truth and beauty? Why do you think he makes this statement at the end of the description of the urn? How do specific images of the urn connect to this theme?

11. How are Beauty and Melancholy intertwined? Why are both necessary?

### **Week 25--Victorian Period and Newman**

#### **Questions on Background to the Victorian Period**

1. What effect did Queen Victoria have on the age named after her, as far as “temper?” (p. 1044)

2. What did the “Reform Bill” reform? (p. 1046)

3. What were the Corn Laws? (p. 1048)

4. What was the Oxford movement? (p. 1050)

5. What is Utilitarianism? (p. 1050)
6. What is Higher Criticism? (p. 1051)
7. What social impact did the theory of evolution have on society? (p. 1052)
8. What was the Boer War? P. 1053
9. Why is melancholy a more appropriate description of what are often called the “Gay” (as in happy, not homosexual) Nineties?
10. How were women viewed during the Victorian era? (p. 1057)
11. Why were women more welcome as writers in the world of the novel?
12. How were novels originally published?
13. How did Victorian poets differ from Romantic poets?
14. What elements of poetry were Victorian poets known for?

### **Questions for *Idea of a University***

1. How are Philosophy and Knowledge related?
2. What are the two ways that we can use/treat Knowledge?
3. Newman mentions two contrasting methods of Education. What are they?
4. Why should we speak of a University as a place of education rather than instruction?
5. What image does Newman use to describe the process of knowing and discerning truth?
6. How does Newman define Liberal Education? (hint—it’s not a political term here!)
7. How can the “Good” be useful?
8. Describe the parallels between bodily health and mental culture.
9. How does a cultivated intellect enable us to be more useful than otherwise?
10. What is the practical end that Newman proposes for University studies?
11. Is Newman convincing? Why or why not?

## **Week 26—John Stuart Mill and Elizabeth Barrett Browning**

### **Questions on “What is Poetry?”**

1. What are some problems with trying to define poetry? (p. 1139)
2. What is the object of poetry? (p. 1140)
3. When and where is poetry appreciated most? (p. 1140)
4. What does Mill think of novels? (p. 1141)
5. What “two excellences” does Shakespeare combine? (1141)
6. How does a poet describe things? (1142)
7. What is the difference between poetry and eloquence? (1142-3)
8. How does a poet use “soliloquy?” (p. 1143)
9. How do we tell the difference between poetry and eloquence? (1143)
10. How does Mill connect poetry to music? (1144 and on)
11. What is his opinion of the French? (1146)

### **Questions on “The Subjection of Women”**

1. How does Mill compare the status of women to that of slaves throughout the essay?
2. How are women worse off than slaves, in his opinion?
3. What role has force played in the lives of women and how they behave?
4. What examples from history are discussed which reveal the status of women throughout?
5. Why would women not seek help from the law against an abusive husband? (1158)
6. What were women brought up to do? (1158, 1159, and beyond)
7. Why can people not use “experience” as a reason for equality not working? (1160)
8. How have slaves been more free to develop than women?

9. What hindrances are there to having a general idea about women? (1162 and on)

10. What problems are there with women's writings as a glimpse of their general character? (1164)

11. Respond biblically to Mill's ideas. What does God's Word teach about the role of women and the standard for marriage? Many people say that the biblical ideal makes women into doormats. Please give a biblical response to this idea.

### **Questions on Mill's "Autobiography"**

1. How did Mill's education help bring about his depression?

2. How does he compare to Carlyle philosophically? (1170)

3. What two ways was his life impacted by his depression? (1169 and 1170)

4. What frustration did he have with music? (1171)

5. How did Wordsworth help him through his struggle? (1172)

### **Questions on Elizabeth Barrett Browning**

1. Sonnet 21: How is "I love you" like a cuckoo song and what does the speaker think of this idea?

2. Sonnet 22: Why does the speaker not want to go to heaven with her beloved?

3. Sonnet 32: Why does she want the moon to come? What kind of "musician" is her beloved?

4. Sonnet 43: This first line is very famous. Answer the question—how does she love him?

5. "Aurora Leigh"--Who is Aurora?

