

# English 336: Milton

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## Instructor and section information

Fall 2023, Tuesday/Thursday 12:30-1:45, CCC 323  
Prof. Bowman (she/her)  
Office: CCC 433  
E-mail: mbowman@uwsp.edu

Office hours: Mondays 1:30-3; Wednesdays 1-2; Thursdays 2:30-3:30  
Tuesdays and Fridays by appointment  
Office hours are in CCC 433, with Zoom available on request.

## Course texts

Rental: Merritt Y. Hughes, ed. *Complete Poems and Major Prose*

Purchase:

1. *Paradise Lost*, ed. Gordon Teskey (Norton Critical Edition) 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, ISBN 978-0-393-61708-5 (\$30 new, \$26.50 used). Available as an e-book.  
→Useful now, especially starting Sept. 12, really needed by Oct. 10
2. Virgil, *The Aeneid*, trans. Allen Mandelbaum ISBN 978-0-553-21041-5 (\$5.95 new, \$4.46 used). Available as an e-book.  
→Needed by Oct. 5
3. Optional: *Milton's Selected Poetry and Prose*, ed. Jason P. Rosenblatt (Norton Critical Edition) ISBN 978-0-393-97987-9 (\$25.33 new, \$19 used)

## Description and goals

John Milton lived in a tumultuous time, and was right in the thick of things. While most people now think of him as a great poet, he was best known in his own day as a polemical writer, debating a range of political, social, and religious issues—sometimes in an official capacity as England's Secretary for Foreign Tongues, often exposing himself to scathing personal attacks, and ultimately risking his life. Of course, he also produced a substantial body of poetry on a variety of subjects. Reading his work is challenging, but allows you to explore a range of literary genres, learn something about the hotly contested culture of mid-seventeenth century England, and think deeply about theology, gender, friendship, politics, and many other topics.

The primary goal of this course is to increase your familiarity with, and ability to appreciate, discuss, and interpret the works of Milton. This will include learning about the historical context, culture, and genres of his time, as well as developing the ability to read the texts closely and construct meanings from them. Another goal of the course is to develop your ability to write about literature effectively and with awareness of the conventions and standards of literary criticism.

By the end of the course you should be able to

- Analyze and interpret Milton's writing thoughtfully, relating it to its cultural context and literary history.
- Write effectively about literature, citing primary and secondary sources appropriately.

Classes will consist primarily of full- and small-group discussion, with some lectures on background material.

## Course Requirements and Grading

- **Preparation for class.** Read the material on the schedule for each day, making note of your questions and observations. You may find some of this material difficult, but do what you can with it. See Canvas for some suggestions for possible things to look for or think about as you read and links to useful resources. Feel free to draw on these, or follow your own interests.
- **Attendance and participation.** Regular attendance and meaningful engagement during class is expected.
- **Informal writing.** To warm up your writing muscles and practice some skills in a low-stakes way, there will be a few ungraded writing exercises. As we are working toward the major assignments, you will also be asked to share your work in progress for instructor or peer feedback. Directions and grading scales for these assignments will be posted in Canvas. Collectively, these contribute **15%** of the course grade.
- **Papers.** The first will be a relatively short, focused analysis (about 5 pages), worth **25%** of the course grade. The other will be a longer analysis, incorporating secondary sources (about 10 pages), worth **35%** of the course grade. Deadlines are shown on the schedule below, and guidelines will be provided in separate handouts. Grading criteria will be detailed on a separate handout and discussed before the first paper is due.

Paper 1 may be revised after it is graded, for possible bonus points (up to 2.5% of the final grade).

- **Final exam.** This will be an essay exam, worth **15%** of the course grade.

The remaining **10%** of the course grade will reflect your attendance and participation in class. The rubric on the next page will guide the determination of your grade.

How I calculate grades: Letter grades are converted to points, and points back to a letter grade for the course, using the following scale: D, 60-66.99%; D+, 67-69.99%; C- 70-72.99%; C, 73-76.99%; C+, 77-79.99%; B-, 80-82.99%; B, 83-86.99%, B+, 87-89.99%, A-, 90-92.99%, A, 93-100%. An assignment not turned in or test essay not attempted is a 0, but an F paper/essay will earn points in the F range.

