# The Wilkes Honors College

**Fall, 2017**

**Lit 4243: Honors Milton and the English Revolution**

**Michael Harrawood, instructor**

**SR \_\_\_: Office Hours: TR 9:00-11:00, T 3:30-5:30, and by appointment**

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**Required Texts: Please note that I will accept only the editions specified below.**

William Kerrigan, editor: ***John Milton's Paradise Lost***

<http://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/paradise-lost-william-kerrigan/1101889953?ean=9780375757969>

Jason Rosenblatt: ***Milton's Poetry and Prose***

<http://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/miltons-selected-poetry-and-prose-john-milton/1100878472?ean=9780393979879>

**We will work extensively in Early English Books Online (EEBO), and I will have several books on reserve in the library.**

**Course Objective:** The purpose of this course is, first, to familiarize the student with the poetry and prose of John Milton, and, second, to continue the professionalization of the student’s research and writing abilities. In addition to reading Milton, students will develop and carry out a research project, using libraries and online data resources, to write a paper of original scholarship. By the end of the course, the student will have a deeper understanding of John Milton, his work and his times, and will have mastered the rudiments of research paper writing. Hopefully the student will have produced a research paper to be presented outside the parameters of this course.

**Course Description:** This course will cover the poetry and prose of John Milton against the backdrop of the English Civil War. We will be concerned chiefly with the way in which Milton’s poetical, political and theological projects come together to help form the revolutionary world of 17th century England. Milton, once praised by Frederick Engels as “the first defender of regicides,” is a figure in the Western literary canon who, perhaps alone with Dante Alighieri, sensed himself to be at a critical juncture, a moment in which historical, poetical, linguistic and religious trajectories conjoined with a certain utopic potential (and thus also with a certain violence). Also like Dante, Milton thought himself to be a writer who commanded and who could thus interpret correctly the vast literary and philosophical systems inherited by his age. Like Dante, Milton was probably right in the assumptions he made about himself. And this presents present-day readers with a number of interesting problems: one of the most learned men of his time, Milton was also energetically democratic in his political prose; an apparent misogynist and bully of the women in his life, he wrote the first tracts in our tradition arguing for divorce on the grounds of the woman’s happiness. In Milton’s work we will find a deliberate closing down of certain literary traditions in favor of new ones based on different political and theological models. We’ll find the groundwork for modern American Christian individualism that one scholar, Sacvan Bercovitch, has called “the Puritan origins of the American self.” Milton proposes one antidote to the problems of the seventeenth century. Another, the one that wins out – in part because of the way it can bind itself to Milton’s – is science and experimental method. We’ll finish the course by looking at the events leading up to the founding of the Royal Society, the establishment of what the Academy called the “matter of fact,” and recoding of “Truth.”

 This is an upper-division literature course intended to satisfy the “single author” requirement for the concentration in lit. Course materials will include research and note-taking methods that will help prepare for work on the senior thesis. We will also be making extensive use, in and out of class, of FAU’s electronic database **Early English Books Online (EEBO)**, which contains original full-text reproductions of everything printed in England between 1475 and 1700. Although I have ordered hard copy texts for the course, I intend for the class to explore much of Milton’s literary output on EEBO, looking at the original publications, many of which Milton himself saw through the printing. My hope is that such an exercise will increase our sense of what a book or a poem or a pamphlet actually looked like during the time.

**Research Intensive Course Designation (RI) and Requirements:** This course contains an assignment or multiple assignments designed to help students conduct research and inquiry at an intensive level. If this class is selected to participate in the university-wide assessment program, students will be asked to complete a consent form and submit electronically some of their research assignments for review.  Visit the Office of Undergraduate Research and Inquiry (OURI) for additional opportunities and information at <http://www.fau.edu/ouri>.