6. What is her first impression of England and her aunt?

7. How is she educated?

8. What does she feel to be her goal in life?

9. Why does she reject Romney?

10. What must a poet present in his or her writing?

11. How does Aurora connect to Mill's essay about women? Is her education in keeping with what he supports or fights against?

12. In "Mother and Poet," Why does the mother feel responsible for her sons' deaths?

13. What does she think the purpose of women is? Connect to Mill's essay.

### **Week 27--Tennyson**

#### **Questions on "The Lady of Shalott"**

1. What must the Lady not do in order to avoid the curse?

2. What role does Lancelot play in her curse?

3. Why is his comment ironic?

#### **Questions on "In Memoriam, A.H.H."**

1. In the Prologue, what does he ask God for?

2. In section 2, why does he envy the yew?

3. How does he use the image of a girl in section 6?

4. In section 14, what would not seem strange to him, were it to happen?

5. In section 23, what "creeds" does he refer to?

6. In section 24, what is his view of the past?

7. In section 27, why does he not envy those who cannot feel?

8. Examine the three Christmases that Tennyson goes through without Hallam. How does his sorrow change and how does it remain the same over that period of time? (The stanzas discussing Christ's birth)

9. What is his view of God in section 34?

10. What is his hope in section 47?

11. Who do you think he is talking to in section 50?

12. What is his ultimate hope in section 54 and 55?

13. What does he say about Nature and God in section 56?

14. How is day personified in section 72?
15. In section 82, what is his attitude towards death?
16. What does section 84 reflect on ?
17. Describe the pastimes they enjoyed in section 89.
18. How does the “dead man” touch him in section 95?
19. In section 96, how does doubt affect him?
20. Look at the sections describing the Christmas bells ringing. What are they ringing in and out?
21. How does he view faith in section 108?
22. What views of science does he have in 120?
23. How is Venus like him in 121?
24. What has given him faith in 124 and 126?
25. What has he learned in 131 and Epilogue?

### **Questions on “The Coming of Arthur”**

1. What is the mystery of Arthur’s birth?
2. How do his subjects view him?
3. Why was Arthur given to Merlin?

### **Questions on “The Passing of Arthur”**

1. Who does he battle in the end?
2. What happens with Bedivere and Excalibur?
3. Where does Arthur go at the end of the poem?

### **Week 28—Robert Browning**

#### **Questions on “Porphyria’s Lover”**

1. Examine the setting. How does it connect to the plot of the story?
2. Where has Porphyria come from and why?

3. What do you think is meant by the last two lines?

### **Questions on “Soliloquy of the Spanish Cloister”**

1. What bothers the speaker about Brother Lawrence?(look through the entire poem) Is his anger justified?

2. In stanza 4, is there any proof that Lawrence is guilty of what the speaker charges him with?

3. In stanza 6, what trick is the speaker playing on Lawrence?

### **Questions on “My Last Duchess”**

This is about a painting of the speaker’s deceased wife.

1. What fault is his last duchess guilty of?

2. Do you agree with the charge?

3. How did she die? (you have to dig a little for this one)

### **Questions on “The Laboratory”**

1. Why is the speaker in the laboratory?

2. How has she tried to kill her competition in stanza 9?

### **Questions on “The Bishop Orders His Tomb at St. Praxed”**

1. The speaker is on his deathbed talking to his sons. What does the fact that a Catholic priest has sons tell us about him?

2. What is his opinion of Gandolf (and his tomb)? Give specific sections that reveal this attitude.

3. Does the bishop trust his sons? How does he seek to gain their favor?

### **Questions on “Love Among the Ruins”**

1. Note the rhyme scheme and meter of this poem. How does it affect the content?

2. What is the general theme of the poem?

### **Questions on “Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came”**

1. What physical obstacles does he encounter along the way?

2. In stanzas 15-18, how does he seek to encourage himself and why does this fail?
3. Is the last image in this poem a hopeful one?

### **Questions on “Fra Lippo Lippi”**

1. Who is Lippi talking to?
2. Who does he know who is powerful enough to frighten his audience?
3. Why is Lippi out this evening?
4. Why did he become a monk?
5. What do the other monks think of his paintings?
6. What does Lippi believe about beauty?

