

John Leonard UC 3423 Office Hours TBA

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

PARADISE LOST ENGLISH 9053A

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 (due one week after oral delivery)	25%.
Essay (approx. 3,500 words, due on 10 December):	45%.
Class participation:	10%

Syllabus

8 Sep	Introduction
15 Sep	Milton's Universe(s) I. The big picture
22 Sep	Satan and Epic Heroism
29 Sep	God and Theodicy
6 Oct	Innocence and Experience in Paradise
13 Oct	READING WEEK
20 Oct	Satan's Rebellion and the War in Heaven
27 Oct	Milton's Universe(s) II. The Book VIII Colloquy about Astronomy.
3 Nov	The Argument about Working Separately. <i>Areopagitica</i> and Safe Space
10 Nov	Temptation and Fall.
17 Nov	Milton's Grand Style I. Sound and Sense
24 Nov	Milton's Grand Style II. Epic Similes
1 Dec	Aftermath of the Fall. Milton and Women
8 Dec	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

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/>