COURSE DESCRIPTION:

English 400 is a thorough treatment of the writings of John Milton. Representative selections from the Early Poems (1628-1640), Prose Works and Sonnets (1642-1658), and the Major Poems will be read, discussed, and written about. Computer literacy and writing improvement activities will be incorporated into the course work.

COURSE COMPETENCIES:

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to do the following:

A. To describe the role of Reason in such works as *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained*.
B. To analyze Milton’s treatment of the theme of Good and Evil in any work selected.
C. To evaluate the prominence of Free Will in the Miltonic scheme of things.
D. To apply Milton’s Christian scheme of redemption to modern situations.
E. To explain the use of the epic simile in *Paradise Lost*.
F. To interpret the character of Satan (and Eve) in relation to prevailing views of the “heroic.”
G. To list the epic characteristics and conventions found in *Paradise Lost*.
H. To explain the characteristics that makes *Samson Agonistes* a Greek tragedy.
I. To discuss “Lycidas” as a pastoral elegy.
J. To summarize the major premise of Milton’s prose works.
K. Analyze Milton’s English and Italian sonnets.

OUTLINE OF COURSE CONTENT:

- Introduction and vocabulary development- *The Portable Milton* (PM), pp.1-36
Unit I: Early Poems, 1628-1640
- “On the morning of Christ’s Nativity”
- “Lycidas”
- “Lament for Damon”

Unit Test

Unit II: Prose Works and Sonnets, 1642-1658
- An Apology for Smectymnuus
- Of Education
- Second Defense of the English People

Test
- Sonnets

Refer to [http://pom-vms1.Pomona.edu/~esong/sonnets.html](http://pom-vms1.Pomona.edu/~esong/sonnets.html) for important notes on the sonnets and Milton.

- “How soon hath time” (Dec.9, 1631 or 1632) (c. 1642-1645).
- “On the Same” (c. 1645-6)
- “To Mr. H. Lawes, on his Airs” (before 1648)
- “On the Lord General Fairfax at the Siege of Colchester” (August, 1648)
- “To the Lord General Cromwell” (May, 1652)
- “To Sir Henry Vane the Younger” (June/July.1652)
- “On the Late Massacre in Piedmont” (April, 1655)
- “When I consider” (date under debate)
- “Lawrence of virtuous father” (any winter between 1651-2 and 1656-7)
- “Cyriaek” (c.1655)
- “To Mr. Cyriak Skinner Upon his Blindness” (c. 1655)
- “Methought I saw” (under debate probably 1658)

Unit Test

Unit III: The Major Poems

- Paradise Lost
  Test

- Paradise Regained
  Test

- Samson Agonistes

Unit Test
SPECIAL COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Milton-L is a discussion group devoted to the life, literature, and times of the poet John Milton. Currently, there are more than 465 listed members from around the world.

- Join the Milton-L discussion group. To do so, send an email message to majordomo@richmond.edu

  In the body of the message, type the words subscribe Milton-L (no need to boldface the words.)

You will receive the message: subscribe Milton-L succeeded. You will now begin to receive many messages from people everywhere who are interested in John Milton. Your assignment is to lurk for two weeks (read messages and take notes daily.) Beginning on January 31, you will focus on one of threads on the list. You will post your first summary on the Milton Web-Board by 12:00 midnight on Sunday, February 10. One (1) point credit will be given only for correct summaries. You must pay attention to grammar, spelling, sentence structure, and documentation.

  Additionally, you will post a summary of the same or another thread every two weeks: February 24, March 10, March 24, April 7, April 21, and May 5. Read through at least five of the summaries on topics other than yours, and respond to the ideas presented by your classmates before 12 midnight the Sunday following the posting of summaries. Your responses are an important part of the assignment. You will also receive one (1) point for each response.

The Communications and Languages Computer Classroom (273 Turner Hall) is available for C & L majors at all times, unless there is a class in there. Be sure to sign in and out for my records, and ask a tutor to listen to your summary before you print the final copy.

- Research paper to be announced.

GRADING SCALE:

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John Milton: Bibliography


**Online Resources**

**John Milton (1608-1674)** - The definitive site on the World Wide Web for information on John Milton, including online editions of his works

**The Milton Quarterly** – A scholarly journal devoted to the life and writings of John Milton.

**The Milton-L Home Page** - A page from the University of Richmond with links to archives and electronic texts of Milton

**John Milton’s Paradise Lost** - Information regarding the poet’s most famous work.

**Selected Poetry of John Milton**- A resource that provides e-text versions of many of Milton’s poems

[http://www. science.winder.edu/~withers/webeval.htm](http://www.science.winder.edu/~withers/webeval.htm)  
A collection of materials to help you evaluate all kinds of electronic and print texts.

[http://www/mla.org/main_stl.htm#sources](http://www/mla.org/main_stl.htm#sources)  
The MLA’s guide to citing electronic resources
Fun Milton Tidbit

In the 1997 film The Devil’s Advocate, Al Pacino plays a character named John Milton. The character is depicted as a semi-adaptation of the poet placed in a modern world. In the film, Milton is literally the devil, and in fact, some of his lines are directly quoted from the poet’s work.