### **Week 29--Hopkins Poetry**

\*\* Keep in mind that Hopkins frequently used inventive word-combinations in his poetry and that he believed in “inscape” and “instress.” Please read about these terms in the background on Hopkins and be ready to discuss his poetry in light of them.

### **Questions on Gerard Manley Hopkins**

1. What is “inscape?”
2. What is “instress?”
3. In “God’s Grandeur,” what is said about nature?
4. What is the role of the Holy Spirit in “God’s Grandeur?”
5. Please compare this poem to “The world is too much with us” by Wordsworth. (p. 297)
6. How are onomatopoeia and imagery used in “God’s Grandeur?”
7. In “The Starlight Night,” Hopkins is describing the starry sky. What images does he use to do this?
8. What do you think the second stanza means, particularly in relation to Christ? (Please be willing to take a stab in the dark at this one—there will probably be many answers to it)

9. What role does inscape play in “As Kingfishers Catch Fire?”
10. How does Christ play “in ten thousand places?”
11. What images are used to portray the spring in “Spring?” (catchy title)
12. What do you think is meant by “thy choice and worthy the winning?” (I am still working through this one)
13. In “The Windhover,” “achieve” is used as a noun in line 8. Why do you think this poem is addressed to “Christ our Lord?”
14. How does “pied” beauty reveal the immutability of God? (in “Pied Beauty”)
15. What is being described (in “Hurrahing in Harvest”) as “Meal-drift moulded ever and melted across skies?”
16. What has happened to the “Binsey Poplars?” (a poplar is a type of tree)
17. What connection to inscape is made in this poem?
18. Who is Duns Scotus? How does Scotus’ beliefs come to life for the speaker as he looks around him? (the footnote will help you)
19. What happened to “Felix Randal” as death drew near?
20. Why is Margaret grieving in “Spring and Fall?”
21. In “Carrion Comfort,” what does the speaker mean by “not choose not to be?”
22. Who is wrestling with whom in this poem? How does the speaker feel about this?
23. What hope does the speaker find in this image?
24. In “No Worst, There is None,” what is the “comfort serves in a whirlwind?”
25. What is “God’s most deep decree” in “I Wake and Feel the Fell of Dark, Not Day?”
26. Is the view of self positive or negative in “I Wake...?”
27. What is being described in “That Nature...” ?
28. What hope ends “That Nature...?”

29. Why does the speaker begin discussing “banks and brakes” and birds in “Thou Art Indeed Just, Lord?”

30. How is he “Time’s eunuch?”

31. In the excerpts from “Journal,” how does Hopkins writing compare to the writing in his poetry?

### **Week 30—Oscar Wilde**

#### **Questions on “The Importance of Being Earnest”**

1. Identify the following characters: Jack, Algernon, Cecily, Gwendolen, Aunt Augusta/Lady Bracknell, Merriman, Miss Prism, Chasuble, Lane, “Ernest” (give all possible answers for this character)

2. Why is Aunt Augusta opposed to Jack’s desire to marry Gwendolen?

3. How does Algernon win Cecily’s heart, initially?

4. Why do Cecily and Gwendolen refuse to marry Jack and Algernon?

5. How do Jack and Algernon rectify this problem?

6. A “comedy of manners” is defined as: “A comedy concerned with the social actions and behavior of members of a highly sophisticated, upper-class society. Low-class characters are normally subordinate in interest or are played against the foibles of their 'betters'. Such comedy emphasizes wit, whether true or false, and more often that not takes an arch view of the love game.” [Bacon, Wallace A. *The Art of Interpretation*. 2nd ed.] How closely does *Earnest* fit this description?

