

**Literature MA Track Entrance Exam**  
**English and American Literature**  
**Spring 2015**

Answer three of the following four questions. (33.33 points each)

1. How do Herman Melville's and Nathaniel Hawthorne's writings reflect a darker and more pessimistic view of the human condition, compared to the more hopeful attitudes expressed by Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau, concerning the potential for any individual's self-improvement?
  
2. What social and intellectual forces caused the turn away from Romantic literature following the American Civil War, and the emergence of Realism and Naturalism as the predominate forms of literary expression between 1865 and 1918?
  
3. Dystopian fiction (also known as anti-utopian fiction) has made an important contribution to modern English literature. What are the main features of dystopian fiction and why do you think it has been so popular and influential?
  
4. Many of the greatest writers writing in the English language today hail from former colonies of the British Empire (Australia, New Zealand, Canada, South Africa, Nigeria, Kenya, Trinidad, etc.) Drawing on two or three examples of writers from these so called Commonwealth countries, discuss some of the main features of post-colonial literature in English.