

EN 4/6533 Milton
Dr. Lara Dodds
Fall 2009, Tuesdays and Thursdays 11:00

In this course we will read Milton's major poetry and selected prose. We will begin the course with readings of Milton's autobiographical writings and his early poetry (primarily Lycidas Comus, and the sonnets) in order to establish the context of Milton's notion of a poetic vocation and to examine his self-presentation as a writer. We will spend a good part of the semester on a slow and careful reading of Paradise Lost that engages the theological, political, literary, and philosophical contexts of Milton's epic. Selections from the prose (Areopagitica, "Of Education," the divorce tracts) will supplement our reading of Paradise Lost by presenting the range of Milton's thought on problems of individual choice and agency; marriage and women's roles; style, rhetoric, and the nature of literature. We conclude the semester by reading Paradise Regained and Samson Agonistes: in what ways is each work a culmination of Milton's career as poet and author?

Text: *The Complete Poetry and Essential Prose of John Milton*. Ed. William Kerrigan, John Rumrich, and Stephen M. Fallon. Random House: New York, 2007. (Modern Library Edition).

In addition to completing the required readings and participating in class discussion, all students will write one or two brief essays, complete a mid-term and final exam and write a researched final essay (undergraduates = 10 pages; graduates = 15-20 pages). Graduate students will also prepare an annotated bibliography a research presentation of approximately ten minutes.

