

Milton (English 335-01)

Rhodes College, Department of English

Professor Newstok

Fall 2013

TuTh 3:30-4:45

Palmer 203

newstoks@rhodes.edu

Office: Palmer 306

Office hours: W 1-4pm, or by appointment (please *email*)

A man may be a heretic in the truth, and if he believe things only because his pastor says so, or the Assembly so determines, without knowing other reason, though his belief be true, yet the very truth he holds becomes his heresy.—Areopagitica

Course description

A study of the major poetry and selections of prose of the 17th century writer John Milton. Milton's a fascinating figure who composed in an extraordinary range of genres, including an epitaph on Shakespeare; sonnets on historical events as well as on his own life; poems about Christ, including a dialogue with Satan; a play about shepherds; prose treatises on divorce and governance; an influential elegy on the death of a companion; a 'closet' drama about the biblical Samson. While we will be surveying the full range of these genres across his learned career, we will be devoting much of our attention to *Paradise Lost*, the major epic of the English language, based on the story of Genesis yet encompassing profound and still relevant reflections on liberty, rebellion, history, providence, social hierarchies, and domestic relations in magnificent verse. As a contemporary writer praised this undertaking: "*You who read Paradise Lost, the sublime poem of the great Milton, what do you read but the story of all things?*" Seminar participants will be expected to attend two events outside of class: a symposium on the "The Past and Future of the Book" (**October 11**), and a marathon reading of *Paradise Lost* (**November 16**). *Prerequisite: any 200-level literature course (285 preferred).*

Required Texts

- *The Complete Poetry and Essential Prose of John Milton* (=ML)
- *Cambridge Companion to Milton* (=CC)

Schedule—subject to revision, per class interest and instructor's discretion

*Have the assignments read **before** our discussions each week. Ideally, you will read them once over the weekend, and then **re-read** them during the week—good reading always entails **re-reading**. Bring your **ML Milton** to each class, along with **any assigned secondary reading***

You are always expected to read the ML headnotes to each text.

Thursday	Aug. 22	Milton mattering; "On Shakespeare" (ML 34); sonnets intro
Tuesday	Aug. 27	Sonnets (ML 139-62); Hall (CC 98-112)
Thursday	Aug. 29	<i>Ad Patrem</i> (ML 220-24); Johnson <i>Life</i> (handout); 2 nd <i>Defense</i> (ML 1090-96); Aubrey (ML xxi-xxx); Dobranski (CC 1-24)
Tuesday	Sep. 3	Nativity Ode (ML 18-29); Fish (handout)
Thursday	Sep. 5	<i>L'Allegro & Il Penseroso</i> (ML 41-52); Brisman (handout)
Tuesday	Sep. 10	<i>Comus</i> (ML 61-98); Jonson <i>Pleasure Reconciled</i> (handout)
Thursday	Sep. 12	<i>Comus</i> , continued; Brown (CC 25-39)
Tuesday	Sep. 17	"Lycidas" (ML 99-110); Spenserian elegy (handouts)

