Best known for his epic poem *Paradise Lost*, John Milton was also a forceful advocate of free speech who lost his eyesight arguing for the overthrow of the English monarchy. This course will explore the full range of Milton’s writings in prose and verse, from *Comus* and the early lyrics to the monumental works of his final decades.

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<tr>
<th>Sept. 5</th>
<th>W</th>
<th>Introduction</th>
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<td>7</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Masson, “Brief Life” (Elledge 313–49); “Milton on Milton” (Patrides 49–74, 133–38)</td>
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<td>12</td>
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<td>“On the Morning of Christ’s Nativity” (= “Nativity Ode”)</td>
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<td>“Nativity Ode” (cont.), “Elegia quinta,” “Elegia sexta”</td>
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<td>17</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>“L’Allegro” and “Il Penseroso”</td>
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<td>19</td>
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<td>Fish, “What It’s Like to Read ‘L’Allegro’ and ‘Il Penseroso’” (ER); recommended: Brooks, “Light Symbolism” (ER)</td>
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<td>21</td>
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<td>Butler, “Private and Occasional Drama”; Jonson, <em>Pleasure Reconciled to Virtue</em> (ER)</td>
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<td>24</td>
<td>M</td>
<td><em>Comus</em>; reread Milton’s other masque, “Arcades”</td>
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<td><em>Comus</em> (continued)</td>
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<td>28</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>“Epitaphium Damonis” (Latin with English translation); “Lycidas”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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| Oct. 1 | M | “Lycidas”: reread for imagery |
| 3      | W | “Lycidas” revisions (handout); Virgil, *Eclogues* 5 and 10 (course web site) |
| 5      | F | Rivers, “Issues” (Elledge 307–13); Wilding, “Milton’s Early Radicalism” (ER) |
| 8      | M | *Areopagitica* |
| 10     | W | Evans, “Imagery as Argument” (ER); Smallenburg, “Style as Argument” (ER) |
| 12     | F | *On Education* |
| 15     | M | Prince, “Heroic Sonnet” (ER); sonnets of praise: I, IX, X, XIII, XIV, “Henry Vane” |
| 19     | F | Horace, *Epode* 13 and *Odes* 2.11, 3.8 (handout); Lovelace, “The Grasshopper” (handout); Milton, Sonnets XVII, XVIII |
| 22     | M | Sonnets on vocation, loss, blindness: VII, XIV, XVI, “To Mr Cyriack Skinner,” XIX |
| 24     | W | Evaluation and review |
| 26     | F | *Fall Break* |
| 29     | M | Marvell, “Horatian Ode”; Milton, “To the Lord General Cromwell” |

| Nov. 2 | F | *Paradise Lost* (= *PL*) 1 (Invocation; Satan; hell). Over the next week you will also want to read “Important Concepts and Topics in *PL*” (Elledge 461–74); title is boring, content exceedingly useful. |
| 5      | M | *PL* 2 (Council of demons; Satan braves Chaos, Sin, and Death, invades earth) |
| 7      | W | *PL* 3 (Invocation; God observes, explains) |
| 9      | F | *PL* 4 (Eden) |
| 12     | M | *PL* 5 (Eve’s dream; Raphael’s embassy; Adam’s creation) |
| 16     | F | *PL* 6 (War in heaven) and 7 (Creation) |
| 19     | M | *PL* 6 (War in heaven) and 7 (Creation) |
| 21     | W | Essay prospectus due |
| 23     | F | Thanksgiving Friday |

ER = electronic reserve: www.macalester.edu/~library/about/readthis.html
REQUIRED TEXTS


REQUIREMENTS

Hard copies of all assignments are due at the beginning of the class period. Assignments delivered after that will receive a lower grade. (For instance, an A- essay that is delivered up to 24 hours late will receive a B+, an A- essay that is delivered between 24 and 48 hours late will receive a B, and so on.)

Essay (25%). Submit one essay of 3,000–3,500 words on course readings of your choice. (It may, in some cases, be possible to write on a text that does not appear on the syllabus, but you will need to clear this with me first.)

- When you’re done, do a word count and write the result on the first page of your paper.
- Pages should be (a) stapled and (b) numbered by computer (ask someone at the computer lab if you don’t know how to do this already).
- First impressions count; so do spelling, punctuation, and grammar.
- Use 12 point Times Roman (or a similar font of the same size).
- Double-space.

Preliminary to writing the paper itself you will turn in a three-paragraph prospectus describing your topic, your work thus far (including secondary reading if your argument requires it), and any problems you foresee.

