Medieval Western Literature Final Exam Study Guide

- **Characters**
  - **Luther**
    - Martin – Main Character of the Story. Became a Catholic Monk after a lightning storm frightened him, in which he made a promise to God to become a monk if he were to survive and to fulfill life goals. Faced the issue of never being able to make his Father proud of him. Wrote the 95 theses and posted them on the door of the University. Declared a heretic by the Catholic Church, started the Lutheran Church and the Reformation.
    - Hans – Father of Martin Luther. Has very high expectations of his son, and has sacrificed a lot to give his son the best. Simply wanted grandchildren from his son.
    - Katherine – Former Nun. Becomes Martin Luther’s wife following the Reformation.
    - Staupitz – Spiritual Father of Martin Luther during his time in the Monastery. Was a Vicar-General in the Augustinian Order. Remains Martin’s friend throughout and appears in the final scene alongside Martin Luther holding his son at night.
    - Tetzel – German Dominican Priest known for selling indulgences. Made Commissioner of All Indulgences for Germany by Pope Leo X. Strongly opposes Martin Luther as he badly damaged his business during the reformation.
    - Eck – Assistant of Archbishop Trier. Debated with Martin Luther at Leipzig on the authority and power of the Pope and the theology of the Catholic Church. Opposed Martin Luther at the Diet of Worms.
    - Cajetan – Papal Legate and Cardinal. Interviewed Martin Luther at Augsburg and suggested that he renounce his opinions on the selling of indulgences and papal infallibility.
  - **Man for All Seasons**
    - Thomas More – Protagonist of the Play. English Lawyer and Statesmen, important counselor to the King. Opposed the Reformation. Stood with his integrity and his conscience before God by not signing that he agreed with the King’s divorce of his wife Catherine, specifically when the Pope had given King Henry VIII the ability to marry Catherine in the first place.
    - Alice – Wife of Thomas More is confused at first by her husband’s inability to sign away his approval but later understands her husband’s motives after she visits him in prison before he is to be executed.
    - Meg – Thomas More’s well-educated and inquisitive daughter who falls in love with Roper, and seeks to marry him even though he is a Lutheran. Understands her father better than anyone else.
    - Norfolk – Close friend to Thomas More. Is asked by Cardinal Cromwell and even encouraged by Thomas to betray his friendship with Thomas. Very simpleminded man often doesn’t understand the situation.
    - Wolsey – Lord Chancellor of England who dies suddenly during his attempt to receive an annul from the Pope for the marriage of Henry VIII to Catherine allowing him to marry Anne Boelyn.
    - Cromwell – Crafty lawyer who is the primary agent working against Thomas More. Engineered the annulment between the King and Catherine.
    - Rich – Seeks a high position from Thomas More, but More only gifts him a cup and tells him to become a teacher. So Rich goes off to work for Wolsey and eventually receives a position as the attorney general in Wales from Cromwell for perjuring himself in the More trial. He is a Machiavellian character and is able to conquer and destroy his conscience unlike More.
- Chapuys – Spanish Ambassador to England. Seeks to stop the divorce between Catherine and Henry VIII.
- Common Man – Sporadically narrates the play. Shows up as different common characters throughout the play. Illustrates the point that most people betray their own personal moral values and end up just being happy to be alive.
- Roper – Over-zealous young man who marries Meg after converting from Lutheranism to Catholicism. His high-minded ordeals contrast with More’s level-headed morality.
- Henry VIII - King of England who breaks ties with the Catholic Church declaring himself to be the Head of State and Church, starting the Church of England all because he seeks to divorce Catherine. Wants to divorce Catherine because she is barren, ever religious and plain, the alliance with Spain is unpopular, and he is in love with Anne Boelyn.

