

**National Taiwan University**  
**Graduate Institute of Foreign Languages and Literatures**  
**2016 PhD Program Admissions Examination**  
**Subject: American Literature (40%)**

*Instructions: Write an English essay on the following topic. Note that this is not a test on literary theory. A theoretical framework is not necessary and could effectively be detrimental if unwarranted. Support your argument with copious references to pertinent texts.*

Recent literary discussions have been informed by new concerns—about race, gender, class, the environment, etc.—and new concepts—about power relations, linguistic constructs, subjectivity, globalization, etc. Earlier writers and early readers often do not share our modern awareness, thus the need to reevaluate and reinterpret earlier works for a contemporary readership. For your essay, choose one American literary text before 1900 and explain how our reading of it differs from that of earlier readers. Then choose an American literary work of a similar theme from the 20<sup>th</sup> century and explain how the writer handles the same issues with a modern sensibility.