Instructor: Dr. Brand  
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Department of English  
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Office Hours: M & W, 1:00-2:00; T & Th, 11:30-12:30 (& by appointment)

Objectives: This course offers a critical introduction to the major poems and selected prose of John Milton. We will read the works of Milton in their relevant biographical, historical, theological, political, and literary contexts with a view both to assessing the poet against the backdrop of the seventeenth century and in terms of his persistent and problematic influence. Over the course of the term, students will (1) acquire facility in reading and interpreting Miltonic poetry, (2) engage historical and literary contexts, especially the traditions of biblical and epic literature, (3) address relevant humanistic, theological, and representational problems, (4) evaluate interpretive cruxes in Milton’s poetry and their critical histories, (5) formulate critical arguments in conversation and writing, and (6) assess Milton’s influence and his place in English and European literature.


Course Requirements: To receive credit for this course, students are expected to attend class regularly, read all of the assignments on the syllabus, participate in class discussion, and to submit all written work in a timely fashion. Students will submit two formal essays (6 pp. each) and sit for a midterm exam, as well as a final examination. In addition to these requirements, graduate students in the MLA program will draw up an annotated bibliography in consultation with the instructor and will compose a longer, critical research paper (in lieu of the second essay).

Unexcused absences and habitual tardiness will not be tolerated and will result in a reduction of the final grade.

Written assignments are due on the dates designated on the syllabus *at the beginning of class*. Papers submitted late will be penalized with the reduction of a letter grade for each two-day period past the due-date.

The university’s policies on academic dishonesty will be strictly enforced, and students are expected to familiarize themselves with the relevant sections of the *Undergraduate Catalog* (pp. 71-73) and the *Student Handbook* (pp. 40-45).

Grading: For the satisfactory completion of these requirements, letter grades will be awarded and will constitute percentages of the final grade as follows:

- Essay 1  20 %
- Essay 2  25
- Mid-term Exam  20 %
- Final Exam  25
- Participation  10
Aug. 25 T  Introductory
27 Th  Milton’s Life & Times: “A warlike, various, and tragical age”
       Chronology (endpapers); biography (handout); “At a Vacation Exercise” (p. 261); “At a
       Solemn Musick” (p. 56); Sonnet 7 (p. 85); Sonnet 19 (p. 256); Sonnet 23 (p. 259)
Sept. 1 T  “On the Morning of Christ’s Nativity” (pp. 33-47)  (The Ode)
3 Th  “L’Allegro” and “Il Penseroso” (pp. 65-77)
8 T  “Lycidas” (pp. 94-107)  (Pastoral Elegy)
10 Th  A Mask (Comus) (pp. 109-171)  (The Masque)
15 T  Areopagitica (pp. 987-1024)  (Classical Oration)
17 Th  Examination on the 1645 Poems and selected prose
22 T  Introducing Paradise Lost: Genesis as history, theodicy, & myth (selections from the
       Bible); The Epic Tradition (selections from Homer, Vergil, Ovid, & Spenser);
       Introduction (pp. 297-327)
24 Th  Paradise Lost, Bk. I  (Invocations)
29 T  PL, II  Essay 1 due  (Epic Similes)
Oct. 1 Th  PL, III  (Milton’s Satan)
6 T  PL, IV  (Milton’s God)
8 Th  PL, V  (Milton’s Eve)
13 T  Mid-semester Break
15 Th  PL, VI  (War in Heaven)
20 T  PL, VII  (Hexameron)
22 Th  PL, VIII  (Prelapsarian Sexuality)
27 T  PL, IX  (The Fall)
29 Th  PL, IX  (Original Sin)
Nov. 3 T  PL, X  (Christian History)
5 Th  PL, XI  (The Paradise Within)
10 T  PL, XII  (Milton’s Reception & Influence)
12 Th  Concluding Paradise Lost
17 T  Introducing Paradise Regained; Introduction (pp. 711-717)  (The Brief Epic);
       Paradise Regained, Bk. I
19 Th  PR, II  Essay 2 due
24 T  PR, III  MLA Research Essay due
26 Th  Thanksgiving Break
Dec. 1 T  PR, IV
3 Th  Conclusion & Review / Milton’s Reception & Influence

Final Examination: Thursday, December 10, 1:45-4:15