**Student Learning Outcomes**

Research projects are expected to achieve all six of the following Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs):

**1: Knowledge.** Students are expected to demonstrate content knowledge, and knowledge of core principles and skills. All research begins with the acquisition and gathering of data. Researchers in literature find our data in books and manuscripts. For this course, we will learn the data acquisition skills available to researchers in South Florida. These include reference to hard copies of books that can be obtained through our libraries and through inter-library-loan programs, and the use of the many electronic data sources available to us. At FAU we are particularly fortunate to have access to Early English Books Online (EEBO), a resource that allows us to view scanned microfilm of original copies of every volume printed in England between Caxton’s press in 1475 and 1700. Online text searches require very different skills from library catalogue searches, and we will spend lots of in-class time looking at ways to formulate effective text searches in humanities databases, such as J-Stor and Project Muse. EEBO, in particular, will require students to become familiar with 16th and 17th century typeface, and reading early modern texts in unedited and unmodernized form will take some time. The benefit to the student of this is that you have the opportunity to do real and contributive scholarship. FAU is one of the few universities using EEBO in undergraduate research projects, and HC students have won awards and have presented their work at international conferences from research here.

**2: Formulate Questions.** Students are required to formulate research questions, scholarly or creative problems in a manner appropriate to the planning discipline. You start research because something in the text piques or interests you: how can Milton, who so defends women in *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce,* have exercised such misogyny in his creation of Eve? Or in the treatment of his own daughters? Or how can the writer celebrated by Frederick Engles as “the first defender of regicides” have created such an emperor in his God? Or, following William Blake, does he really write in fetters about God and angels? Or, something in a pop tune or on the evening news makes you think of Paradise Lost. Or, you wonder why Milton keeps forcing etymologies and repeating words on the same line. This seed from the text will unfold into larger questions about the social and textual meanings of the play itself, its post-colonial, feminist, or political history or questions about the text itself. This larger question will take shape for you by reading the research by other scholars on your play and your question. We commonly call these “Secondary Sources” but this is a mistake. Reading literature is unique in that we do it alone – the sense of revulsion we feel when Satan meets Sin and Death in Book II is ours alone – but we feel it alone in a community of fellow readers – so that sense of horror can take on different forms and proliferate different meanings. Reading the work of other scholars will admit you into this community so that you will no longer have to think about these issues alone. In this course we’ll spend a lot of our class time looking online at library catalogues, World Cat, and the university’s online data bases; we’ll talk about how to do effective searches and how to get a sense of what the reading community has been thinking about the issue that first piqued you in your own reading. You will formulate your question based on how other readers and scholars of these texts formulated theirs.

**3: Plan of Action.** Students are expected to develop and implement a plan of action to address research and inquiry questions or scholarly problems. Your ideas belong to you, and nobody can really implement them for you. But there is a path from that first moment of excitement you got reading the poems to the finished project. The first step is to formulate your most basic idea in a sentence or two: I notice that. . . ; I’m interested in. . . You don’t do that alone. This will be a small and intimate learning group, and we’ll all spend time talking about our ideas. From that first burst of light, you start to build outwards towards greater topics (see above, Outcome Two). You can then take these topics to electronic and catalogue searches that will provide your research path for you. Don’t try to map out the whole paper all at once, and don’t be afraid to change your paper from the ground up once you’ve started. Your data may show you that all this time you’ve really been interested in something other than the idea with which you started. We’ll spend lots of time on this.

**4: Critical Thinking.** Students are expected to apply critical thinking skills to evaluate information, their own work, and the work of others. You already know what “Critical Thinking” means or you wouldn’t be here. In literary research, it means a sort of intellectual push-back on both the primary and secondary sources you read. Why *is* Satan such a charming and compelling character in the early books of *Paradise Lost?* In fact, many scholars have compared him to an Epic Hero. Is that right? Your own research questions will cause you to read both the poetry and the critics in a way that will allow you to shave off just what you want to say. Study in The Humanities requires “Critical Thinking” to examine both the “what” and the “how” of your thought process.

**5: Ethical Conduct.** Students are expected to identify significant ethical issues in research and inquiry and/or address them in practice. For students of literature, ethical issues arise both in the reading and in the writing. We may not want to like Satan. . . we may not want to like Adam. But we do somehow. The temptation scene and the first taste of the apple may appear heartbreaking, once Milton makes us feel the stakes. All literature, even our own, asks that we consider attitudes and actions that make us uncomfortable. Great art demands that we reexamine our own ethical foundations. It is in these moments of our discomfort that we can begin to sort out the ethical problems of the text itself.

