BA in English and American Studies Questions and Readings for the Final Examination (2020)

I. English Linguistics

The brief remarks that follow might help you interpret the questions and better understand what we expect you to do and what we do not. Each title, e.g. "Natural language and linguistic theory," is followed by an annotation, which clarifies what questions and issues may be discussed under that title. We do not expect you to address each such question. Instead, we encourage you to be selective and discuss some of the questions under a title in some depth rather than make a few cursory remarks about each.

1. Natural language and linguistic theory

Naïve beliefs about language and linguistics. What is language? What is a language? Goals of linguistic theory. Criticism of prescriptive approaches to language and grammar. Natural language vs. animal communication systems. Competence vs. performance. Mental grammars and theories of mental grammars. The structure of competence and the structure of grammars. The creative aspect of language use and its implications for a theory of competence. FL/UG and the logical problem of language acquisition. Adequacy conditions on grammars.

2. Phonological theory and the phonological structure of English and Hungarian

The task and goals of phonological theory, its place in (a) grammar. Phonology vs. phonetics. Segmental and suprasegmental phonology. The phoneme inventory of English. Phonological differences between English and Hungarian.

3. Goals and tasks of syntactic theory and the structure of English sentences

The place of syntax in grammar. The goals and tasks of syntactic theory. Constituent structure and structural relations. Identifying sentence constituents: "constituency tests" and assumptions that underlie them. Determining the category of constituents. Traditional syntax vs. generative transformational grammar. The "major English clause types" of traditional grammar. The complementation and subcategories of verbs. Contrasts expressed in the verb phrase/sentence (tense, aspect, mood). The structure of non-monoclausal sentences. Clausal coordination and subordination. Finite and nonfinite clauses as constituents.

4. The structure, meaning and communicative function of linguistic expressions

Word meaning and sentence meaning. The compositionality principle. The content of linguistic communication: sentence meaning versus utterance meaning. The context of utterance interpretation. Inference in utterance interpretation. Criticism of the naïve assumption of a biunique relation between structural sentence types and discourse functions. One-to-many and many-to-one correspondence between structural sentence types and discourse functions. Declaratives and interrogatives as indirect directives.

II. British and American Civilisation and History

II.1. British Civilisation, History and Cultural History

In discussing the following topics, you are expected to synthesize the relevant information and ideas from your studies in British Civilisation, the History of Great Britain, and the Cultural History of Britain. The subtopics in parenthesis are merely an indication as to what you should consider while approaching the main topic; under no circumstances should they be discussed in isolation.

1. Country, geography, people and political life: Unbalanced Union: Discuss England's dominance of Britain and Ireland throughout history; does the Union have a future? (settlement; invasions; ethnic groups; the North–South divide; sectarianism; national parties: Plaid Cymru, Sinn Fein /DUP, SNP; Devolution)

2. The Monarchy, government and parliamentary system: *The cradle of Democracy: Outline the historical roots and origins of today's major political institutions* (the Monarchy; the source of parliamentary traditions; the origins of the House of Lords and its role today; the Tudors, their legitimising myth and their enduring legacy; the electoral system; the fight for the franchise)

3. The law: A very English constitution: Why does Britain not have a written constitution? (an uncodified constitution; sources of the constitution; Henry II, English Common Law; statute law; foundation documents: the Magna Carta, Provisions of Oxford, Petition of Rights, Bill of Rights, Act of Settlement; 20th-century Acts of Parliament; the future?)

4. Society, education and welfare: *Discuss the origins of the education and welfare systems in the UK* (historical overview of the major educational institutions; the current education system; the formation of the current welfare system; the role of the church; the Poor Law; Industrial Revolution; the Liberal government of the 20th century; the Beveridge report, the Welfare State vs. Thatcherism; dismantling welfare; privatising education)

5. International relations and economy: *The 'ruler of the waves': Why a Commonwealth of Nations?* (the story of the British Empire; the development of overseas trade; Henry VIII and the navy; Elizabeth I; American War of Independence; the "Second" Empire; the Jewel in the Crown; scramble for Africa; Chinese Opium Wars; penal colonies; World Wars; break up; legacy)

6. Religion: *Discuss the story of Christianity and its art in Britain* (the Christianisation of Britain; forms and styles of medieval Church Art with examples; the Reformation; John Wycliffe and the Lollards; Henry VIII and the Church of England; Roman Catholicism; Non-Conformism; other religions; religious map of the UK today)

II.2. American Civilization and History

7. Discuss the concept of the American Dream and its manifestations in American high and low culture.

8. Retrace the development of multicultural America with special emphasis on the main aspects of the color multiculture, that is, the main ethnic and racial groups.

