

Notes on taking the Intermediate Exam (*Zwischenprüfung* [ZP]) with Professor Hilary Dannenberg

Key information on taking the ZP can be found at the following link:

<http://www.uni-trier.de/index.php?id=10391>

Please follow the instructions there regarding the composition and submission of your reading list and your preparation for the exam. In addition, below are my personal recommendations and advice on how to prepare for the exam if I am your examiner.

Your first priority should be to prepare to answer questions on the ten texts on your reading list, referring both to literary history and literary form (points A and B below). In addition, you should review your overall knowledge of literary history, also regarding the development of the main literary genres (point C below).

A: Prepare and study the literary-historical context of each of your authors and their works.

The following questions are suggestions for key aspects to focus on:

- Which genre, subgenre and period do they belong to?
- How are they representative of the overall output of the author?
- How are they representative (or not), of overall literary-historical trends, cultural ideas and issues in the period in which they were written?
- Is the author associated with a larger literary movement? If so, what were the key features and ideas of that movement and what specific role did the author play in that movement?
- In what way did the author/the work contribute to the overall history of the genre/subgenre concerned (history of the novel, of drama, of poetry).

B: Prepare each of your texts for key questions regarding their literary form according to their specific literary genre and subgenre

This means you should be aware, in detail, of the specific formal features of different literary genres (narrative fiction, drama, poetry) and be able to apply key terminology for their analysis. Prepare for your exam by practicing the application of this terminology on your selected texts. Bear in mind that there are often competing sets of terms produced by different academics (for example: there are many different systems of classification for the different types of narrator in narrative fiction; there are different ways of classifying types of character conception and the different methods for the representation of character in literary texts; there are a variety of competing theories and terms for the analysis of metaphor in poetry and language as a whole). It is not necessary to know all the different systems and theories for the ZP. Your primary aim should be to be aware of the different key distinguishing features of all the major genres and have a command of technical terms which will enable you to describe and analyse the form of each of the texts on your list.

C: Review your overall knowledge of literary history and of the terms for classifying epochs and major literary movements

In addition to being able to place your chosen authors and works in their specific literary-historical context, you should review your overall knowledge of literary history by consulting at least two literary histories. Use these works, first, to look up the authors on your reading list and establish their historical context (as part of your preparation for point A above). When you have done this, expand your understanding of literary history by creating a more complete map of key periods of literary history for areas not covered by your selected authors (it often helps to sketch your own map of literary history when doing this kind of preparation).

Like all stories, literary history can be told in different ways; here are two key approaches which should both be used in your preparation:

- Review and clarify your knowledge and understanding of the different epochal designations used to create major 'signposts' in the writing of literary and cultural history. (For example: students sometimes use the terms "Victorian period" and "the nineteenth century" interchangeably, although they are not the same thing; what is the difference?)
- Each literary genre has its own specific evolutionary history. For example, the history and development of the drama is different to that of the novel: each genre has its own specific historical milestones, significant periods and key authors. Review your knowledge of the different key stages in the evolution of each of the major literary genres. Bear in mind, however, that sometimes major literary movements manifest themselves across more than one literary genre. (For example: in which period was the Gothic novel established and what larger literary movement was the Gothic novel a manifestation of? What specific features and themes characterized the Gothic novel and how did these influence the subsequent development of narrative fiction?)

Please note: the examples given above are given as practical illustrations to help you to formulate your own method of inquiry when preparing for the exam; they are not questions which will receive a greater focus than others in the ZP. The questions in your exam will be primarily oriented towards the texts on your reading list, but you should also be prepared to answer general questions on literary history as described in section C.

Good luck with your preparation.

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