Thursday	Sep. 19	"Lycidas," continued; Evans (CC 39–53)
Tuesday	Sep. 24	<i>Areopagitica</i> (ML 923–66); Smallenburg (handout)
Thursday	Sep. 26	<i>Areopagitica</i> , continued
Tuesday	Oct. 1	<i>Of Education</i> (967–82); Festa (handout)
Thursday	Oct. 3	<i>Doctrine and Disc. of Divorce</i> (ML 853–922); Patterson (handout)
Tuesday	Oct. 8	<i>Paradise Lost</i> I (ML 293–322); Carey (CC 160–74)
Thursday	Oct. 10	<i>Paradise Lost</i> II (ML 323–58); Lewalski (CC113–29)
Friday	Oct. 11	BOOK SYMPOSIUM (9am-noon, Blount)
<i>Tuesday</i>	<i>Oct. 15</i>	<i>No class: Fall recess</i>
Thursday	Oct. 17	<i>Paradise Lost</i> III (ML 359–83); Empson (handout)
Tuesday	Oct. 22	<i>Paradise Lost</i> IV (ML 384–417); Ricks (handout)
Thursday	Oct. 24	<i>Paradise Lost</i> V (ML 418–446); Lewis (handout)
Tuesday	Oct. 29	<i>Paradise Lost</i> VI (ML 445–75); Danielson (CC 144–59)
Thursday	Oct. 31	<i>Paradise Lost</i> VII (ML 476–96); Genesis 1–3 (KJV)
Tuesday	Nov. 5	<i>Paradise Lost</i> VIII (ML 497–516); Leonard (CC 130–143)
Thursday	Nov. 7	<i>Paradise Lost</i> IX (ML 517–51); Schoenfeldt (handout)
Tuesday	Nov. 12	<i>Paradise Lost</i> X (ML 552–84); McColley (CC 175–92)
Thursday	Nov. 14	<i>Paradise Lost</i> XI–XII (ML 585–630); Cavanagh (handout)
Saturday	Nov. 16	Marathon Group Reading of <i>Paradise Lost</i> (location TBA)
Tuesday	Nov. 19	<i>Paradise Regained</i> (ML 635–88); Radzinowicz (CC 202–218)
Tuesday	Nov. 21	<i>Samson Agonistes</i> (ML 707–66); Bennett (219–35)
Thursday	Nov. 26	<i>Research proposals due</i>
<i>Thursday</i>	<i>Nov. 28</i>	<i>No class: Thanksgiving Break</i>
Tuesday	Dec. 3	<i>Research presentations</i> (Dec. 7 is Milton's 405 th birthday)
Tuesday	Dec. 10	Final Papers due

Requirements

Engagement (25%) is mandatory, broadly conceived to include regular, active **participation** (*listening* and *responding* to your peers as well as the professor), consistent **preparation** of course readings, **enthusiasm** for assignments, **collaboration** with your peers, and **respect** for the course. Successful students are typically those who re-read thoroughly in advance of discussion, arrive on time to class, and participate thoughtfully every day of the semester. If *for whatever reason* (including medical and personal emergencies, extracurricular events) you miss **more than four (4_ classes** (that is, two full weeks of the semester!), **you will fail the course.**

Short essays (30%) are arguments (one **full** page, single-spaced—**around 500 words** each) designed to familiarize you with a number of different *kinds* of approaches to reading Milton's various genres—from examining very minute details to considering larger issues across multiple texts. Email copies are due **every Sunday by 4pm in my office (Palmer 306)**. **No late work**—the responses prepare your thoughts in advance of the weekly discussion. Numerical 'grades' (a rough score out of 10) will be assigned to give you a sense of your progress throughout the course, although you will be judged on your cumulative work.

Introduction to a book of *Paradise Lost* (10%) — a critical handout completed with a peer, which helps you guide that day's discussion.

Final projects (35%) involve engaging in a **critical dialogue** with other readers (critics) of Milton's works, leading to a **5000-word** research paper on a topic of your own choice. The texts addressed, however, must be selected from those read in this course—your audience consists of your peers, so you will need to address poems and prose with which they are already familiar. I presume that most of you will be addressing at least some aspect of *Paradise Lost*. Please submit your final paper in a **self-addressed envelope** so I can return your essays to you via mail.

Grading: 'C' (70–79%) represents *satisfactory* work; a 'B' (80–86%) represents *good* work; a 'B+' (87–89%) represents *very good* work; an 'A-' (90–93%) represents *excellent* work; and the infrequent 'A' (94% and above) represents *extraordinary* achievement. This holds true for overall engagement, short essays, and your final projects.

Policies: You must complete all written work to pass this course. As always, please observe Rhodes guidelines regarding the **Honor Code**; academic dishonesty will not be tolerated, and students caught plagiarizing will **fail this course**, in addition to having to face the Honor Council. Please respect the integrity of the course: turn off **cell phones** and **remove hats** before entering the classroom; **do not eat during class**. Treat email exchanges with one another and with the professor as **formally composed correspondence**.