Milton: Poetry, Prophecy, and Polemic

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ECTS Weighting: 10

Semester/Term Taught: HT

Learning Outcomes:

On successful completion of this module a student should be able to:

- Analyse Milton texts using techniques of close reading;
- Demonstrate appropriate contextual knowledge;
- Understand the application of literary theories to early modern texts;
- Express themselves in a manner suitable to level 4.

Option Learning Aims:

- To familiarise students with the writing of John Milton;
- To familiarise students with the historical and theoretical contexts of such knowledge;
- To equip students to consider issues of genre and interpretation;
- To develop transferable skills suitable to a level 4 course in English.

Option Content:

1. Introduction
2. Early poetry – ‘Lycidas’, A Mask Presented at Ludlow Castle, 1634
3. Prose of the 1640s
4. Sonnets
5. Paradise Lost I-III
6. Paradise Lost IV-VI
7. READING WEEK
8. Paradise Lost VII-IX
9. Paradise Lost X-XII
10. Paradise Regained
11. Samson Agonistes
12. Conclusion

Assessment Details (Including component percentage(s)):

Essay: 100%

Core reading:


Additional resources:

- Professor John Rogers’ lectures in Milton at Yale: [oyc.yale.edu/english/milton](oyc.yale.edu/english/milton)
- The Lady Margaret Lectures 2008 at Christ’s College Cambridge: [www.christs.cam.ac.uk/milton400/lectures.htm](www.christs.cam.ac.uk/milton400/lectures.htm)

General bibliography:

Students should pay attention to articles in such journals as *Milton Quarterly, English Literary Renaissance* and *The Seventeenth Century*, all available online via the library website.

- Fish, Stanley E., *Surprised by Sin: The Reader in Paradise Lost* (1967)
• Loewenstein, David and James Grantham Turner (eds), *Politics, Poetics, and Hermeneutics in Milton’s Prose* (1990)
• Loewenstein, David, *Representing Religion in Milton and His Contemporaries: Religion, Politics, and Polemics in Radical Puritanism* (2001)
• Nutt, Joe, *A Guidebook to Paradise Lost* (2011)
• Parry, Graham and Joad Raymond (eds), *Milton and the Terms of Liberty* (2002)
• Raymond, Joad, *Milton’s Angels* (2010)
• Rosenblatt, Jason P., *Torah and Law in Paradise Lost* (1994)
• Turner, James Grantham, *One Flesh: Paradisal Marriage and Sexual Relations in the Age of Milton* (1987)
• Wolfe, Don M., *Milton in the Puritan Revolution* (1941)
Useful Bible Readings

(Any English translation will do – there are countless available freely online. Ideally, though, you should read the King James (Authorised) Version)

- Genesis 1–12 (creation and the Fall)
- Judges 13–16 (Samson)
- Job (the model, in many ways, for Samson Agonistes)
- Matthew 20:1–16 (The Parable of the Talents – an important source of Milton’s view of Divine service)
- Matthew 25:14–30 (The Parable of the Talents – Milton continually returns to this parable)
- John 10 (The Good Shepherd – particularly relevant for Lycidas)
- Romans 1–8