**Othello**

- Othello – Christian Moor and General of the Armies of Venice. Physically powerful individual and eloquent, is prey to insecurities due to the amount of responsibility and prestige he carries at such a young age and to do so as a man of color.
- Desdemona – Daughter of Venetian Senator Brabantio. Is secretly married to Othello before the start of the play. She is determined and self-possessed and very capable of defending her marriage.
- Iago - Othello’s Ensign (Standard-bearer) villain of the play. Seeks the demise of Othello for no other reason than his finding pleasure in the pain of others, the only other possible explanation is that he was passed up for a promotion to Lieutenant several times.
- Roderigo – Jealous suitor of Desdemona, believes foolishly that if he gives Iago all of his money that Iago will aid him in winning the hand of Desdemona. Becomes frustrated when Desdemona and Othello marry and move to Cyprus. Is convinced by Iago to help him murder Cassio because he could possibly move in on Desdemona also.
- Cassio - Othello’s lieutenant. Cassio is a young and inexperienced soldier, whose high position is much resented by Iago. Truly devoted to Othello, Cassio is extremely ashamed after being implicated in a drunken brawl on Cyprus and losing his place as lieutenant. Iago uses Cassio’s youth, good looks, and friendship with Desdemona to play on Othello’s insecurities about Desdemona’s fidelity.
- Emelia – Iago’s wife and attendant of Desdemona. Cynical and worldly woman who is deeply attached to her mistress and is distrustful of Iago.
- Brabantio – Father of Desdemona, important Venetian Senator. Feels betrayed when his friend Othello marries his daughter in secret.
- Bianca – Prostitute who’s favorite customer is Cassio, who continually teases her with the idea of marriage.

**Faustus**

- Faustus – Protagonist of the play is a doctor who has the potential to be pretty much anything he desires. He contemplates being a doctor, a theologian, and a lawyer, but in the end decides to become a Necromancer. Doesn’t become a doctor because it is only delaying death. Doesn’t become a Theologian because of the absolute statements, “the wages of sin is death” and “for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God”. Doesn’t become a lawyer because he would have to spend his life with the underbelly of society and he doesn’t find that intriguing. Gives his soul to Satan for the ability to use Supernatural powers. He often wavers in his decision and comes close to repentance but always strays from that decision.
- Mephistopolis – Devil who Faustus summons with his initial magical experiment. Serves Faustus for the time period with which he possesses supernatural powers. On one hand wants to carry Faustus' soul to Hell and on the other hand wants to save him from suffering in Hell because he understands that it is terrifying. Similar to Faustus' situation with repentance.
- Good Angel – A spirit that attempts to persuade Faustus to repent and return to God. In many ways represents his conscience.
- Lucifer - The prince of devils, the ruler of hell, and Mephistophiliis's master.

**The Inferno**
- Dante – Protagonist of the Play and the Author. Journeys through Hell in order to journey to Heaven after he finds himself awoken after a deep sleep somewhere in the midst of a wood.
- Virgil – Guide of Dante through Hell, as he is the only other poet who has gone into any detail at all about what Hell looks like. Allegorical representation of human reason.

**Merchant of Venice**
- Portia – Beautiful and intelligent heiress of Belmont who is bound by her father's will to only marry the man who is able to choose correctly from three caskets. Marries her true love Bassanio after he chooses correctly from the caskets. Later she saves Antonio from death by pretending to be a lawyer and outsmarting the system and Shylock
- Antonio – Wealthy merchant and Christian who often lends money to people without interest which hurts the business of Shylock a Jewish moneylender. He seeks a loan from Shylock in order to help his friend Bassanio present himself as a proper suitor to Portia. When the loan is not paid back in time he is faced with having a “pound of flesh” taken from his body in repayment, but is saved by Portia's disguising herself as a lawyer.
- Shylock – Jewish moneylender who is angered by the Venetian Christians, specifically Antonio. Seeks to get his revenge by taking a “pound of flesh” from Antonio if he is unable to repay a loan that goes to Bassanio. Is represented very stereotypically. Ends up having to give up the charges.
- Bassanio – Friend of Antonio who seeks to receive the hand of his love Portia, but is without money and so goes to Antonio for a loan. Antonio’s money has all been shipped out in different ventures and so he must take out a loan from Shylock for his friend. Bassanio ends up marrying Portia but finds out that Antonio faces death right after the marriage, so he journeys back to attempt to save him.
- Nerissa - Lady-in-waiting of Portia. Marries Gratiano (Bassanio's Friend)
- Gratiano – Friend of Bassanio who is a huge critic of Shylock. Journeys with Bassanio to Belmont for Portia and ends up falling in love with her lady-in-waiting Nerissa.
- Launcelot – Servant of Shylock who runs away to serve Bassanio instead. Comical figure who's skill seems to be making adept puns.
- Jessica – Daughter of Shylock who runs away from her father’s house to marry Antonio’s friend Lorenzo, taking a chest of money from her father with her escape. They run away together to Belmont to elope.