- 9. Discuss the process of the formation of the American colonies.
- **10.** Discuss the historical development of the United States between 1775 and 1865.
- **11.** Discuss the formation and main aspects of the Constitution of the United States.
- **12.** Discuss the historical development of the United States between 1917 and 1945.

III. British and American Literature

Preambulum

The comprehensive examination concluding your literary studies is not another end-of-thesemester exam ("kollokvium"). The subjects below demand much broader literary intelligence: integrative skills are needed in handling lecture and seminar materials as well as related required readings.

(A) English Studies Specialization

III.1. British Literature

1. The English Poetry of the 14th century: Chaucer and the Alliterative Revival (the 14th century English and European context, Humanism, Chaucer and his art, the significance and variety of the Alliterative Revival)

2. English Renaissance Drama: Shakespeare and his Contemporaries (the 16th century context; Renaissance and Humanism in England and Europe; Elizabethan Literary Drama, Shakespeare and his varieties of drama)

3. Tendencies and Styles in Lyric and Epic Poetry in the 17th and 18th Centuries (Metaphysical poetry; the Miltonic sonnet and Milton's Puritan epic; Neoclassical verse satires and Pope's mock-heroic epic; new trends of pre-romantic poetry)

4. The Rise of the English Novel: Types and Forms (Swift's satire; Defoe's new type of hero/heroine; Richardson's novel of sensibility; Fielding's version of the picaresque novel; Sterne's novel-parody; Austen's novel of manners and Scott's historic novels)

5. Generations of Romanticism (form and contents; political and cultural influences; Blake, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron, Shelley, Keats)

6. The Victorian Novel (Art and reality: Charles Dickens, the Brontë Sisters, W. M. Thackeray, George Eliot)

7. Search for new alternatives in the Late Victorian period (Victorian Poetry: Tennyson and Robert Browning; new sensibility, experience and technical solutions: Oscar Wilde, Walter Pater, Matthew Arnold, Thomas Hardy)

8. Modern Fiction and the "Re-shaping of the Novel" (innovations of the narrative technique introduced by Henry James, Joseph Conrad, James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, D. H. Lawrence and Aldous Huxley)

9. Modernist Poetry and its Aftermath (W. B. Yeats's Symbolism and personal mythology; T. S. Eliots's new classicism through his criticism and poetry; the Auden Generation)

10. Varieties of Drama in Britain from the Turn of the 19th and 20th Century until the 1950s (the well-made play; Shavian Theatre; the Irish Dramatic Movement and the Abbey Theatre; T. S. Eliot's poetic drama)

III.2. American Literature and Cultural History

11. The changing concept of the American Dream (the myths of American spirit/identity; Benjamin Franklin: the first American; the Manifest Destiny idea; literature of the American frontier: James Fenimore Cooper's romances, Melville's scepticism of American progress and expansionism; the dissolution of the American Dream after the turn of the century; the anti-hero and the vacuity of American life in Sinclair Lewis, F. Scott Fitzgerald and John Steinbeck)

12. Variations of American Consciousness from 1800 to 1940 (Romanticism, Transcendentalism, Abolitionism, Realism, Regional Realism, Naturalism, Modernism; the nay-sayers: Poe's Gothicism, and the yea-sayers: Ralph Waldo Emerson; the slave issue: F. Douglass's *Narrative*, the female voice in Dickinson's poetry and Chopin's prose; realistic portrayals of 19th century American society in Twain and Crane; the stream-of-consciousness technique in modernist prose: Hemingway and Faulkner)