## Grading Criteria for Attendance, Participation, and Informal Writing

A:

- Attends class, prepared, and engages in class activities (attentive, mentally engaged even if not speaking), at least 95% of the time.
- Treats other students and classroom community with respect.
- Contributions to discussions show careful listening, thoughtfulness, or effort to connect to others' ideas. May make an extra effort to contribute or to hold back occasionally to make space for others, or encourage other students to contribute.

B:

- Attends class, prepared, and engages in class activities (attentive, mentally engaged even if not speaking), at least 90% of the time.
- Treats other students and classroom community with respect.

C: Attends class, prepared, and engages in class activities (attentive, mentally engaged even if not speaking), at least 75% of the time.

D: Attends class, prepared, and engages in class activities (attentive, mentally engaged even if not speaking), at least 60% of the time.

Note: Expectations for attendance can be “fudged” to reflect valid reasons for absence. Examples of valid reasons include illness that makes meaningful participation impossible, unsafe, or disruptive; family or personal emergencies; field experiences for other classes; and travel for athletic competition. It is the student’s responsibility to notify the instructor to have these circumstances taken into account.

## Policies

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Any change to the syllabus will be announced in class and posted in Canvas.

**Attendance:** You should plan to attend class regularly. If you are unable to attend, let me know what is going on so that I can take your particular situation into account when I assign a grade for attendance and participation.

**Late papers:** A late paper will have its grade lowered by one letter grade per week. Informal writing assignments can be submitted up to one week late for half credit. These penalties may be waived if circumstances warrant. If legitimate problems interfere with getting your work in on time, please discuss your situation with me.

## **Classroom Etiquette:**

Tablets and other devices can be used in class for taking or referring to notes, if you can resist their temptations. However,

Students may not make audio, video, or photographic recordings of lectures or other class activities without written permission from the instructor. Anyone violating this policy will be asked to turn off the device being used. Refusal to comply with the policy will result in the student being asked to leave the classroom, and possibly being reported to the Dean of Students. (English Department Policy)

Diverse perspectives are an asset to class discussions. Please treat those whose ideas or experiences are different from yours with the same respect you want for yourself.

**Academic honesty:** Building the skills this course is intended to foster requires effort and practice. The point of assignments is to help you develop your skills, which can only happen if you do the work yourself. Except where an assignment indicates otherwise, all work should be done without collaboration with other students or anyone else, and without any assistance except for peer feedback, support from the Tutoring-Learning Center, and any accommodation appropriate to a documented disability. These principles don't change just because technology changes, so in case it needs to be said, having AI write for you constitutes plagiarism.

Students enrolled in a 300-level course should understand the difference between appropriate and inappropriate forms of help in writing papers and know how to cite sources properly, but if you have questions or feel unsure about any use of help or sources, please ask. The university policy on Academic Misconduct will be followed when applicable and includes the possibility of an F for the assignment or for the course. For more information about UWSP's policies regarding Academic Misconduct, see <http://www.uwsp.edu/dos/Documents/AcademicIntegrityBrochure.pdf>.

**Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:** If you have a condition requiring accommodations for this course, please contact the Disability Resource Center. Call 715 346-3365 or email [DRC@uwsp.edu](mailto:DRC@uwsp.edu) to make an appointment or get more information, or visit them in Room 108 of the Collins Classroom Center. Visit their website at <https://www.uwsp.edu/disability-resource-center/>

**Email:** Your UWSP email account is the university's standard method of communication with you, and you should check it regularly. I may at times use email to contact the class as a whole or individual students; I will routinely use the course home page in Canvas for reminders and announcements.

## Schedule

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Page numbers for Sept. 7 – Oct. 3 refer to Hughes, *Complete Poems and Major Prose* except where noted. (Some of this material is also available in the Norton Critical *Poetry and Prose*, which you may find more readable or portable; this is referred to as *P&P*.)

