In this course we will examine all of Milton's major poetry, and some of the prose, and its relationship to a variety of contexts and traditions. Among the questions we will consider are those of genre (pastoral, masque, epic); of heritage (the uses of the classical and Biblical traditions); of the intellectual and literary tradition of Renaissance humanism; of the political, religious, and literary consequences of the Protestant Reformation and the Puritan Revolution in England; of responses, contemporaneous and subsequent, to Milton's work. While the volume of reading is not especially heavy, the poetry requires, and repays, careful reading and rereading. I encourage you to come to class armed with questions—whether specific ("What does this line mean?"); general ("Why are there so many allusions?"); or cosmic ("What's the big deal about Milton?"); and I expect that you will come ready to discuss the questions that others raise.

TEXT:


REQUIREMENTS:

Short (3-5 page) paper 15%
Midterm Exam 15%
Participation 20%
Term Paper 25%
Final Exam 25%

SCHEDULE OF ASSIGNMENTS (tentative):

Jan. 13 W Introduction to course

Towards the 1645 Poems: Humanism, Protestantism, Revolution

15 F Finding a Voice
   Poems of Mr. John Milton, pp. 31-37
   Poemata, pp. 172-94, 201-22

18 M MLK Day--No class

   Elegy 6, pp. 195-98

22 F Nativity Ode, cont.

25 M Poems, pp. 48-65

27 W L'Allegro and Il Penseroso, pp. 65-77

29 F L'All and Il Pens, cont.

Feb. 1 M Sonnets, pp. 77-88
   Letter to a Friend, pp. 1049-50
   To My Father, pp. 223

3 W Milton and the Aristocracy
   Arcades, pp. 89-93
   A Mask, pp. 120-71
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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<th>Assignment</th>
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<tr>
<td>5 F</td>
<td>A Mask, cont.</td>
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<td>8 M</td>
<td>A Mask, cont.</td>
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<td>10 W</td>
<td>A Mask, cont.</td>
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<td>Paper #1 due</td>
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<td>15 M</td>
<td>Lycidas, cont.</td>
<td>Damon’s Epitaph, pp. 148-61</td>
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<td>17 W</td>
<td>Lycidas, cont.</td>
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<td><strong>Controversy, Revolution, Blindness</strong></td>
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<td>24 W</td>
<td>Poems, prose cont.</td>
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<td>26 F</td>
<td>Midterm Exam</td>
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<td>March 1 M</td>
<td>Areopagitica, pp. 987-1024</td>
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<td>3 W</td>
<td>Areopagitica, cont.</td>
<td>Poems, pp. 254-85</td>
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<td>5 F</td>
<td>Second Defense, pp. 1096-1118</td>
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<td>6-14</td>
<td>Spring Break</td>
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<td><strong>Restoration: Epic, Brief Epic, Tragedy</strong></td>
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<td>15 M</td>
<td>Paradise Lost, Book I</td>
<td>Genesis 1-3</td>
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<td>19 F</td>
<td>Bk. II</td>
<td>Blake and Shelley on Satan</td>
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<td>22 M</td>
<td>Bk. III-IV</td>
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<td>24 W</td>
<td>Bk. III-IV, cont.</td>
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<td>26 F</td>
<td>Bk. V-VI</td>
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Johnson on *Paradise Lost*, pp. 71-84 in Thorpe, ed.

29 M Bk. V-VI, cont.
31 W Bk. VII-VIII

April 1-4 Easter Break
5 M Bk. IX-X
7 W Bk. IX-X, cont.
9 F Bk. XI-XII
12 M Bk. XI-XII, cont.

14 W *Paradise Regained*, Book I

16 F Bk. II-III
19 M Bk. IV

21 W Early Lives, pp. 1-30

23 F *Samson Agonistes*
Judges 13-16

26 M *Samson*, cont.
Johnson on *Samson*

28 W *Samson*, cont.

30 F *Samson*, cont.

Term Paper due

**FINAL EXAM:** Friday, May 7, 8:30--11 a.m.

**PLEASE NOTE:**

1) Your discussion grade includes response papers, which will be assigned and submitted at various times during the semester, and may include one or more quizzes.
2) Papers are due at the beginning of class on the day assigned unless other arrangements are made ahead of time. A penalty of 10% per day will be assessed on all late papers. Papers more than one week late will not be accepted.
3) Habitual tardiness or absence will be penalized.
4) All work in this course will be fully pledged under the Honor System.

**Interpreting Grades**
A: Reserved for papers showing the highest quality of insight, organization, and style. It presents sophisticated ideas in an interesting way, with a clearly articulated thesis generating a logically developed argument and employing a style capable of expressing complex ideas in clearly and effectively. It should be virtually error-free.

B: Typically, a paper that presents sound ideas in an effective way, and employs a clear, mature style appropriate to college-level writing. It should have few if any errors.

C: Usually, a paper that expresses competently ideas that fail to go beyond the obvious or the commonplace. Often a C paper is one that gives the impression of “going through the motions.” It will fail to engage the reader because it has failed to engage the author. It may contain some errors, but not many and not serious ones.

D: A paper that lacks a clear point of view or fails to develop an argument, often because the author’s grasp of the material is at best superficial. Usually the style is also ineffective and may be marred by mistakes of a relatively serious nature.

F: An unacceptable paper, either because it shows a failure to understand the subject, because it is poorly written, usually with many mistakes, or both. Often it is the product of obvious haste, written without any serious thought or effort.