

John Leonard UC 3423 Office Hours TBA

Course Location and Time: UC 4415 Fridays 9:30-12:30

PARADISE LOST                      ENGLISH 9053B

Is *Paradise Lost* an epic? Is “the grand style” sublime or merely bombastic? Was Milton “of the Devil’s Party without knowing it”? Were Adam and Eve “fallen before the Fall”? Was Milton a misogynist? Questions like these have recurred over the centuries, but they have been asked in different ways, at different times. One eighteenth-century editor was so enthused by fallen Adam’s diatribe against women that he added an icon of a pointing hand in the margin of the text, for fear that readers might miss a valuable gobbet of Miltonic wisdom: “OBSERVE. Here, an excellent Caution, how to rule a Wife.” A few years later, Samuel Johnson deplored Milton’s “Turkish contempt of females.” A few years after that, Mary Wollstonecraft chided Milton not for despising women, but for loving them in the wrong way. In recent times, Joseph Wittreich has lauded Milton as a “feminist.” Early editors believed that Milton’s universe accorded with the post-Copernican model of multiple solar systems, but most critics since the nineteenth century have assumed that Milton adopts the Ptolemaic system, which was obsolete decades before *Paradise Lost* was published. Can all these conclusions follow from the same text? This course will trace a number of controversies over the centuries, exploring the ways in which critics have made one of English literature’s most canonical texts accord with their own prejudices and anxieties. A key question for the course will be: “Can any critic see past his or her own prejudices?”

Texts

The only required text for purchase is Milton’s *Paradise Lost*, but critical readings will be assigned on a weekly basis and made available either in Leanne’s office or online. You should use a reliable text of the poem with thorough annotations. The bookstore has copies of my Penguin edition. Also recommended (and particularly good for graduate work) is Alastair Fowler’s 1998 Longman edition. Other good editions include the Modern Library *Complete Poetry and Essential Prose of John Milton*, edited by William Kerrigan, Stephen Fallon, and John Rumrich (2007). You should not use an anthology, as the notes are inadequate.

Assignments

Each student will present one **20-minute** (8 page) seminar. A written version will be due one week after the oral presentation. Each student will also write one essay, of approximately 3,500 words, due on the last day of classes. The essay should be on a different topic from the seminar paper.

Oral seminar presentation:	20%.
Written version of seminar paper:	25%.
Essay (approx. 3,500 words):	45%.
Class participation:	10%

## Syllabus

11 Jan	Introduction
18 Jan	Satan and Epic Heroism
25 Jan	God and Theodicy
1 Feb	Innocence and Experience in Paradise
8 Feb	Milton's Universe(s)
15 Feb	The Fall. Satan as Confidence Man
22 Feb	READING WEEK
1 March	Epic Similes
8 March	Milton's Grand Style I. Early Critics on Sound and Sense
15 March	Milton's Grand Style II. Organ Music and John Addington Symonds
22 March	Milton's Grand Style III. The Milton Controversy (Eliot, Leavis, Ricks)
29 March	Milton and Misogyny
5 April	Conclusions

### **Statement on Academic Offences**

The statement: "Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site:

[http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/scholastic\\_discipline\\_grad.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/scholastic_discipline_grad.pdf)

### **STATEMENT ON STUDENT ACCESSIBILITY SERVICES (SAS)**

Western is committed to achieving barrier-free accessibility for all its members, including graduate students. As part of this commitment, Western provides a variety of services devoted to promoting, advocating, and accommodating persons with disabilities in their respective graduate program.

Graduate students with disabilities (for example, chronic illnesses, mental health conditions, mobility impairments) are encouraged to register with Student Accessibility Services, a confidential service designed to support graduate and undergraduate students through their academic program. With the appropriate documentation, the student will work with both SAS and their graduate programs (normally their Graduate Chair and/or Course instructor) to ensure that appropriate academic accommodations to program requirements are arranged. These accommodations include individual counselling, alternative formatted literature, accessible

campus transportation, learning strategy instruction, writing exams and assistive technology instruction.

For more information, see <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/ssd/>