7. Look up the word “satire.” What do you think the author satirizes?

8. How is marriage viewed in this play? In other words, what do the characters think of it?

9. How do the characters view death in this play?

10. What views of social class does this play reveal?

11. What makes this play humorous?

12. What do you think Wilde was trying to say when he wrote this play? Do you think he was successful or not?

## **Week 31—finishing Wilde, Introduction to the Twentieth Century**

### **Questions for the Introduction to the Twentieth Century**

1. What is “art for art’s sake” and who was involved in it?
2. How did widespread literacy affect England?
3. What are “high, low and middle brows?”
4. What did those who were anti-Victorian attack about Victorian society?
5. What changes for women were occurring?
6. What Irish struggle effected British literature?
7. What was “golden” about the Georgian period?
8. What problems arose following WWI?
9. How did these problems impact literature?
10. How did regional arts councils affect the literary and artistic world of Britain?
11. What does the Norton Anthology give Margaret Thatcher credit for? Tony Blair?
12. What was the “imagist movement?”
13. What role did T.S. Eliot play in the world of poetry?
14. What is remarkable about Yeats’ writing?
15. What are the three main “strata” of fiction in the 20th century?
16. Where did writers seek to find truth and reality?
17. How did the different wars impact the writing of the time?
18. Why is late 20th century literature criticized?
19. What was happening in Irish theater during the 20th century?
20. What happened in 1968 that affected theatre?

## **Week 32--World War I Poetry**

1. "The Soldier": What is the tone towards war in this poem? What is the view of death? What is the purpose of the war?
2. Thomas, "Adlestrop": How does this poem connect to the war?
3. "Tears": What "truths" do you think the speaker is told?
4. "The Owl": What is different about the speaker's life and that of the other soldiers? How does he feel about these differences?
5. "Rain": Why can death not disappoint?
6. "The Cherry Trees": What are the trees a symbol of?
7. "As the Team's Head Brass": The poet describes two different lives in this poem. How do these two lives interact with one another?
8. Sassoon, "They": What is the tone towards war in this poem? How does this poem compare with Brooke's "The Soldier?"
9. "The Rear-Guard": What do you think is meant by "unloading hell" in this poem?
10. "The General": Examine the meter and rhyme scheme of this poem. What effect does it have on the content of the poem?
11. "Glory of Women": What view do women have of the war versus what the men live out?
12. "Everyone Sang": What literary devices are used to create the lyrical sound of birdsong? How do these descriptions affect the conclusion of the poem?
13. "On Passing the New Menin Gate": What is the "crime" mentioned at the end of the poem?
14. What kind of thoughts go through Sassoon's head during the battle described in "Memoirs?"
15. Gurney: "To His Love": How does the last stanza contrast with the images in the rest of the poem?
16. "The Silent One": What do you think is happening in this poem? What effect does it have to use parentheses around the phrase "polite to God?"

17. Rosenberg, "Break of Day in the Trenches": Why is the rat more "chanced" than the soldiers? How is the word "cosmopolitan" used? What do you think the poppies symbolize?
18. "Louse Hunting": Why are the men in an uproar about the lice? How does this "battle" compare with the battles they fight by day? In other words, compare the two enemies.
19. "Returning, We Hear the Larks": What do the larks represent? What tone is taken towards them in light of what the speaker faces?
20. "Dead Man's Dump": How is personification used in the poem? How does the poet build suspense at the end of the poem?
21. Owen, "Anthem for Doomed Youth": What images does Owen use to draw the contrast between those fighting the war and those at home?
22. "Apologia Pro Poemate Meo": Why do the men not feel "sickness or remorse of murder?"
23. "Miners": How are the centuries personified? What tone does this reveal about the work the soldiers have done?
24. "Dulce et Decorum Est": How does the content of the poem connect to the title of the poem? What images are used to paint the picture?
25. "Strange Meeting": How does Owen use alliteration and assonance in the poem?
26. "Futility": What does the sun symbolize?
27. "Disabled": Why did the young man join the army? What has happened to him? How has he changed? (besides physically)
28. Cannan, "Rouen": What effect do Cannan's use of meter and repetition of certain words ("and" and "can you") have on the content? What images does she use? What tone is taken towards the war? Would you group her with Brooke or Owen?
29. "Grey Ghosts...": How does her experience compare with Sassoon and Owen's?
30. Jones, "In Parenthesis": What images does the term "Waste Land" evoke as a description of the battlefield?

31. “The Five Unmistakeable Marks”: How does this poetic structure differ from the other war poetry? What images does he place next to one another as he tells his story? How does he attempt to raise these characters to mythological heights? (Please read the introduction to this poem for help) What do you think the gun symbolizes in this poem? What does leaving it behind mean?