Perhaps more importantly, the ethics of literary research demand that the work we present is legitimately and genuinely our own. Students in college writing courses get warned about “plagiarism,” but research ethics are something else again. It is important that we do not poach conclusions or subject matter from our fellow scholars. There is enough room in the field of Milton scholarship for all our voices. As with all of these outcome fields, we will spend a lot of class time talking about how to use the work of other scholars in our own projects.

**6: Communication.** Students will convey all aspects of their research and inquiry (processes and/or products) in appropriate formats, venues, and delivery modes. We want to imagine presenting your final paper for this course in an academic venue. That means, we will groom and professionalize your writing as we go, so that you can submit your work for conference presentation or publication. **I encourage each student to imagine presenting this research outside the confines of our class.** I would like you to prepare research you can present at the **Honors Research Symposium**, here at the HC, or at the FAU Undergraduate Research Symposium in Boca. Here are web sites for information on these:

<http://www.fau.edu/honors/academics/research-symposium.php>

<http://www.fau.edu/ouri/undergrad_symposium.php>

Additionally, I encourage you to imagine the preparation of a research paper you can submit to the ***FAU Undergraduate Research Journal***, and to sources outside this community, like the **Florida Council of Honors Colleges**, or the **National Council of Honors Colleges**. Presenting your work is not a requirement for the course, and I will not factor it into your final grade. But I promise it will be worth all the work you will put into it.

The six SLOs listed above come all together, not one at a time, as we learn to conduct research in literature.

**How We’ll proceed:** We first must learn to read professional scholarship. **I’ll assign several scholarly articles and essays for this course, at least one or two per week. We’ll read these together, and I’ll ask a student to present a 10-minute discussion on each**. I’ll ask you to state the thesis of the article, to read the thesis sentence, and then to describe the way in which the critic builds his or her argument, what the argument specifically claims, and whether the paper works or not. In addition, I’ll ask each presenter to find a picture of the scholar we’re reading, to tell the class who this person is, where he or she got her Ph.D., where this person teaches today, if still teaching, and what other scholarship this person has published. We will talk much more about this.

In addition, after a few weeks I will ask students to find items on their own out of our online resources and library collections. There are vast possibilities out there, and we’ll have fun playing around with them. This exercise will also lay the foundation for your final paper.

**Note of Honors Distinction:** This course differs substantially from the non-Honors version. First, the writing component of the course will be much more demanding, and will prepare students for upper-division college writing and for work on the **Honors Thesis**. Students will be exposed to vocabulary of a specifically theoretical nature, and will be expected to comprehend these new concepts and to deploy these new terms in their own critical thinking and writing. In addition, we will begin professionalizing our own readings and analyses of these texts. Students will be expected to familiarize themselves with the history and the ongoing critical and scholarly conversation about these works, and will give in-class presentations about critical history and about the living scholars in the field as it now stands. Students will also engage with the theoretical tools used by today’s reading community to study literature. Most importantly, this course will reflect the interdisciplinary nature of Honors education and will inculcate critical attitudes and skills that will teach you how to learn for yourself.

**How you’ll get your grade**: As always for HC courses, I will finalize the grading parameters in collaboration with the students. The workload I propose for the course is heavy in both reading and writing, and so I am not planning any quizzes or tests. But this can change if I don’t feel that the class is reading the material as carefully or thoroughly as I demand. Right now, I’m imagining the written work to be based on one research paper of about 15 pages and one shorter paper of 5-pp. I think we should plan on presenting our work at the Honors Research Symposium. The grading breakdown would run something like this:

**Five-page paper** = 25%

**One research paper of 10-15 pages** = 50%

**Attendance and participation** = 25%

The absentee policy for this course is the usual one: you may have two (2) unexcused absences; after that, I will file an automatic and irrevocable F for your final grade. An excused absence is one for which the university makes allowances, and you must provide the appropriate documentation. As always, if you have an urgent personal issue, contact me *before class* meets and we’ll try to work something out. This is going to be a very busy semester and I want everybody to be in class on time and ready to talk about the day’s readings in a way that reflects a sustained and rigorous engagement with the assignment.

