ENGLISH 350B
SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY NON-DRAMATIC LITERATURE 2
TUESDAY AND THURSDAY, 10:00-11:30, ARTS LECTURE HALL 105
PROFESSOR KATHY ACHESON

In this course we will be studying in full the most important work of poetry in the English 17th century, Milton's _Paradise Lost_. (Should time permit, we will discuss certain other writers from the period, such as Bacon, Browne and Bunyan).

Course Objectives

The objective of the course sounds simple: to read _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 gain particular knowledge of questions of form and content from our discussion of certain aspects, and from writing essays and tests on selected topics. 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; as Christian concerns are not as immediate to our culture as they were to his, we will take it instead as a means to actively educate ourselves about complex writing. For this, there is no better example in the English language.

Text: I have ordered the Oxford UP edition, entitled _John Milton_ and edited by Stephen Orgel and Jonathan Goldberg. Any other scholarly edition of the whole poem will be fine, as long as the edition has line numbers and footnotes, and you are able to get supplementary readings. The library has many copies of the poem, and so do secondhand bookstores.

Assignments

Discussion Questions: For each book of the poem I will assign discussion questions for each book of the poem. Normally, we will go over the discussion questions in the Thursday class. You should make notes and bring them to class. There are no direct marks for this assignment, but preparation for it will directly help in the tests, and indirectly in the essay.

Additional Reading: As the primary reading is difficult, the additional reading is not required; however, you will find that it is often helpful, for the biblical story from which Milton is working will be more plainly put, and the prose explanations of some of the concepts he employs will be easier to understand. You may also find material helpful to you in formulating your essay.

The suggested readings are always very short. For the Bible readings I use the King James version, but you may use any standard version. Be forewarned that in the passage numbers might be a little off if you are using a text other than the King James.

Short Tests: There will be three surprise tests (only on Thursdays) requiring students to answer one question in essay style in half an hour. The questions will be chosen from the discussion questions. Students will have a choice from a few questions on each of the tests. Students may use their notes and the textbook and may prepare answers in advance. Each of these tests is marked out of 10.

Thesis statement: A thesis statement, a substantial paragraph with outlines the argument and evidence for your essay, is due on March 11. No extensions will be given for this assignment, unless a serious medical problem is documented. 10 marks.
Essay: One paper of 7 to 10 regular pages is due March 27. The topic may be designed by you, or chosen from those I hand out. These essays do not require secondary research. I will discuss and give handouts outlining what I expect in these essays.

No extensions will be granted without a medical certificate unless agreed to by me before the due date. There is a 2% per working day penalty on late papers. Papers will not be accepted after the exam date.

Exam: Final exam during examination period; probably one section of multiple choice questions and two sections of essay questions.

On Plagiarism: In all of your written work you must take care not to plagiarize. Plagiarism occurs when you represent somebody else's ideas or words as your own; to avoid it, you must ensure that your reader understands, through your use of the conventions of documentation, when you are quoting or borrowing in any way from another person's writing. You'll know if you are plagiarizing deliberately; to make sure you don't do it by accident, take careful notes, making sure you write down the author and page number of each quotation, and the title and publication information of the book or article, and make this information clear to your reader in your essay.

Lectures and class discussion are free for your plunder, and need not be cited.

Marks Scheme

Short tests: 30% (top two of three marks count)
Thesis Statement: 10%
Essay: 25%
Exam: 35%

CLASS SCHEDULE

January 7: Introduction: course structure, materials, assignments
January 9: Introduction: Milton and Paradise Lost

January 14 and 16: Book I (Satan and the rebel angels in hell)
Genesis 1-3; Revelations 12: 3-13

January 21 and 23: Book II (Satan and his legions in hell; Satan departs from hell)
James 1:12-15; any account of the birth of Athena.

