

## English 414: Milton

Mondays/Wednesdays 3:30pm - 4:45pm, Tawes Hall 0221

**Professor:** Scott Trudell  
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**Office hours:** Mondays and Wednesdays, 2:00-3:00pm, and by appointment  
Tawes Hall 3243

This is a course on the life and works of John Milton. We will attend closely to language and meter, spending a substantial section of the course on Milton's lyric poetry. We will also think carefully about the performative dimensions of Milton's work, including the role of theatricality and music in *A Maske at Ludlow Castle* and *Samson Agonistes*. At the heart of the course will be *Paradise Lost*, with all of its theological, philosophical and imaginative complexity. Throughout the course, we will think about Milton's role in the political upheaval of the mid-seventeenth century, especially the English Civil Wars and the Parliamentarians' beheading of Charles I. We will also draw connections between Milton and contemporary culture, reimagining his work in light of critical theory, political philosophy and religious history.

### Books:

- *Milton's Selected Poetry and Prose*, ed. Jason P. Rosenblatt (W. W. Norton and Company, 2010), ISBN 978-0393979879.
- *Paradise Lost*, ed. Gordon Teskey (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 2005), ISBN 978-0393924282.

Check [www.addall.com](http://www.addall.com) and [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com) for used copies.

Note that there will be additional readings available for download on our ELMS course site. You are required to print these out.

### Course requirements:

- Participation (15%)
- Reading quizzes and passage memorization (10%)
- Blog posts (15%)
- Blog comments and peer feedback (10%)
- First paper, 4-5 pages (15%)
- Second paper, 7-10 pages (20%)
- Final exam (15%)

### Policies

- Attendance and participation are extremely important in this course.
- I grade participation based on thoughtful, consistent engagement with the class. This is not simply about speaking often: more important is how you listen and respond to your peers.
- I take attendance daily. Absences that are not excused will result in failing participation grades. You may submit written documentation of excused absences before class begins or during my office hours. For the University policy on absences, see <http://www.ugst.umd.edu/courserelatedpolicies.html>
- If you miss class for any reason, follow these steps:

1) Send me a brief email before class begins to let me know that you cannot attend.

2) Post a reaction to that day's readings on the course blog. Make-up posts are in addition to your weekly blog posts: they do not count as your post for the week. Post within three days of the class you missed and title it "Make-up post." Failing to submit make-up posts will result in lower or failing grades for participation and blog performance.

3) Obtain notes. Find a partner and exchange contact information early in the semester to help with this.

- Turn off phones and computers completely (not to vibrate or silent) and leave them in your bag. See me if you require an exception.
- You are responsible for following the university code on academic honesty. If I detect plagiarism, I will report it to the Honor Council, and you will be subject to receiving an "XF" for the course, with the notation on your transcript, "Failure due to academic dishonesty."
- If you have a disability that requires accommodation, please let me know during the first two weeks of class.
- If there are hardships that will affect your course performance, I encourage you to let me know early in the semester. We can discuss strategies for succeeding.
- For further information on course policies, see <http://www.ugst.umd.edu/courserelatedpolicies.html>

#### **What to expect:**

You will be required to memorize fourteen lines of Milton's verse, of your choice. You will write down your selection from memory halfway through the semester, and again (the same passage) near the end of the term.

Reading quizzes will be unannounced; the only preparation necessary is to complete the assigned reading for each class. Failing quizzes after having done the reading may be a warning sign of comprehension problems, or it may be a warning sign that you have not read closely enough. Those of you who are new to Milton: it is normal to have comprehension trouble right away, and I give credit for improvement when I tabulate your final reading quiz grades. If you are having comprehension trouble, email me to make an appointment or drop into my office hours.

The final exam will take the form of five short essay questions, each asking you to pair two texts on the syllabus. The exam touches on many texts and rewards those who have read attentively and engaged actively throughout the course. During the semester I will distribute a sample exam so that you are able to practice your responses on the blog and on your own. You will be allowed to use your books and your marginal notes (but not notebooks or loose sheets of paper) on the exam - so it is a good idea to write (or paste) notes in the margins over the course of the semester.

You will have two papers due on topics to be determined.

Pay close attention to the due dates on the syllabus: most of your writing assignments have deadlines outside of class, in electronic form.

**Blog requirement:**

Blogging will be a key part of this course: you will do a lot of your writing in this format, and our discussion in class will emerge from what you say online. In particular, you will be required to read blog about the upcoming week's readings on the blog by Sunday night each week.

Please bookmark the blog here and sign up for email updates:

[english414fall16.wordpress.com](http://english414fall16.wordpress.com)

The first step will be responding to an auto-generated invitation that you will receive via email. Check for messages from a Wordpress email address, accept the invitation to set up or log in with a Wordpress account.

Remember to post by Sunday night and make at least one comment on your peers' posts during the week. To make a post, it is best to use the "Write a new post" link, in the "Get to work" column on the right (using the drop-down menu sometimes leads to confusion). Note that part of your grade is based on how thoughtfully you comment on your peers' posts, so you will need to keep up with the blog and also engage with your classmates' ideas.

I will occasionally provide blog prompts, but in general I prefer for you to generate the discussion. Your posts will be the starting points for your papers; they will respond to and inspire threads of discussion in class; and they will allow you to draw connections between course texts and contemporary culture.

Posts should generally focus on the reading for the coming week. This means that you will need to read ahead. That said, it's okay to pick up on something that came up during class discussion. Try connecting the upcoming reading (which you will have just finished) to what we discussed in class. It's also okay to build on something that interested you about the previous week's discussion, or to focus on something that we did not have time to discuss in class. Just make sure that most of your posts touch on new material.