(B) American Studies Specialization

III.1. British Literature

1. The characteristics of the English novel in a major phase of its development

The Rise of the English Novel: Types and Forms (Swift's satire;. Defoe's new type of hero/heroine; Richardson's novel of sensibility; Fielding's version of the picaresque novel; Sterne's novel-parody; Austen's novel of manners and Scott's historic novels)

OR

The Victorian Novel (art and reality: Charles Dickens, The Brontë Sisters, W. M. Thackeray, George Eliot)

OR

Modern Fiction and the "Re-shaping of the Novel" (innovations of the narrative technique introduced by Henry James, Joseph Conrad, James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, D. H. Lawrence and Aldous Huxley)

2. The central features of poetry in a major phase of English Literature

The English Poetry of the 14th Century: Chaucer and the Alliterative Revival (the 14th century English and European context; Humanism; Chaucer and his art; the significance and variety of the Alliterative Revival)

OR

Tendencies and Styles in Lyric and Epic Poetry in the 17th and 18th Centuries (Metaphysical poetry; The Miltonic sonnet and Milton's Puritan epic; Neoclassical verse satires and Pope's mock-heroic epic; new trends of pre-romantic poetry)

OR

Generations of Romanticism (form and contents; political and cultural influences; Blake, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron, Shelley, Keats)

OR

Modernist Poetry and its Aftermath (W. B. Yeats's Symbolism and personal mythology; T. S. Eliots's new classicism through his criticism and poetry; the Auden Generation)

3. Drama in English - the outline of a major period

English Renaissance Drama: Shakespeare and his Contemporaries (the 16th century context; Renaissance and Humanism in England and Europe; Elizabethan Literary Drama; Shakespeare and his varieties of drama)

OR

18th and 19th Century Drama (novelties of Restoration Theatre;, Dryden's dramatic works; Congreve's and Sheridan's comedies of manners; Oscar Wilde's version of the comedy of manners)

OR

Varieties of Drama in Britain from the Turn of the 19th and 20th Century until the 1950s (the well-made play; Shavian Theatre; the Irish Dramatic Movement and the Abbey Theatre; T. S. Eliot's poetic drama)

III.2. American Literature and Cultural History

4. Introduction to American Studies

Major steps in the development of the American nation in the 19–20th century in view of the Frontier, regions and immigration influences (the westward movement; Manifest Destiny; closing of the frontier; new European immigration from 1880 to 1914; an agricultural country becoming industrial)

5. Introduction to American Studies

Significant forms, notions and features of the development of American Studies; American Studies in Hungary (American studies as a discipline; American studies as a concept of culture; the myth and symbol school; the transformation of American Studies; leading representatives of American studies in Hungary)

6. Introduction to Canadian Studies

The concept of regionalism in Canada, the reasons for its emergence and significance in Canadian national and individual identity formation (major regions and their particular relationships with the rest of Canada; Canada as a promised land; immigration to Canada – compared with that in the United States; national holidays)

7. Introduction to Canadian Studies

Ethnic pluralism: minorities, clashing interests vs. the values and opportunities of contemporary multicultural Canada; various interpretations of multiculturalism

8. American Literature and Culture

The historical and social relevance of Puritanism and conjoining American values in view of selected pieces of literature (John Winthrop, Cotton Mather, John Cotton, William Bradford, Jonathan Edwards)

9. American Literature and Culture

Major streams of consciousness, literary figures and tendencies in the 19th century and at the turn of the century (Transcendentalism, Realism and Naturalism: Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, Walt Whitman, Emily Dickinson, Mark Twain, Stephen Crane, Jack London, Kate Chopin)

10. American Literature and Culture

Outstanding pieces of literature and authors in 20th century Modernist American literature in poetry, prose and drama (Ezra Pound, Carl Sandburg, T.S. Eliot, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Ernest Hemingway, John Steinbeck, Tennessee Williams, Arthur Miller, Langston Hughes)

11. American Literature and Culture

The appearance and challenge to the American Dream in selected pieces of American prose, drama and poetry (F. Scott Fitzgerald: *The Great Gatsby*, Arthur Miller: *Death of a Salesman*, John Steinbeck: *The Grapes of Wrath*, Allen Ginsberg: "Howl")