### **Week 33--Yeats**

1. In “The Madness of King Goll,” the last line of each stanza is the same. What purpose do you think this line serves? What do you think drove the king to madness?

2. In “The Stolen Child,” take note of examples of onomatopoeia and alliteration and the effect they make.

3. Read the footnote (1) for “The Rose of the World.” How does Yeats illustrate this view of beauty throughout the poem?

4. What desire is revealed in “The Lake Isle of Innisfree?” What is appealing about this life to the speaker? How does Yeats create the sounds one would hear there through his words?

5. Compare the first and last stanzas of “The Sorrow of Love.” How do they connect?

6. How is Love personified in “When You Are Old?”

7. In “The Folly of Being Comforted,” what is his reasoning for stating that he cannot be comforted?

8. In “Adam’s Curse,” what does the speaker say about the work of a poet?

9. In “No Second Troy,” why does he not blame “her?”

10. What specific things have “dried the sap” out of the speaker’s veins in “The Fascination of What’s Difficult?” What from Yeats’ life is he referring to?

11. What is the speaker lamenting in “September 1913?”

12. Why is there “more enterprise in walking naked” in “A Coat?”

13. How are the swans described in “The Wild Swans at Coole?” What might they symbolize?

14. “Easter 1916” is about an Irish revolt against the British. There has long been enmity between Irish nationalists, who want all of Ireland to be independent, and England, who wants to maintain control of it. Currently, southern Ireland is an independent nation and Northern Ireland is not. This is why there are often bombings and other problems with violence in Ireland. Why do you think Yeats uses the phrase “a terrible beauty is born” in connection with the revolt in 1916?

15. What do you think is being stated about Christ in “The Second Coming?”

16. In “A Prayer for My Daughter,” what desires does he have for his daughter?

17. In “Sailing to Byzantium,” what is “no country for old men?” Why is this so?

18. How is “bodily decrepitude” wisdom in “After Long Silence?”

19. In “Lapis Lazuli,” what is being described?

### **Questions from “Reveries”**

1. What things does Yeats find significant about his family?

2. How has Irish literature suffered from being “Protestant Ireland?”

3. Why was he criticized for enjoying Blake and Rossetti?

4. What was his impression of Oscar Wilde?

5. What inspired him to write “The Lake Isle of Innisfree?”

6. What was the purpose of “The Rhymers’ Club?”

### **Week 34--T.S. Eliot**

T.S. Eliot quotes from and alludes to a huge number of sources and I realize the number of footnotes is mind-boggling. Don’t try to understand every reference made—rather, try to look at the poem as a whole. Though much of what you read will seem disjointed and you may say “I can connect nothing with nothing” (quote from *The Waste Land* :)) do not be discouraged. It is a good idea to skim the poem once before even trying to answer the questions. Then, go back and read it again slowly with the questions.

### **Questions on “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock”**

1. Where is the Italian passage from? How does this affect the start of the poem?

2. Eliot uses many images to create the setting at the start. What are some of them and what is he trying to express about the setting?
3. What kind of a fellow is Prufrock, from the descriptions of his thoughts, such as “Do I dare?”
4. Why do you think Eliot mentions only the arms of the woman?
5. Why does Prufrock proclaim he is not Prince Hamlet?
6. Does this love song meet your expectations for the usual love song? Why or why not? Who or what might he be singing to?

### **Questions on “The Waste Land”**

1. Why is April the “cruellest month?”
2. How might the Wagner quotes connect to the phrase “hyacinth girl?”
3. What role does water play throughout this poem? What things does it symbolize?
4. What role do eyes play in part II? In other words, what might they represent?
5. In part III, how is the Thames described?
6. Who is Tiresias and why is he important?
7. In Part IV, what was the fate of Phlebas?
8. What images does part V end with?

### **Questions on “The Hollow Men”**

\*\*Eliot was a part of the “Lost Generation” which is a name for those who lived through World War I. Since such an incredible number of young men died, everyone was impacted by death in a personal way and many of this generation were without hope. This poem is often said to be representative of the spirit of the Lost Generation.