January 28 and 30: Book III (Meanwhile, in heaven...introduction of Christ and God, foretelling of the consequences of Satan's actions)

February 4 and 6: Book IV (Satan lands in the garden; introduction to Adam and Eve; Eve's account of her creation)
Christian Doctrine X "Of the Special Government of Man Before the Fall," XXX "Of Man's Private Duties;" 1 Corinthians 7:1-9

February 11 and 13: Book V (Eve's dream, and guess who's coming to dinner!? Beginning of the story of the war in heaven)
Christian Doctrine IX, "Of the Special Government of Angels"

"Winter break"
February 25 and 27: Book VI (conclusion of Raphael's story of the war in heaven)
Matthew 25:31-41

March 4 and 6: Book VII (the story of the creation of the world)
Reread Genesis 1 and 2; John 1:1-5, 14-18.

March 11 and 13: Book VIII (Adam's story of his creation)
THESIS STATEMENT DUE MARCH 11

March 18 and 20: Book IX (The temptation and fall of man)
Christian Doctrine, XI "Of the Fall of Our First Parents, and Of Sin," XII "Of the Punishment of Sin"
Reread Genesis 3
Re women, 1 Corinthians 7:1-16, 11:3-12, 1 Timothy 2:7-15

March 25 and 27: Book X and XI (Christ comes to judge man; sin and death prepare to enter earth; Satan and the rebel angels are punished; Michael's visit)

April 1 and 3: Books XI and XII (Michael shows them the future, and reveals the covenant of grace; Adam and Eve are expelled from the garden of Eden)
Matthew 5:1-12, 13, 17, 21, 27, 38, 43 ("Sermon on the Mount"); Christian Doctrine XXXIII

April 8
"Mait does more than Milton can
To justify the ways of God to man."

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

BOOK I

1. How does Satan characterize himself?
2. How does Satan characterize God?
3. How does Milton convey the grandeur of the poem and its great theme?

BOOK II

1. How is Satan cast as heroic in this book?
2. What do we learn about Satan from his response to the nomination?
3. How does Satan persuade Sin to let him through the gates of hell?

BOOK III

1. How is God's foreknowledge signalled in this book, and what is its relation to the fall?
2. What is the difference between man's fall and the fall of the rebel angels?
3. What effect does the imagery of light in Book III have?

BOOK IV

1. How does Milton encourage us to see Satan differently than Satan sees himself?
2. What is the relationship between nature and man in Paradise?
3. How is the irony of the fall expressed in this book?

BOOK FIVE

1. Satan believes that God's goodness and love are finite. How is this belief tied to the sins that Satan
commits and Adam and Eve will commit?

2. What are the similarities between the war in heaven and the fall of man?

3. Why does it matter whether or not angels eat?

BOOK VI

1. What is the relationship between storytelling and truth in this book?

2. What is heroic about Abdiel?

3. What is the difference between Christ's "merit" (43) and Satan's merit in Book I (1.98)?

BOOK VII

1. How is goodness defined in this book?

2. What more do we learn about Eve in this book?

3. In what ways are the creation and the redemption of mankind similar?

BOOK VIII

1. How does Adam attain self-knowledge and what is that self-knowledge?

2. What is the relationship between fancy and sin?

3. Why is Eve characterized in the way she is?

BOOK IX

1. How are Satan's argument (678-732) and Eve's argument (322-341) similar?

2. What's sexy about Satan's temptation of Eve?

3. What work do the epic similes do in this book?

BOOK X

1. How is the punishment of man related to the sin?

2. What is ironic about Sin and Death's reception of Satan?

3. How is Adam's penitence related to God's mercy?

BOOK XI

1. Why does Eve have to sleep while Adam receives the vision of the future from Michael?

2. How is it shown in this book that God is good and loving?

3. What is the relationship between faith and reason?

BOOK XII

1. What is the relationship between the story of Cain and Abel and either the rebellion of the angels or the fall of man?

2. How will Christ bruise the heel of the serpent?

3. What shows that Adam's education is complete and he is ready to leave the garden?