

## Poetry Anthology Guidelines:

*In preparation for the comprehensive MFA exam you are asked to compile an anthology. Below are some guidelines for review prior to compilation of your anthology.*

1. Poetry anthologies may be compiled as binders including copies of poems with no notes or critical discussion **OR** as USB flash drives including files containing poems with no notes or critical discussion.
2. You may opt to bring books in addition to your anthology with you to the exam. Only books containing no critical essays, biographical information, or other discussion will be allowed in the exam room. If you have questions about whether a book may be referenced during the exam, contact the graduate programs manager. The use of library books is not recommended.
3. All anthologies (hard copy or electronic) must be checked prior to the exam. You should plan to arrive a few minutes early for the review of your anthology (and books, should you bring any). The graduate programs manager will let you know if anything can't be used during the exam.
4. Your anthology may include as many or as few poems as you choose. The poems in your anthology should represent the work of those poets on your rationale reading list. Some students opt to include only a few select pieces from each poet; others opt to compile as comprehensive a collection as possible.
5. Your anthology may be organized as you like it. Most anthologies are organized by poet, but some anthologies are organized according to date/time period or style; still others are divided into unique sections meaningful to the student.
6. Your anthology is more than just reference material for the exam. It is a valuable resource that you can go to during the rest of your academic career and your professional career as a writer. Should you go on to teach, your anthology is all the more valuable in that you go into the classroom with a strong compilation of work somehow already strung together by theme/style/period/etc and a unique understanding of the work within that compilation and a knowledge of at least twenty poets, their work, their lives, and their approaches to writing. Many teaching alumni have mentioned the value of the exam and the anthology when in the classroom.
7. Your anthology is yours to keep, but it must be turned in along with your exam answers. All books used during the exam must also be turned in with your exam questions. Once your exam is graded, you are welcome to pick up your anthology from the graduate programs manager. Anthologies that remain in the office for one academic year or longer will be recycled.

One of the traditional components of a terminal degree is the comprehensive exam in which students demonstrate mastery of the literature in the field. The MFA exam is meant to showcase MFA poetry candidates' command of their genre and motivate fresh ideas and critiques of long-discussed works of poetry. It is an opportunity for MFA poetry candidates to demonstrate what they know. The faculty hope that students will take pleasure in the kinds of synthesis and writing the exam invites. They hope it will be (as Wallace Stevens says in "of Modern Poetry") the finding of satisfaction.

You want to create an anthology that allows you the opportunity to reference poems comfortably and easily while constructing your ideas in your answers to MFA exam questions. So, create your anthology to fit your needs.

*Questions: contact the graduate programs manager at [jstone22@gmu.edu](mailto:jstone22@gmu.edu) or 703.993.1180*