

Senior Oral Exams Topics List, with Sample Questions **Latin America Field**

Topic I. Literature of the Anglophone and Francophone Caribbean

Aimé Césaire, *Cahier d'un retour au pays natal* (1939)

Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952)

V.S. Naipaul, "Trinidad." In *The Middle Passage* (1962)

Jean Rhys, *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966)

Derek Walcott, "Sea Grapes," "The Schooner Flight," and "Names." In *Collected Poems: 1948-1984* (1986)

Jean Barnabé, Patrick Chamoiseau, Raphaël Confiant, *Eloge de la Créolité* (1989)

Derek Walcott, "The Muse of History." In *What the Twilight Says* (1998)

SAMPLE QUESTIONS

1. Could you tell me about the ideological differences between Césaire and Fanon?
2. What poetic techniques does Césaire use in *Cahier d'un retour au pays natal* to address any of these ideological differences?
3. How did French and British colonialism differ in the Caribbean?
4. How is the experience of the colonized explored in *Wide Sargasso Sea*?
5. What poetic techniques does Césaire use in *Cahier d'un retour au pays natal* to address these ideological differences?

Transitional Question: Compare the political goals of Césaire and/or Fanon to José Martí in "Nuestra América"?

Topic II. Bureaucratic Authoritarian Regimes in Chile and Argentina

Esteban Echeverría, “El matadero” (1871)

Jacobo Timerman, *Preso sin nombre, celda sin número* (1981)

The *Nunca Más* Report (1984)

Roberto Bolaño, *Nocturno de Chile* (2000)

Guillermo O’Donnell, “Toward an Alternative Conceptualization of South American Politics” (1971)

Pamela Constable and Arturo Valenzuela, “Army of Shadows” and “A Culture of Fear.” In *A Nation of Enemies* (1991)

Marguerite Feitlowitz, Chapter One, *A Lexicon of Terror* (1999)

SAMPLE QUESTIONS

1. Compare the authoritarian regimes during the Dirty War and Pinochet.
2. How does Marguerite Feitlowitz imagine language in *A Lexicon of Terror* and how does that relate to Timmerman’s *Preso sin nombre, celda sin número*?
3. What do you mean by “bureaucratic authoritarian regime,” and how does it relate to the literary?
4. How does Feitlowitz imagine language in *A Lexicon of Terror*, and how does it relate to Bolaño’s *Nocturno de Chile*?
5. How would you compare Timerman’s historic project with that of *Nunca Más*?

Topic III. Internal and External Revolutions

Simón Bolívar, “Carta de Jamaica” (1815)

José Martí, “Nuestra America” (1891)

Alejo Carpentier, *El siglo de las luces* (1962)

Che Guevara, “El socialismo y el hombre en Cuba” (1965)

Gustavo Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation* (1971)

Marifili Pérez-Stable, *The Cuban Revolution: Origins, Course, and Legacy* (1994)

Laurent Dubois, *Avengers of the New World* (2005)

SAMPLE QUESTIONS

1. What do you mean by “internal” and “external” revolutions? Also, what do you mean by “revolution”?
2. What is the metaphor that Che Guevara uses in “El socialismo y el hombre en Cuba” to think about the relationship between himself and the masses?
3. Compare Bolívar’s and Gutiérrez’ visions of revolution.
4. What were the internal and external factors that drove the Haitian Revolution?

Topic IV. Men Representing Women, Women Representing Themselves

Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, “Respuesta de la poetisa a la muy ilustre Sor Filotea de la Cruz” (1691)

Jorge Isaacs, *María* (1867)

Pablo Neruda, *Twenty Love Poems and a Song of Despair* (1924)

Rodolfo Walsh, “Esa mujer” (1966)

Rosario Castellanos, “Poesía no eres tú” (1972)

Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands: The New Mestiza = La Frontera* (1987)

Octavio Paz, “Hijos de la Malinche.” In *El laberinto de la soledad* (1959)

Diana Taylor, “Gendering the National ‘Self.’” In *Disappearing Acts* (1997)

SAMPLE QUESTIONS

1. What is the relationship between aesthetics and politics in the poetry of Anzaldúa and Castellanos?
2. What role does religion play in Isaacs’ *María*?
3. How do these men represent women differently from the way they represent themselves?
4. How did the Spanish conquest shape Mexican national identity?

Transition Question: How would you relate either the *casta* paintings or Kahlo’s paintings listed in Topic V with Anzaldúa’s formulation of the *mestiza*?

Topic V. Visual Culture in Mexico

José de Ibarra (attrib.), *De Negro e india, lob a* (ca. 1725) and unknown, *De albino y español, nace torna atrás* (ca. 1785-90)

José Clemente Orozco, “Anglo-America” and “Hispano-America.” From *The Epic of American Civilization* (1932-34)

Diego Rivera, *Man at the Crossroads* (1932-34)

Frida Kahlo, *My Dress Hangs There* (New York) (1933) and *The Broken Column* (1944)

Angel Rama, “La ciudad escrituaria.” In *La ciudad letrada* (1984)

Iona Katzew, Chapter One, *Casta Paintings: Images of Race in Eighteenth Century Mexico* (2005)

Desmond Rochfort, “The Sickle, the Serpent, and the Soil: History, Revolution, Nationhood, and Modernity in the Murals of Diego Rivera, José Clemente Orozco, and David Alfaro Siqueiros.” In *The Eagle and the Virgin* (2006)

Louis E.V. Navaer and Elaine Sendyk, *Protest Graffiti Mexico: Oaxaca* (2009)

SAMPLE QUESTIONS

1. Why do you call this topic “in Mexico” when at least four of the works (Orozco, Kahlo’s *My Dress*, and *Man at a Crossroads*) were painted in the U.S.? Additionally, how has American consumption (and occasional censorship) shaped modern Mexican art?
2. How does Orozco represent “Anglo-America” vis-à-vis “Hispano-America” in *The Epic of American Civilization*? Is its location at Dartmouth significant?
3. How do these artists use visual art as a form of political protest?
4. How does Frida Kahlo integrate multiple identities, such as Judaism, into her *Self Portrait on the Border between Mexico and the United States*?