**Essay Questions**
- **Is the Law of Divine Retribution justified in Scripture?**
  - I do not believe that the Law of Divine Retribution as Dante has portrayed is justified in Scripture. I believe that the bible is very clear in Romans 6:23, “The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in our Lord Jesus Christ”. The Divine Retribution that Dante portrays gives a unique punishment based on the unique form of sin that has been committed, however this is not found anywhere in scripture, instead we see that sin leads to death, or that hell is a place where there will
be “weeping and gnashing of teeth” (Matthew 22:13) this is a place apart from God for it is in Darkness. The bible is clear in the fact that we must die because of our sin, anything other than that is simply not supported by Scripture.

- **How does the poem utilize form to extend the content’s meaning?**
  - The basis of the poem is to persuade individuals to turn away from their sinful ways and begin to live for Christ. Dante helps to extend this meaning through adding symbolism into the form of the poem. For instance there are three sections within the poem, each describing a separate place: Hell, Purgatory, and Heaven. Not only do the three sections represent this but also the Godhead. The amount of cantos, including the introduction, adds up to 100 which is thought of as a divine number. These are just a few of the ways that Dante sought to extend his poem’s meaning.

- **What part do reason and revelation play in the scheme of redemption?**
  - Revelation comes into play in the scheme of redemption because it takes the revelation that comes through the Holy Spirit to accept the Grace that is given to us through Christ Jesus. By denying that revelation and thus that Grace one finds themself on the road to Hell. It takes a denying of reason and an acceptance of faith and trust in who the Lord is to reach redemption, which is to say reach a point of accepting the revelation that comes through the Holy Spirit.

- **How does the poem demonstrate syncretism?**
  - There are several ways in which the poem demonstrates syncretism, first off the poem includes people from that time period that Dante would have known and they have become part of the story. The poem also demonstrates syncretism in the fact that there are several key members of the Catholic Church which have become a part of Hell, for instance Pope Leo.

- **Why can’t Faustus repent?**
  - I believe that the reason Faustus cannot repent is his pride. His pride keeps him at a point where to repent means that he was wrong and to be wrong at any point is simply not an option for him. By the end Faustus believed that his sin was so great that not even God could forgive him, that’s Pride.

- **Is the advice given him by the Good Angel sound?**
  - The Good Angel advises Faustus to think of heavenly things which is biblical. It is found in Hebrews 12:2, “Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.” The idea is also found in Philippians 4:8, “Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable— if anything is excellent or praiseworthy— think about such things.” For it is with thinking of these things that we are reminded to repent and seek to fulfill God’s purpose for our lives.

- **What was More’s belief regarding the duty of statesmen?**
  - The duty of a statesman is first of all to their private conscience then it is to the sake of public duties. He believes that by doing so a statesman will be able to accomplish a common good.

