ENGLISH 350B: POETRY AND PROSE OF THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

PROFESSOR KATHY ACHEISON
UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO, SPRING 1997
SYLLABUS

KATHY: HH 225; EXT. 2122; E-MAIL KOA@WATARTS.UWATERLOO.CA; OFFICE M 12-1, T 1:30-2:30

PLEASE TAKE THE OPPORTUNITY TO DISCUSS MATTERS WITH ME. GUARANTEED RESULTS.
THE BEST WAY IS BY E-MAIL.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

The objective of the course sounds simple: to read Milton's Paradise Lost with some measure of understanding. The problem is that Paradise Lost is probably the most difficult piece of writing any of us will ever read, and to read it with anything like our usual ease and comprehension requires a great deal of work. We need, therefore, to gain an overall knowledge of the story, the techniques and vocabulary, and the structure of the poem; we will gain these through reading assignments, lectures, and regular discussion. We will also have the opportunity to compare the treatment of similar themes in other works of the period, in order to clarify the choices Milton made in writing the epic. When we finish the course, we will know the poem a little, which will be much better than we did before; we will also be better general readers, with our senses more finely tuned to the fundamental qualities of extraordinary writing. It can be said that Milton wrote the poem as a form of active education for the Christian man; Christian philosophy still underpins much of our culture, and in this respect the poem is useful to us. More importantly, however, we can read the poem as an education in complex writing, thus improving our skills as readers and critical writers substantially. To this end, there is no better text on which to work.

POLICIES

1. Late policy: The only assignment which could be handed in late in this course is the essay. I will accept it up until the last day of class, at a rate of penalty of 2% a day, including weekends. This penalty will only be remitted with proof of a medical problem or other crisis. An extension of up to one week from the due date is available, but must be requested before the due date and I must agree to it.

2. Examination: The exam date is set by the University. The University's policy is that "[a] student requesting an alternative time for a final examination will be granted that request only in exceptional circumstances outside the control of the student. Such circumstances include illness (with medical certificate) or other mitigating circumstances outside the control of the student. Elective arrangements (such as travel plans) are not considered acceptable grounds for granting an alternative examination time." I abide by this policy.

3. Plagiarism: We all know what it is: representing someone else's words as your own. What seems to be unclear to some students is that the distinction between the student's words and the critic's must be unmistakably clear and precise. I investigate any instance in which the documentation of secondary sources is sloppy -- for instance, if you put a footnote at the end of a paragraph, which vaguely attributes something in the paragraph to a critic, I will go to the book or article, check it out, and take appropriate action in the event that I confirm that the distinction between your ideas and the critic's is not firmly and clearly made. The least suffering a student who does not abide by the precise
conventions of documentation will endure is marks deducted for improper documentation; if the problem is extensive, I will deal accordingly and impose stiffer penalties. I do not require that you use secondary sources in your essay; should you wish to, I strongly advise that you apprise yourself thoroughly of the conventions of documentation which are used in English studies. The clearest manual on such matters is *The MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*.... Ignorance is no excuse at this level.

**TEXTS**

Milton, John. *Paradise Lost*. Scott Elledge, ed. New York: Norton. BOOKSTORE. I need you to have this edition, as it has supplementary material which is required.

Selected contemporary works. These are available in the *Norton Anthology of Literature in English, Volume I*; I use the sixth edition. For those of you who do not have the anthology, I will provide photocopies at cost, or you may seek out the texts in the library.

Please try to get an English *Bible*, preferably the King James Version.

**SCHEDULE**

May 6, 8: Introduction
May 13, 15: Book I, *Paradise Lost*
May 20, 22: Book II, *Paradise Lost*
**May 22: SHORT TEST ON BOOKS I AND II**
May 27, 29: Book III, *Paradise Lost*
June 3: CLASS CANCELLED
June 5: Book IV, *Paradise Lost*
**June 10, 12: SEMINARS ON BOOKS I to IV**
June 17, 19: Books V and VI, *Paradise Lost*
June 24, 26: Books VII and VIII, *Paradise Lost*
July 1: University Holiday
**July 3: MID-TERM (BOOKS V-VIII)**
July 8, 10: Book IX, *Paradise Lost*
July 15, 17: SEMINARS ON BOOKS V to IX
July 22, 24: Books X, XI and XII, *Paradise Lost*
**July 24: FINAL PAPER DUE**
July 29: parodies
July 31: review, papers returned, course evaluations

**MARKS AND ASSIGNMENTS**

**TEST ONE, MAY 22: 10%**
SEMINARS (SEE EXPLANATION BELOW): TWO AT 10% EACH = 20%
**MID-TERM TEST, JULY 3: 20%**
**FINAL ESSAY: 25%**
**FINAL EXAM (TWO HOURS): 25%**
SEMINARS

In the term, you will each be involved in giving two seminars. You will do so in groups of three or four. Each seminar will discuss the relationships between assigned supplementary readings and one of the assigned books of PL. The format is as follows: each person in the group gives a five-minute presentation on the relationships between one piece of supplementary reading and the book in question; then each student will give a one or two minute summary of the findings of the group as a whole. Each student must read all of the pieces of supplementary reading discussed in the seminar. Half the mark will come from how well the group does; half will come from how well individuals do.

For the presentations, any discussion of relationships is acceptable. Should you feel uncertain about how to approach the question, here are a couple of suggestions. For source material, show how Milton uses the source material -- where it appears in the poem, and what he makes of it in the context of the poem. For other works, including those by Milton, discuss similarities and/or differences between the treatments of common themes or topics.

SEMINAR ONE: BOOKS I TO IV

Books I and II

Set A: 1. Francis Bacon, "The Idols of the Marketplace" from Novum Organum, Norton
2. John Bunyan, "Christian Sets out for the Celestial City," the "Slough of Despond" from The Pilgrim's Progress, Norton

Set B: 1. Bible: James 1:15 (birth of sin) + an encyclopedia account of the birth of Athena.
2. Christopher Marlowe, Dr. Faustus, Scene 1.1-63; 1.78-118, 1.83-100, 5.192-206, 13.55-112, Norton
3. William Shakespeare, Othello: speeches by Iago selected from 1.1.8-33, 1.1.41-65, 1.3.311-316, 1.3.319-333, 1.3.335-362, 1.3.380-402 (can be two people, if numbers require; then all speeches).

Book III

1. Milton, Christian Doctrine, "Of Divine Decree" (Part I, Ch. 3)
4. John Donne, "Good Friday Riding Westward," Norton

Book IV

3. Andrew Marvell, "To His Coy Mistress"

Set B: 1. Andrew Marvell, "The Garden"
2. Ben Jonson, "To Penshurst," Norton

SEMINAR TWO: BOOKS V TO IX
Books V - VI
3. Bible, Revelations 10-22
5. Philip Sidney, Defense of Poetry, 481-88, Norton

Books VII-VIII
1. Francis Bacon, “The Abuses of Language,” Norton
5. Thomas Hobbes, Leviathan, Chs. 14 and 15, Norton

Book IX
1. Aemilia Lanyer, Salve Deus Ex Judaeorum, Norton
2. Francis Bacon, “Of Great Place,” Norton
3. Milton, “Il Penseroso” (two people)
4. Edmund Spenser, The Faerie Queene, Bk. I, Canto 4, Stanzas 16-36 [procession of the Seven Deadly Sins led by Lucifera, or Pride], Norton (two people)
5. Milton, CD, “Of the Punishment of Sin,” “Of the Fall...”