- September 7:** The Nativity Ode, 42-50. (Also in *P&P*, 3-13)
- September 12:** “L’Allegro” and “Il Penseroso,” 67-76 (Also in *P&P*, 25-34)  
Elegy I, 7-10  
Elegy V, 37-41 (Also in *P&P*, 205-210)  
Optional: biography in Norton Critical *PL*, xix-xxiv
- September 14:** “On Shakespeare,” 63-64 (Also in *P&P*, 24)  
Sonnet 7 (“How soon hath time”), 76-77 (Also in *P&P*, 79-80)  
“Ad Patrem” (To His Father), 82-86 (Also in *P&P*, 210-215)  
“Mansus,” just lines 70-84 (pp. 129-30, starting at “Old man”)
- September 19:** “On the Death of a Fair Infant,” 35-37 (Also in *P&P*, 14-17)  
“Damon’s Epitaph,” 132-39 (Also in *P&P*, 215-225)  
“Lycidas,” 116-25 (Also in *P&P*, 69-75)  
**Writing exercise 1**
- September 21:** A Mask Presented at Ludlow Castle, aka Comus, 86-114 (Also in *P&P*, 37-68)
- September 26:** Excerpt from *The Reason of Church Government* (preface to the second book), 665-71. (This is also available in the Norton Critical *Paradise Lost*, pages 339-48.)  
Sonnet 18 (“On the Late Massacre in Piemont”), 167-68 (Also in *P&P*, 86-87)  
Optional: biography in Norton Critical *PL*, xxiv-xxxi  
**Writing: Possible topics for paper 1**
- September 28:** *Areopagitica*, starting on p. 716. Get at least to the end of 734. (Also in *P&P*, 333-top of 359, or Norton Critical *PL*, 348-370)
- October 3:** *Areopagitica* to end (p. 749) (Also in *P&P*, 359-80, or *PL*, 370-94)  
Sonnets 19 (“When I Consider”) and 23 (“Methought I saw”), 168 and 170-7 (Also in *P&P*, 87-88, 90)  
Excerpt from *Second Defense*: start p. 823, lower right column, after the break, and read to 827 at the break in the upper right column.
- October 5:** *The Aeneid*, books 1-3

**October 10:** Sample papers (TBA)  
**Writing: Pin down topic for paper 1 and do (most of) your research.**

**October 12:** *The Aeneid*, books 4-8

**October 17:** *The Aeneid*, books 9-12

Note: Pages for Oct. 19 – Nov. 21 refer to the Norton Critical *Paradise Lost*. You may also find reference to the introductions and notes in the Hughes edition useful.

**October 19:** *Paradise Lost*, Book 1 (3-28)  
**Writing: Paper 1 due**

**October 24:** *Paradise Lost*, Book 2 (28-57)

**October 26:** *Paradise Lost*, Book 3 (57-79)  
Secondary reading on Satan: excerpts from Blake, 411-12, and Shelley, 420-21, and cluster “On Satan,” 431-37 (includes excerpts by Lewis, Rajan, Empson, and Schwartz)  
**Writing: Peer feedback on paper 1 due**

**October 31:** *Paradise Lost*, Book 4 (79-108)  
Secondary reading on God and theodicy: Cluster “On God,” 438-44 (excerpts from Lewis, Empson, Frye, and Cook) and “On Christian Ideology,” 468-76 (excerpts from Woodhouse, Fish, Silver, and Lieb)  
**Writing exercise 2**

**November 2:** *Paradise Lost*, Book 5 (108-135)

**November 7:** *Paradise Lost*, Book 6 (135-161)

**November 9:** *Paradise Lost*, Books 7 and 8 (161-99)  
Genesis 1-2, pages 313-316

**November 14:** *Paradise Lost*, Book 9 (200-233)  
Genesis 3, pages 316-317  
**Writing exercise 3**

**November 16:** *Paradise Lost*, Book 10 (234-65)  
Secondary reading: Cluster “On Eve and Adam,” 444-54 (excerpts from Frye, Quint, Picciotto, Sugimura, and Greenblatt) and “On Gender and Sexuality” 499-513 (excerpts from Lewalski, Walker, Goldberg--skip the piece by Stanton)

- November 21:** *Paradise Lost*, Books 11 & 12 (265-310)  
**Writing: Possible topics for paper 2**
- November 23:** Happy Thanksgiving!
- November 28:** **Writing: Have your topic chosen for paper 2 and do some brainstorming or early drafting.** Be ready to workshop ideas and look for secondary sources. (You may want to have a device with you to work on.)
- November 30:** *Paradise Regained*, Books 1 and 2, Hughes 483-505 or *P&P* 96-122
- December 5:** *Paradise Regained*, Books 3 and 4, Hughes 505-530 or *P&P* 122-151
- December 7:** **Writing: Have a draft of paper 2 ready to share for feedback.**
- December 12:** *Samson Agonistes*, lines 1-709, Hughes 549-68 or *P&P* 156-177
- December 14:** *Samson Agonistes*, lines 710-1758, Hughes 568-93 or *P&P* 177-204  
**Writing: Paper 2 due.**
- December 18 (Monday), 2:45-4:45, Final exam**