

**Carleton University  
Winter 2017  
Department of English**

**ENGL 5303W Studies in Early Modern Literature I  
John Milton's *Paradise Lost* and the Intellectual Tradition**

**Mondays: 11:30-2:30**

**Location: Dunton Tower, 1816 (*confirm on Carleton Central*)**

**Instructor: Donald Beecher  
Email: donald.beecher@carleton.ca  
Office: 1908 dunton Tower  
Phone: 613 520 2600 ex. 2305  
Office Hours: Tuesdays 2:45-3:45**

*\*Preliminary Outline: Subject to change*

### **Ideas into Experience: Milton's *Paradise Lost* as an Epic Encyclopedia**

The stature of Milton's great poem needs no special defense; even Dryden acknowledged with admiration and regret that Milton had surpassed them all, without fully realizing that he had also brought to a close the age of the pansophic poem. It is a monumental work in so many ways, not the least of them its dramatic representation of ideas drawn from a lifelong program of reading and study. This course is designed to bring its members into a close encounter with the text and into dialogic exchange with others in the seminar engaged in a mutual discovery of some of the prevailing ideas that find representation in this work. Milton's epic was created at a moment in cultural and intellectual time, but the ideas themselves have histories going back to ancient, medieval and Renaissance sources. The history of ideas is a critical perspective in its own right, worth knowing about as a discipline, and worth mastering as a vehicle to a fuller understanding of literature in general. Just what those ideas may include will be yours to discover, but among the master concepts, you might find justice, obedience, punishment, angels, hell, salvation, eschatology, creation, reprobation, uxoriousness, the fortunate fall, dreams, memory, prayer, paradise, and honeymoon (I left out hero and predestination). Unfolding this poem in relation to its informing ideas is a rewarding experience, one that from class to class has never come close to repeating itself. The material is so rich, you could take this course over and over!

This course will deal with *Paradise Lost* as a work conceived after a lifetime of reading which prepared the author for his great task. The work is grounded not only in biblical culture, both Judeo as well as Christian, but in the Church fathers, the writers of ancient Greece and Rome, as well as in Renaissance works ranging through all the received topics of that age. Our goal will be to identify as many of those sources and traditions as possible in working systematically through the text. Milton calls upon these multiple traditions both as a poet and as an apologist for the Christian world order, making

*Paradise Lost* a contribution to the history of ideas by drawing upon a vast legacy. Our collective concern, then, is a hermeneutical one in relation to this encyclopedic tradition.

Each class meeting will be devoted to one of the twelve books. A small delegation of students, in accordance with our numbers, will provide a seriatim *explication* of each book in relation to its intellectual history. You can work as a group, or subdivide the lines of the book among yourselves. My estimate is that I will be calling on each of you to contribute in this manner three times during the term. These exercises will provide you with occasions to explore the theological, linguistic, poetic, historical, mythological, biblical, and scientific backgrounds to the poem, including Milton's own writings, such as the divorce tracts or *On Christian Doctrine*, in order to explicate the lines. The informing discipline behind all these presentations may variously be described as "intellectual history" or "the history of ideas," which is more than simple source studies. It is an important distinction. These presentations can be exploratory and methodologically experimental, to a degree. I will not be grading them, although they are a critical and requisite component of the course. The final grade will be based on two 7-9 page papers, each presenting a Miltonic "idea" in its historical context. The choice of topics is as vast as the poem itself, from angelology to zoology. I will be concerned with just how much of a sense of the history of that idea you can bring to Milton's exploitation of it in the limited space allotted. You will have to balance encyclopedic amplitude with Miltonic precision, making the bridge from historical meanings to the argument of the poem. These papers can, of course, make use of anything that you have presented in class, but they should reveal the greater rigor that one normally brings to cogent and concise written work, including a clear explication of ideas, problems, methods, and the measure of progress the paper contains in exposing those ideas.

Both papers are due on or before Friday, April 7. Plan ahead.

The course text of *Paradise Lost*, ed. Scott Elledge, New York, Norton, 1993.

The meeting dates are as follows:

Jan. 9 Intro. to the work  
Jan. 16 Book I  
Jan. 23 Book II  
Jan. 30 Book III  
Feb. 6 Book IV  
Feb. 13 Book V  
Feb. 20-24 Study Break  
Feb. 27 Book VI  
Mar. 6 Book VII  
Mar. 13 Book VIII  
Mar. 20 Book IX  
Mar. 27 Book X  
Apr. 3 Book XI-XII.

Requirements: All components of the course must be completed before a final grade can be assigned.

Plagiarism: The University takes this offense seriously. All ideas or passages of other scholars must be acknowledged in the appropriate manner, and the writing you submit must be entirely your own, and not have been submitted to any previous course. For more information:

<http://carleton.ca/studentaffairs/academic-integrity/>

The Paul Menton Centre is available to students with handicaps, Room 500, Unicentre

For information on special accommodations, please go to:  
<http://carleton.ca/equity/accommodation/academic/students/>

The Student academic success centre is located in 302 Tory.