**Plagiarism:** The Wilkes Honors College and Florida Atlantic University have both established guidelines of Academic Integrity, and I am expecting everyone in the class to abide by it. FAU presently subscribes to several on line services that track down sources of work that instructors suspect has been plagiarized, and I will use these for anything I suspect has not been generated by the student for this class. Besides all this, since you all have chosen to take this course, and since you all have chosen to attend an Honors College, I am counting on your own arrogance and sense that you can write your own papers *better* than whatever hacks are out there selling stuff to you. I think you’re smarter than the people writing for the services, and hope you do too. You’re all gifted, focused, hard-working students – *go with it!* – get pleasure from your education and enjoy doing your own work. Here are links to the University and HC Honor Codes:

<http://www.fau.edu/divdept/honcol/academics_honor_code.htm>

 <http://www.fau.edu/regulations/chapter4/4.001_Code_of_Academic_Integrity.pdf>

***POLICY ON ACCOMMODATIONS:****In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), students who require reasonable accommodations to properly execute coursework must register with Student Accessibility Services (SAS)  -- in Boca Raton, SU 131**(561-297-3880**); in Davie, LA 131**(954-236-1222**); in Jupiter and all Northern Campuses, SR 111F**(561-799-8585**) – and follow all SAS procedures.*

**Class Schedule**: As always, this is not a contract. We can change our dates, assignments, quicken or slow our reading and research pace as we want. I have set out what I think is a challenging and fast-paced course; but we can go differently if you want.

**Week One**: Introduction. Background on Milton’s life and on seventeenth century English history. Jacques Derrida, “White Mythology: Metaphor in the Text of Philosophy.” Read10-pages in and we’ll see how it goes.

***In class: Writing Research Papers. What you need to begin?***

**Week Two**: ***L’Allegro*** and  ***Il Penseroso***, plus revisit the poems from Week One. Critical essays from the ***Norton.*** Continue Derrida. In-class reports on The English Civil War, Cromwell, the execution of Charles I, The New Model Army.

***In class: Note-taking for Research Papers. How to Take Notes. What a Note Should Give You.***

**Week Three: *Comus*** and ***Lycidas*** . Derrida, ten more pages in. Student-led discussions on the poems and their critical histories.

***In class: Elements of Literary Research: Text, Literature, Theory.***

**Week Four:** Religious and Political Prose: ***Of Education, Areopagitica***. ***The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates.***

***In class: How You Find Your Research Topic. How to get to the EEBO texts.***

**Week Five:**  ***The Ready and Easy Way.*** Political poems and occasional sonnets: **Sonnet 11 (*A Book was writ*), Sonnet 18 (*On the late massacre in Piemont*), Sonnet 23 (*Methought I saw. . .*), *On the new forcers of Conscience under the long PARLIAMENT*.**

Derrida: Ten more pages into “White Mythologies.”

***Moving from secondary materials to EEBO searches***

**Week Six: *Paradise Lost, Books I and II.*** Also, William Blake, ***The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*** (in class).

***In class: preliminary discussion of possible research topics.***

***Five-page paper due by Friday.***

**Week Seven: *Paradise Lost, Books III and IV.***

Stanley Fish, ***Surprised by Sin.*** Student-led discussion.

***In class: How to make an annotated bibliography entry. Academic Styles for research in literature.***

**Week Eight: *Paradise Lost, Books V and IV.***

R.A. Shoaf, “Surprised by Signs.” Student-led discussion.

***In class: student research topics. Game plan for research paper. Each student presents a topic, no matter how vague or rough.***

Week Nine: Spring Break. Class meets anyway.

Week Ten: Student Reports: Critical history of *Paradise Lost*, Milton’s influence in English Literature, the state of Milton studies today.

Also: *Paradise Lost, Books VII and VIII.*

Week Eleven: *Paradise Lost, Books IX and X.* Also, Steven Shapin, *The Social History of Truth.*

***Drafts of your lead pages due by Friday, March 22, 9 p.m.***

Week Twelve: *Paradise Lost, Books XI and XII*. Also, *Leviathan and the Air Pump.* On BB.

Week Thirteen and Fourteen: *Paradise Regained,* selections

Week Fifteen: We will spend this time reviewing our semester’s reading and discussing the final research projects. This will be our time to iron out any remaining difficulties with the projects.

We will meet during the scheduled exam time to read our work to one another. I encourage students to present research done in this semester at the Honors Research Symposium.