Weekly Analysis (55%). Each week, you will submit a written analysis of the previous week’s discussion (800 words, or about two and a half pages). Your analysis of week one will be due at the first class meeting of week two and so on. A good analysis will summarize the content of the previous week’s discussion, but it will also evaluate that discussion: what, for instance, got left out of the conversation last week, and why does it matter? In general, I think one part evaluation to two parts analytical summary is a good balance. Spelling, grammar, and punctuation count, as do style and content.

One final note. Each written analysis will be submitted in two forms: to me, on paper, and to the other members of the class, by email (milton@virgil.org).

Discussion (20%). Over the course of the semester, you and a partner of your choosing will be responsible for class discussion on two or more occasions (the precise number will depend on enrollment). To prepare for the discussion, you and your partner will meet together before class and select
six passages from the day’s reading. Your job will not be to present these passages to the class in any
formal way. Instead, you will come to class with three or four questions about each passage. You need not
know the answer to these questions yourself, and you may not (probably will not) get to pose each
question you have prepared for each passage. The ultimate goal of the questions is to direct our attention
to the details of the text. Apart from this goal, getting through a list of questions about a given piece of
text has no intrinsic value. Pick questions, therefore, that can sustain an intelligent conversation about the
passage in question for five to ten minutes—and have back-ups. Sometimes good questions go nowhere
for no good reason. One final word of direction on picking questions: pose questions that force us to pay
attention to the language of the text. In the course of discussion, it is expected that we will, from time to
time, take up some of Milton’s ideas on their own terms. This is inevitable and it is the way Milton
intended his poetry to be read: Milton took ideas seriously and he invited his readers to argue with him
(see, for example, the preface to De doctrina christiana, in Patrides 360–63; an extended version of this
thesis also appears in Areopagitica). The glory—and the danger—in this is that sometimes a discussion of
ideas can spin out of control. Your job, in leading discussion, will be to bring us back to the text, not
because Milton wants you to take his word for something, but because what Milton has to say about a
subject is (a) usually worth thinking about, (b) not always apparent on a first reading, and (c) useful for
bringing structure and substance to our exchanges when they threaten to turn nasty or (what is worse)
trivial. Your ability to use the text in this way will depend largely on how much you have thought about it
beforehand and is one of the main things that I will look for in assigning a grade for this assignment.

After you and your partner have decided on a plan for the class, each of you will write up a 500-word
rationale for picking the six passages you and your partner selected. Concentrate on answering two
questions: how do these passages relate to the work as a whole and how do they relate to one another?
This document is due at the beginning of class on the day you are leading discussion. It doesn’t need to be
fancy, though it does need to be typed. Again, spelling, grammar, and punctuation count.

Attendance and Reading. There is one more requirement for this course: you have to come to class and
you have to do the reading. If you don’t, you’ll get a NO CREDIT (NC) for the semester, even if you hand in
all of the graded assignments. Not coming to class = missing nine or more class meetings. Not doing the
reading = failing more random reading quizzes than you pass. Note: these quizzes are impossible to fail if
you have done the reading; if you haven’t done the reading, or you aren’t in class to take them, you may
find them something of a challenge.

Email. Announcements and changes to the syllabus will be delivered by email.

Extensions
Everyone gets a two-day extension on two written analyses over the course of the semester. You choose
which ones. You don’t need to ask me ahead of time: just hand in a sheet of paper with your name on it
that says “I’m taking an extension on this week’s analysis.” In the interests of fairness, however, no one
will be granted a third extension. Exam dates and deadlines for the paper and prospectus are, by contrast,
adamantine and immutable.

Important Times, Phone Numbers, Addresses
Office: Old Main 205 (phone 651.696.6643)
Email: wilson-okamura@virgil.org
Office hours: MWF 1:20–2:20. Extra hours as needed and by appointment. If you’d like to schedule an
appointment—and I encourage you to do so if these hours don’t work for you—just grab me after
class or give me a phone call and we’ll set up a time. If you call my office and I’m not there, do
try me at home, though not after 9:00 PM, please; the phone number there is 651.699.3577.
Email discussion group for this course: milton@virgil.org
Course materials on the web: http://virgil.org/dswo/courses/milton
These items can be found online or in the reference section on the first floor of the library.


*Dictionary of Literary Biography* [abbreviated *DLB*]. Detroit: Bruccoli Clark-Gale Research, 1978–. PS221.D5. For 16C poets, see vols. 132, 136, 167, and 172. For 17C poets, see vols. 121, 126, and 131. For Elizabethan dramatists, see vol. 62. For 17C dramatists, see vols. 58, 80, 84, and 89.


*RESERVE*