12. American Literature and Culture

Major trends in recent American literature (Non-conformism, Postmodernism, Minimalist fiction) and the expressions of ethnic and gender minority identity (J. D. Salinger: *The Catcher in the Rye*, Kurt Vonnegut: *Slaughterhouse Five*, Thomas Pynchon: *The Crying of Lot 49*, Leroi Jones: *Dutchman*, Raymond Carver: "A Small, Good Thing")

13. Canadian Literature and Culture

Questions of Identity Formation in Canadian Literature (the first stirrings of a literary culture: Catharine Parr Traill and Susanna Moodie; Modernism in fiction: Morley Callaghan; poetry and prose: Margaret Atwood; the short story: Alice Munro)

Readings

I. English Linguistics

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- Bhatia, Vijay K. Worlds of Written Discourse: A Genre-based View. London/New York: Continuum, 2004.
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- Greenbaum, S., & R. Quirk. A Student's Grammar of the English Language. Harlow: Longman, 1990.
- Huddleston, R. & G. K. Pullum *A Student's Introduction to English Grammar*. Cambridge: CUP, 2005.
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- Lipka L. An Outline of English Lexicology. Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1992.
- Lyons, J. Introduction to Theoretical Linguistics. Cambridge: CUP, 1979.
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- Nádasdy Á. Background to English Pronunciation : Phonetics, Phonology, Spelling : For Students of English at Hungarian Teacher Training Institutions. Budapest: Nemzeti Tankönyvkiadó, 2006.
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- Radford, A. English Syntax: An Introduction. Cambridge: CUP, 2004.
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II. British and American Civilization and History

British History and Society

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British Culture and Arts

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American History and Culture

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Fiedler, Eckhard et al. America in Close-Up. London: Longman, 2001.

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- Taras et al. A Passion for Identity An Introduction to Canadian Studies. Scarborough: Nelson, 2001.

Saywell, John. Canada: Pathways to the Present. Toronto: Stoddard, 1994.

Morton, Desmond. A Short History of Canada. Toronto: McClelland and Steward, 2001.

III. British and American Literature

For students in the American Studies Specialization the compulsory material includes, apart from the American Literature courses, (any) 2 of the 4 English Literature courses.

Compulsory Readings

English Literature 1

Pearl; Sir Gawain and the Green Knight
Geoffrey Chaucer, The Canterbury Tales – General Prologue, The Knight's Tale, The Nun's Priest's Tale, The Pardoner's Tale
Thomas Kyd, The Spanish Tragedy.
Christopher Marlowe, Doctor Faustus
William Shakespeare, A Midsummer Night's Dream; Richard III; Hamlet; Othello; Macbeth; The Tempest
Ben Jonson, Volpone.

English Literature 2

John Donne, "The Blossom", "The Good-Morrow", "The Flea"
Andrew Marwell, "To his Coy Mistress"
John Milton, "On His Deceased Wife", "On His Blindness", *Paradise Lost, The First Book* and selections from 3 Books
John Bunyan, *The Pilgrim's Progress* (extracts)
Alexander Pope, "The Rape of the Lock" (Cantos 1 and 5)
Daniel Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe*Jonathan Swift, *Gulliver's Travels;* "A Modest Proposal"
Thomas Gray, "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard"
Samuel Johnson, "London" or "The Vanity of Human Wishes"
William Cowper, "The Poplar Field", "To a Mouse", "John Anderson My Jo"
Henry Fielding, *Tom Jones*Laurence Sterne, *Tristram Shandy* (Volumes I-II)

