

John Leonard Office Hours Monday 1.30-2.20 and Wednesday 4.30-5.20. Other times by appointment

## MILTON: THE GREAT POEMS ENGLISH 9143B

This course will examine Milton's three great poems, *Paradise Lost*, *Paradise Regained* and *Samson Agonistes*. Nine weeks will be devoted to *Paradise Lost*, one to the prose tract *Areopagitica*, and one each to *Paradise Regained* and *Samson Agonistes*. Questions for discussion will include: Is *Paradise Lost* an epic? Is "the grand style" genuinely sublime or merely bombastic? Was Milton "of the Devils [*sic*] Party without knowing it"? Were Adam and Eve "fallen before the Fall"? Was Milton a champion of free speech (and if so, is this a good thing)? Was he a misogynist? What is Satan up to in *Paradise Regained*? Is Samson a hero or a terrorist? The prevailing question will be "Why does Milton Matter?" and equal emphasis will be placed on aesthetic and historical/political questions.

### Texts

The only required text for purchase is Milton's Complete Poems, but critical readings will be assigned on a weekly basis and made available either in Leanne's office or online. We shall also be reading the prose tract *Areopagitica*, which you can read online at the Dartmouth Milton Reading Room ([https://www.dartmouth.edu/~milton/reading\\_room/areopagitica/text.html](https://www.dartmouth.edu/~milton/reading_room/areopagitica/text.html)) or by using a hard copy from the Weldon library. You should use a reliable text of the poems 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.

### Schedule of Topics for Weekly Discussion

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| Jan 9  | Introduction. Sample Sonnets. What is an Epic?               |
| Jan 16 | The Grand Style, "the Milton Controversy", imitative harmony |
| Jan 23 | Epic Similes—digressive or subtly relevant?                  |
| Jan 30 | Milton's Epic Universe                                       |
| Feb 6  | Satan  |
| Feb 13 | God and Christianity   |

READING WEEK

Feb 27	Paradise and Innocence
March 6	<i>Areopagitica</i> , 'Safe Space', and the argument about working separately
March 13	The Fall
March 20	<i>Paradise Regained</i>
March 27	<i>Samson Agonistes</i> and Terrorism
April 3	Conclusions. Milton and Women (Eve, Dalila, women readers)

### Assignments

Each student will present one **20-minute** seminar. A written version (8 pages, double spaced) 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%

### **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](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/scholastic_discipline_grad).