1. How does the quote at the beginning connect to the rest of the poem?
2. What is a “hollow man?”
3. How do the dead remember the “hollow men?” (l.13-18)
4. How does the speaker view “death’s dream kingdom” in part II?

5. In part III, what is the “supplication of a dead man’s hand?” Is there power behind such prayer?
6. What role does sight and eyes play in part IV?
7. Why do you think Eliot changes the mulberry bush song of childhood and includes it, along with the Lord’s Prayer?
8. Consider the pictures Eliot has created of the Hollow Men. How does this picture connect to the final line of the poem?

### **Questions on “Journey of the Magi”**

1. What had the magi spent their time doing before setting out on the journey?
2. What kind of obstacles were faced along the way?
3. Why does Eliot place the phrase “you may say” in parentheses? If it is an aside, (an “aside” in theater is when a character speaks without intending for everyone to hear what is said) why?
4. What do you think is meant by the closing line of the poem? Think about this from a Christian perspective.

### **Questions on “Tradition and the Individual Talent”**

1. Since you have read Shelley and Wordsworth’s view of poetry, this essay should be interesting. Think about the comparisons and contrasts to be made.
2. Why should we not focus on a poet as an individual when we consider his poetry?
3. Why must we not ignore the dead writers when we look at current poetry?
4. Why should we avoid looking at “personality” when we look at poetry?
5. What is Eliot’s view on Wordsworth and ‘emotion recollected in tranquility’?

### **Questions on “The Metaphysical Poets”**

1. Why is it difficult to define the term “metaphysical?”
2. What is the difference between an “intellectual” and a “reflective” poet?” p. 2405

### **Week 35--Thomas, Hughes, Heaney, and Boland, and Hughes**

## **Questions on Dylan Thomas**

1. "The Force That Through the Green Fuse Drives the Flower:" This poem examines (or illustrates) how man is connected with nature. What is Thomas saying?
2. When the word "dumb" is used, it is in the sense of unable to speak. Why do you think the speaker feels dumb?
3. "After the Funeral:" What role does nature play in mourning the loss of Thomas' aunt?
4. "Fern Hill": Thomas plays with language to describe this setting. For example, he uses the phrase, "all the sun long" rather than "all the day long." Note other such phrases in this poem and their effect.
5. What do you think his "chains" are in the last line of the poem?
6. "Do Not Go Gentle into That Good Night": What do you think it means to "rage against the dying of the light?"

## **Questions on Ted Hughes**

1. "Wind": What is the house compared to throughout the poem? What might be going on emotionally that causes him to make this comparison?
2. "Relic": If a jawbone is an image of terror and power, what effect does it create for us to see it useless on the shore? Why do you think Hughes chose to call this poem "relic?" What is a relic and what is the jawbone a relic of?
3. "Pike": How is enjambment used in the last stanza? Make sure to read the lines, flowing from one to the next, to get the correct meaning. What do you think he means in the last stanza?
4. "Examination at the Womb-Door": Make sure to read the footnote for help on this one. How is the Crow "stronger than death?" Is the Crow portrayed in such a way that one expects this?
5. "Theology": What REALLY happened in Eden, according to Hughes?
6. "The Seven Sorrows": What are the seven sorrows? What images strike you in particular?
7. "Daffodils": Remember how Hughes lost his wife, Sylvia Plath, as you read this poem. What image does the speaker give to his deceased wife's scissors?

What does this tell us about his memories of her? How are the daffodils described?

### **Questions on Seamus Heaney**

1. "Digging:" How does Heaney compare his profession as a writer to the profession of his ancestors?
2. "Casualty:" Describe the speaker's friendship with the man who is the poem's subject. How did this man die and what does this tell us about him?

### **Questions on Eavan Boland**

1. "That the Science of Cartography is Limited:" Why is the science of cartography limited?
2. "The Dolls Museum in Dublin:" How does Boland use the descriptions of the dolls to give us a glimpse of the children who owned them, as well as life before the Easter Rising of 1916?

What images are particularly effective?

3. "The Lost Land:" Who do you think the speaker is referring to with the word "they" in line 25? What country might the "lost land" be?