Walter Scott, *Ivanhoe* or *Waverley*

Jane Austen, Sense and Sensibility or Pride and Prejudice

English Literature 3

- Edmund Burke, A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origins of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful (On Obscurity); Reflections on the Revolution in France (On Englishness, Society is a Contract)
- William Blake, All Religions Are One, From Songs of Innocence and Songs of Experience: "Introduction," "Infant Joy," "Infant Sorrow," "The Chimney Sweeper," "The Lamb," "The Tyger", "London"
- William Wordsworth, "Advertisement" to the *Lyrical Ballads*, "We Are Seven," "Composed upon Westminster Bridge," "The Daffodils," "Tintern Abbey"
- Samuel Taylor Coleridge, From *Christabel;* "Kubla Khan: A Vision," From *Fears in Solitude:* "Frost at Midnight," "France: An Ode", "Rhyme of the Ancient Mariner"
- Percy Bysshe Shelley, "To Wordsworth," "Ode to the West Wind," *Prometheus Unbound, A Lyrical Drama in Four Acts*, "A Defence of Poetry", "Lines to Lord Byron"
- John Keats, "On First Looking into Chapman's Homer," "La Belle Dame Sans Merci," "Ode on a Grecian Urn"
- George Gordon Byron, From *Hebrew Melodies*: "She Walks in Beauty," from *Don Juan* Canto I.

Alfred Tennyson, "Mariana," "Ulysses," "In Memoriam A. H. H.

- Robert Browning: "Love Among the Ruins," "My Last Duchess"
- Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Sonnets 21 and 43

Charlotte Brontë, Jane Eyre

Emily Brontë, Wuthering Heights

William Makepeace Thackeray, Vanity Fair

- Charles Dickens, Christmas Carol and Oliver Twist or Great Expectations
- Matthew Arnold, "The Scholar Gipsy," "Dover Beach," "The Function of Criticism at the Present Time", From *Culture and Anarchy*: "Sweetness and Light," "Porro Unum Est Necessarium," "The Study of Poetry"
- Thomas Hardy, *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, "Hap," "The Convergence of the Twains," "Neutral Tones"
- Oscar Wilde, The Picture of Dorian Gray and The Importance of Being Earnest.

English Literature 4

- G. M. Synge, *The Playboy of the Western World* or Sean O'Casey, *Juno and the Paycock* or W. B. Yeats: *At the Hawk's Well*
- G. B. Shaw, Pygmalion and Saint Joan or Mrs Warren's Profession
- W. B. Yeats, "The Lake Isle of Innisfree," "A Coat," "Easter 1916," "Sailing to Byzantium," "Byzantium," "The Second Coming," "Among School Children," "Leda and the Swan," "The Circus Animals' Desertion,"
- T. S. Eliot, "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock," *The Waste Land*, "Tradition and the Individual Talent," "The Metaphysical Poets"
- W. H. Auden, "In Memory of W. B. Yeats," "In Memory of Sigmund Freud," "The Shield of Achilles," "Miss Gee," "Musée de Beaux Arts"

Henry James, The Ambassadors or The Portrait of a Lady

Joseph Conrad, Lord Jim or Heart of Darkness

- Virginia Woolf, *To the Lighthouse* or *The Waves* or *Mrs Dalloway*, "Modern Fiction," "Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown"
- James Joyce, A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man or Ulysses or Dubliners

E. M. Forster, A Passage to India

D. H. Lawrence, Sons and Lovers or Lady Chatterley's Lover or Rainbow

American Literature

Benjamin Franklin: Autobiography Crevecoeur: Letters from an American Farmer James Fenimore Cooper: The Last of the Mohicans Herman Melville: *Mobv-Dick* Sinclair Lewis: Babbit F. Scott Fitzgerald: The Great Gatsby John Steinbeck: Of Mice and Men Edgar Allan Poe: "The Fall of the House of Usher" Ralph Waldo Emerson: "Self-Reliance", "Nature" Frederick Douglass: Narrative Nathaniel Hawthorne: The Scarlet Letter Walt Whitman: "Song of Myself" Emily Dickinson: "Because I could not stop for Death", "I'm Nobody! Who are you?", "I heard a Fly buzz – when I died", "The Bustle in the House", "This is my letter to the World" Mark Twain: The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn Kate Chopin: The Awakening Jack London: "To Build a Fire" Stephen Crane: The Red Badge of Courage Ernest Hemingway: "The Snows of Kilimanjaro" William Faulkner: "Barn Burning" Richard Wright: Native Son

Recommended Sources

English Literature 1

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- Wu, Duncan. Romanticism: An Anthology. Oxford and Cambridge: Blackwell, 1994.

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