

Final Exam Paper 1: 50 points

Answer **two** of the questions below. Support the points you make with ample evidence from the selections you choose to discuss. Be careful not to reproduce the contents of a previous test. Also, do not discuss any selection more than one time, and be sure to discuss at least one work of non-fiction within this paper. The reading list is given on page two of the exam.

1. Race is not the only component that shapes individual identity. It usually interacts with other social identities such as gender, class, sexuality, ability, etc. in determining one's social position that leads to privilege and/or discrimination. Discuss **two** selections we have read this semester which show the interconnected nature of social categorizations (such as race, gender, class, sexuality, ability, etc.) that are linked to social advantage and/or disadvantage. Which work portrays such interrelation in a fuller, more interesting way? How?
2. What can English prose do? As you read the course selections throughout the semester, you may have felt that some were using words to do something "difficult." Choose **two** such selections, fiction or non-fiction, and analyze what you think is hard about what the text is trying to do with written language. Some questions you might consider in your discussion: What things are hard to put into words yet the texts did it anyway? Presenting a complex issue, proposing an unbelievable idea, describing an indescribable situation or character, championing a controversial cause, or creating sympathy and care across distances and difference? What techniques do the authors use to achieve this? What is the value of daring a difficult writing task?
3. Binary thinking is frequently criticized for being simplistic and even dangerous, yet it frames much of how we process information, for example powerful-powerless, happy-sad, adult-child, concrete-abstract, brave-cowardly, success-failure, either-or. Choose **two** works and discuss whether they present things in terms of opposites in this binary fashion or offer other ways of looking at the world. Explain as well why each mode of thinking is suitable for its function in the texts.

Fiction

“Five Short Stories” – Lydia Davis
“Late Returns” – Joe Hill
“Bad Dreams” – Tessa Hadley
“Snuff” – Jodi Angel
“Protozoa” – Ella Martinsen Gorham
“Audition” – Saïd Sayrafiezadeh
“Bettering Myself” – Ottessa Moshfegh
“Admiral” – T. C. Boyle
“Heads of the Colored People” – Nafissa
Thompson-Spires
“Omakase” – Weike Wang
“The Manga Artist” – Doug Henderson
“Pity and Shame” – Ursula K. Le Guin

Non-fiction

“The Man at the River” – Dave Eggers
“Who’s Your Daddy?” – Joe Hill
“In the Shadow of a Fairy Tale” – Leslie
Jamison
“What My Mother and I Don’t Talk About”
– Michele Filgate
“I Won’t Be Marginalized by Online
Harassment” – Kelly Marie Tran
“I Invented the Term ‘Sadfishing’” –
Rebecca Reid
“Walkabout” – Jeffrey Eugenides
“Bettering Myself” – Ottessa Moshfegh
“The Future Has an Ancient Heart” –
Sugar
“Positive Obsession” – Octavia Butler
“Dry January” – Scaachi Koul
“Lola’s Story” – Alex Tizon
“I Am a Big Black Man Who Will Never
Own a Gun Because I Know I Would
Use It” – Kiese Laymon
“The Impact of Microaggressions and
Why They Matter” – Simba Runyowa
“Cross-Cultural Marriage Is No Picnic” –
Pathik Pathak
“Full House” – David Sedaris
“In Defense of Graphic Novels and Those
Who Read Them” – Liesl Shurtliff