- **Why would the Common Man want us to recognize him?**
  - The Common Man wants us to recognize him because he is one of the key points throughout the entire story. Within the character of the Common Man is a symbolic representation of the moral dilemmas that we all face as humans and the realization that the world wants us to believe is that it matters not about morals for at least we are alive, the Common Man seeks to share that realization with us.
o What is the Common Man's advice to the audience? Is it sound?
  ▪ The Common Man advises the audience the doing the right thing is futile, the only thing that is necessary for all of them is to remain living, which is all that matters at the end of the day. There is no way that this is sound, doing good unto others is a call that we are all given by Christ. When Jesus was here teaching what it meant to be a Kingdom minded individual. One of his parables involved someone who was badly beaten and needed the help of someone else, which happened to be the Good Samaritan.

o When Meg complains to her father that he has suffered as much as anyone reasonably expect, what does he answer? How would you interpret that answer?
  ▪ More answers that it is an act of love that he maintains content with suffering. I think that the reason that he continues to suffer is because he views his time in prison and away from his family to be a trial with which he is able to prove his love for God. He believes that just as Christ suffered for His love of man, he ought to live out a reciprocation of that love.

o Rich contends that every man has a price. What is your response to this?
  ▪ I think that Jesus provided the number one example for us in the fact that he was able to withstand the temptation of the Devil, even though Satan tempted Christ with the ability to have whatever he desired. This proves to me that every man does not have a price. It is possible that many men do have a price, but truly unless one thinks about this question and asks themselves if they would do it, it is not until then that we find out.

o Luther tells his son that he might one day be glad of the Devil. Why?
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o What was lost through the success of the Protestant Reformation?
  ▪ One unified church body no matter how corrupt that church was. A great deal of peace within the world was also lost due to the Protestant reformation, wars erupted between people and countries that beforehand were a part of the same church and shared common purpose with one another. The church no longer had a great deal of presence within state affairs and politics.

o What was gained?
  ▪ A respect for the true teachings of the bible. True relationships with Jesus Christ and an understanding that one's sins resulted in serious consequences. Christianity impacted common day life in a greater way because the spiritual elite became a part of the community and no longer maintained a life of isolation. A new openness to serious questions within the realms of faith and Christianity now takes place.

o How did the playwright use psychological dimensions to amplify the spiritual struggle of Luther?
  ▪ The playwright made Martin sickly and weak in the stomach to show physically how he felt internally with his inability to truly be right with God as he imagined his life would operate were he to be right with God. The sickness that Luther felt displays that Luther is not content with mediocre discipleship but that he must go "all in" for Christ.

o What is the hard lesson which Martin had to learn?
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o Why wouldn't Luther recant?
  ▪ Luther wouldn't recant because no one was able to show him in scripture where he was wrong for his opinions on the Catholic Church. He believed that he was in the right to oppose the Catholic Church and he continually prayed for God to show him a sign that would prove him in the wrong, but one never occurred.

o What was Machiavelli's belief regarding the duty of the Prince?
• The duty of the Prince is to do whatever needs to be done in order to accomplish what is best for the State and for the ruler itself. Basically the rule that the Prince lived by is "The Ends Justify The Means".

  o Why was Machiavelli so concerned about the appearance of integrity?
    ▪ Machiavelli said that integrity is often an unimportant asset for a Prince. The rulers and authorities who simply focus on what is important and does not bother themselves with integrity or morals are often the rulers who surpass all others.

  o What are the two methods a Prince may employ? Which is better?
    ▪ The Prince may employ force or the law. The Prince can either enact legislation that will result in desired actions from his citizens or the Prince can forcefully make his citizens act as he desires. The method of enacting a law to control a people group is definitely better. At times others will circumvent within the process of the law and help to craft the proper law for both the Prince and the people.

  o How does the play Othello demonstrate the danger of jealousy?
    ▪ Within the play Othello, jealousy is a major theme and obstacle that all the characters face. The plot against Othello by Iago and Roderigo is completely guided by jealousy. Iago seeks to take revenge upon Othello because he believes that Othello has slept with his wife, which he has no reason to believe except for his jealousy. Roderigo is jealous of the fact that Othello received Desdemona's hand in marriage. Then at the end of the play Othello kills his wife because he believes she was sleeping with another, his jealousy over ruled reason.

  o What are Iago's motives for destroying Othello?
    ▪ Iago was passed up for a promotion under Othello by a less qualified man. Also Iago believed that Othello had slept with his wife. There is also the fact that some people just want to see the world burn.