I encourage you to experiment with pairing texts on the syllabus with texts from other courses, literature of other periods, or digital media. For example, you might link to a clip on YouTube that helps to illuminate something at stake in that week's reading. Make sure to explain how your pairing helps us understand the course text in a new way.

Any topic that relates to the upcoming week's readings is welcome. This is your chance to set the agenda for discussion: if there are poems or issues you'd like to talk about in class, you should bring them up on the blog!

**Monday, August 29**

- Introductions

**Wednesday, August 31**

- *Samson Agonistes*: read lines 1-177 for today

**Tuesday, September 6**

- Blog post due by midnight

**Wednesday, September 7**

- *Samson Agonistes*

**Sunday, September 11**

- Blog post due by midnight

**Monday, September 12**

- *Samson Agonistes* (continued)
- John Carey, "A Work in Praise of Terrorism" (622-26 in the Norton)
- Feisal Mohamed, "Confronting Religious Violence: 'Samson Agonistes'" (course reserves)

**Wednesday, September 14**

- 1645 *Poems*, sigs. A1r-A6v

**Sunday, September 18**

- Blog post due by midnight

**Monday, September 19**

- 1645 *Poems*, sigs. A6v-B7v

**Wednesday, September 21**

- 1645 *Poems*, sigs. B7v-C6v

**Sunday, September 25**

- Blog post due by midnight

**Monday, September 26**

- 1645 *Poems*, sigs. C6v-E1r (concentrate on "Lycidas")
- Barbara Johnson, "Fiction and Grief: The Pastoral Idiom of Milton's 'Lycidas'" (course reserves)

**Wednesday, September 28**

- *A Maske Presented at Ludlow Castle*: read lines 1-330 for today

**Sunday, October 2**

- **Copy and paste paper draft to the blog by midnight**

**Monday, October 3**

- *A Maske Presented at Ludlow Castle*

**Wednesday, October 5**

- *A Maske Presented at Ludlow Castle* (continued)
- John Rumrich, "Comus: A Fit of the Mother" (course reserves)

**Sunday, October 9**

- **First paper due: upload to ELMS by midnight**

**Monday, October 10**

- *A Maske Presented at Ludlow Castle* (continued)

**Wednesday, October 12**

- *Areopagitica* (read the first seven paragraphs for today)

**Sunday, October 16**

- Blog post due by midnight

**Monday, October 17**

- *Areopagitica*

**Wednesday, October 19**

- *Areopagitica* (continued)
- "Cromwell, our chief of men, who through a cloud" (85 in the Norton)
- On the Late Massacre in Piedmont (86 in the Norton)
- Andrew Marvell, "An Horatian Ode upon Cromwell's Return from Ireland" (handout, also available on course reserves)

**Sunday, October 23**

- Blog post due by midnight

**Monday, October 24**

- **Memorization due** (write out your lines in class)
- To Mr. H. Lawes, on his Airs (83 in the Norton)
- "When I consider how my light is spent" (87 in the Norton)
- "Methought I saw my late espousèd saint" (90 in the Norton)
- *Genesis* 1-3 (307-11 in the Norton)

**Wednesday, October 26**

- *Paradise Lost*, Book 1

**Sunday, October 30**

- Blog post due by midnight

**Monday, October 31**

- *Paradise Lost*, Books 1-2
- Andrew Marvell, "On Mr. Milton's *Paradise Lost*" (377-78 in the Norton)
- Balachandra Rajan, from "The Problem of Satan" (407-12 in the Norton)

**Wednesday, November 2**

- *Paradise Lost*, Books 1-2 (continued)

**Sunday, November 6**

- Blog post due by midnight

**Monday, November 7**

- *Paradise Lost*, Books 3-4
- Joseph Addison, from *Spectator* 297 and 303 (379-82 in the Norton)

- William Blake, from *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* (389 in the Norton)
- Kenneth Gross, from "Satan and the Romantic Satan" (420-24 in the Norton)
- Stanley Fish, from "Not so much a Teaching as an Intangling" (542-45 in the Norton)

**Wednesday, November 9**

- *Paradise Lost*, Books 3-4 (continued)

**Sunday, November 13**

- Blog post due by midnight

**Monday, November 14**

- *Paradise Lost*, Books 5-6
- Archie Burnett, from "Sense Variously Drawn Out" (484-91 in the Norton)
- Julia M. Walker, from "Eve: The First Reflection" (516-20 in the Norton)

**Wednesday, November 16**

- *Paradise Lost*, Books 5-6 (continued)

**Sunday, November 20**

- Copy and paste paper draft on the blog by midnight

**Monday, November 21**

- **Revision workshop: bring a hard copy of your draft to class**

Thanksgiving break!

**Sunday, November 27**

- Blog post due by midnight

**Monday, November 28**

- *Paradise Lost*, Books 7-9
- Northrop Frye, from "Children of God and Nature" (458-65 in the Norton)
- Christopher Ricks, from "Enhancing Suggestions" (481-84 in the Norton)

**Wednesday, November 30**

- *Paradise Lost*, Books 7-9 (continued)

**Sunday, December 4**

- **Final paper due: upload to ELMS by midnight**
- No blog post due this week

**Monday, December 5**

- *Paradise Lost*, Book 10

**Wednesday, December 7**

- Course evaluations: meet in Tawes 0223

- *Paradise Lost*, Books 11-12

**Sunday, December 11**

- Blog post due by midnight

**Monday, December 12**

- **Memorization** (second round)
- *Paradise Lost*, Books 11-12 (continued)

**Friday, December 16, 1:30-3:30, in our normal classroom**

- Final exam: bring all Milton editions