The Student Life Services is located in 501 Unicentre.

Research materials from the WWW are to be used with caution, given that little of it is vetted in the usual ways pertaining to academic research, such as it is to be found in books and academic journals.

If you are concerned about early feedback, I can give an appraisal of the seminar contributions in grade equivalents, even though this portion will not be graded *per se*.

Students requesting academic accommodation on the basis of religious observance should make a formal, written request to their instructors for alternate dates and/or means of satisfying academic requirements. Such requests should be made during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist, but no later than two weeks before the compulsory academic event. Accommodation is to be worked out directly and on an individual basis between the student and the instructor. Instructors will make accommodations in a way that avoids academic disadvantage to the student. Students or instructors who have questions or want to confirm accommodation eligibility of a religious event or practice may refer to the Equity Services website for a list of holy days and Carleton's Academic Accommodation policies, or may contact an Equity Services Advisor in the Equity Services Department.

For pregnancy, students requiring academic accommodation are encouraged to contact an Equity Advisor in Equity Services to complete a *letter of accommodation*. The student must then make an appointment to discuss her needs with the instructor at least two weeks prior to the first academic event in which it is anticipated the accommodation will be required.

Here is the more formal version:

Plagiarism is a serious offence which cannot be resolved directly with the course's instructor. The Associate Deans of the Faculty conduct a rigorous investigation, including an interview with the student, when an instructor suspects a piece of work has been plagiarized. Penalties are not trivial. They can include a final grade of "F" for the course

#### **GRADING SYSTEM**

Letter grades assigned in this course will have the following percentage equivalents:

A+ = 90-100 (12) B = 73-76 (8) C - = 60-62 (4)

A = 85-89 (11) B- = 70-72 (7) D+ = 57-59 (3)

A- = 80-84 (10) C+ = 67-69 (6) D = 53-56 (2)

B+ = 77-79 (9) C = 63-66 (5) D - = 50-52 (1)

F Failure. Assigned 0.0 grade points

ABS Absent from final examination, equivalent to F

DEF Official deferral (see "Petitions to Defer")

FND Failure with no deferred exam allowed -- assigned only when the student has failed the course on the basis of inadequate term work as specified in the course outline.

Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor subject to the approval of the Faculty Dean.

#### **WITHDRAWAL WITHOUT ACADEMIC PENALTY**

The last date to withdraw from **FALL TERM** courses is **DEC. 8, 2014**. The last day to withdraw from **FALL/WINTER (Full Term)** and **WINTER** term courses is **APRIL 8, 2015**.

**REQUESTS FOR ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION** You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term because of disability, pregnancy or religious obligations. Please review the course outline promptly and write to me with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. You can visit the Equity Services website to view the policies and to obtain more detailed information on academic accommodation at: [carleton.ca/equity/accommodation/](http://carleton.ca/equity/accommodation/)

Students with disabilities requiring academic accommodations in this course must register with the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) for a formal evaluation of disability-related needs. Documented disabilities could include but not limited to mobility/physical impairments, specific Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/psychological disabilities, sensory disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), and chronic medical conditions. Registered PMC students are required to contact the PMC, 613-520-6608, every term to ensure that your Instructor receives your Letter of Accommodation, no later than two weeks before the first assignment is due or the first in-class test/midterm requiring accommodations. If you only require accommodations for your formally scheduled exam(s) in this course, please submit your request for accommodations to PMC by **Nov. 7, 2014** for the Fall term and **March 6, 2015** for the Winter term. For more details visit the Equity Services website: [carleton.ca/equity/accommodation/](http://carleton.ca/equity/accommodation/)

**PETITIONS TO DEFER**

If you miss a final examination and/or fail to submit a **FINAL** assignment by the due date because of circumstances beyond your control, you may apply a deferral of examination/assignment. If you are applying for a deferral due to illness you will be required to see a physician in order to confirm illness and obtain a medical certificate dated no later than one working day after the examination or assignment deadline. This supporting documentation must specify the date of onset of the illness, the degree of incapacitation, and the expected date of recovery. If you are applying for a deferral for reasons other than personal illness, please contact the Registrar's Office directly for information on other forms of documentation that we accept. Deferrals of assignments must be supported by confirmation of the assignment due date, for example a copy of the course outline specifying the due date and any documented extensions from the course instructor. Deferral applications for examination or assignments must be submitted within **5 working days** of the original final exam.

**ADDRESSES: (Area Code 613)**

College of the Humanities 520-2809 300 Paterson  
Greek and Roman Studies Office 520-2809 300 Paterson  
Religion Office 520-2100 2A39 Paterson  
Registrar's Office 520-3500 300 Tory  
Student Academic Success Centre 520-7850 302 Tory  
Paul Menton Centre 520-6608/TTY 520-3937 501 Uni-Centre  
Writing Tutorial Service 520-2600 Ext. 1125 4<sup>th</sup> Floor Library  
Learning Support Service 520-2600 Ext 1125 4<sup>th</sup> Floor Library