  o How do you understand Jesus' admonition that we are to be "wise as serpents and as innocent as doves"?
    ▪ I take that to mean that Jesus wanted us to be innocent in terms of the world, to stay away from the temptations which are so easy to fall prey to. However he did not wish us to be naïve and fall prey to easy guises of the world, he desired us to be holy and to serve as an example before men.

  o What lesson is learned from the experience of Vanity Fair?
    ▪ The lesson that we learn from Vanity Fair is that we too must experience our own Vanity Fair. The world is going to see us as something different and it will not accept us as one of it's own, it will reject us and seek to destroy us. Our answer is to join with other believers and seek to push through with our eyes fixed upon Christ.

  o According to Portia, what is the "nature of mercy"?
    ▪ Portia replies that mercy cannot be compelled because of its divine nature or greatness. This nature joins justice and mercy, just as it links the one who gives mercy and the one who receives it. Portia explains that not only does mercy have a divine nature, but it is also what makes monarchs great. This happens, Portia explains, because: "It is an attribute to God himself.../When mercy seasons justice". In the Christian perspective represented by Portia, mercy is not only a part of justice, but it is its main aspect because God shows mercy in his Justice. Justice without mercy, then, becomes tyranny because it goes against divine nature.

  o Why was the punishment of Shylock justifiable?
    ▪ Shylock is the villain in the merchant of Venice. Shylock takes advantage of the people in vulnerable economic situations and makes a handsome living. The way Shylock is punished brings
into doubt the purity of Christian love and mercy. Under the Christian morals he should give back 4 times the amount he took from people just like Zacheeus in Jesus time. But under their law he was justifiable by just giving his estate to his children rather than back to the people he originally took advantage of. He also was forced to become a Christian, and that is not good because no one can force someone to become a Christian. That is not a legitimate faith.

- **Why was the printing press so vital to Protestantism?**
  - It was vital because the reformation gave us the Bible in languages other than just Latin and it became more widely available to the common man through its being available to be produced at a higher rate. It helped lead to the separation of the Catholic Church through Luther's 95 theses which were mass produced through the Printing Press allowing Luther to survive Catholic prosecution.

- **What did Machiavelli mean by “the harness of necessity:”? Discuss Cromwell’s application of that principle in serving Henry VII.**
  - I believe that Machiavelli meant that there are times when one is bound to do something because it is necessary for the good of all. Cromwell serves the King by procuring an annulment for the King, Cromwell does what is necessary for the state and this is because he is bound to do it simply because he serves the state.

- **What are the elements common to all believers which Pilgrim's hero demonstrates?**
  - Christian displayed many commonalities between himself as we as believers of Christ. He starts off having to lug a heavy load on his back. Someone in the early time of their Christian life often carry a heavy burden about them. It was through the power of Christ that Christian's load was relieved. Our burden can disappear at just the sight of Christ. Christian was on a constant journey being tempted, running into people going the wrong direction and falling short. We as Christians are constantly running into temptations, road blocks in our spiritual lives, and are constantly bombarded by people who are going the opposite of God. But if we holdfast, like Christian did, we too can reach God at the end.

- **How does Bunyan exploit the metaphor of Apostle Paul?**
  - Christian can be seen as a representation of Apostle Paul because he, like apostle paul was thrown into prison. While in Prison he got a follower, Faithful. This can be seen as a direct correlation to the Apostle Paul.

- **What lessons are learned from Doubting Castle?**
  - On his way Christian and his companion Hopeful stray off the narrow path (seeking easier travel) and fall into the hands of one Giant Despair who lives in Doubting Castle. The lesson should be clear, when Christians fall into doubts they will end up under the cruel hand of despair. By God's grace Christian and Hopeful escape after realizing that they have a key which is named "Promise" that opens the lock to the dungeon Giant Despair is holding them in and they flee back to the narrow path.

- **How does the Bunyan’s personal history help in interpreting the story?**
  - Bunyan was no stranger to suffering. His first wife died, and he was thrown into jail. Bunyan represents this idea of suffering in Pilgrims progress through the character of Christian. Christian had to go through a lot of trials on his journey to God, and we too have to go through trials.