Overview:

A study of John Milton’s poetry and his engagement with the cultural, social, and political struggles of the seventeenth century. We will examine the literary impact of the revolutions in the period’s thinking about political sovereignty, the relation between the sexes, the material world, religiously motivated terrorism, and the nature of God. Our main texts are Milton’s *Paradise Lost* and *Samson Agonistes*. But we will look in addition at Milton’s influence on literary culture today, considering the specific case of Philip Pullman’s deeply Miltonic science fiction trilogy *His Dark Materials*. Students will watch or listen to pre-recorded lectures, and will meet online for biweekly seminar discussions. Renaissance.

(available from amazon.com):
Link to amazon.com: http://www.amazon.com/Complete-Poems-Major-Prose-Milton/dp/0872206785 (Links to an external site.)

Link to amazon.com: http://www.amazon.com/Materials-Omnibus-Golden-Compass-Spyglass/dp/0375847227 (Links to an external site.)

Alternative Milton text (also available from amazon.com):
Link to amazon.com: http://www.amazon.com/Complete-Poetry-Essential-Milton-Library/dp/0679642536 (Links to an external site.)

Note: page numbers for the Kerrigan/Rumrich edition of Milton appear in brackets below

Requirements:

- Two papers (one 4-6 pp. and one 6-8 pp.)
Three short written responses posted online over the course of the term (see explanation below)
Regular attendance and participation in biweekly online class meetings (see below)
Grade breakdown: short essay (20%), long essay (40%), three responses (20%), attendance and participation (20%)

Schedule of Assignments:

Monday, May 27, 2019: Introduction

- Lecture 1: Milton, Power, and the Power of Milton
- "On the Morning of Christ’s Nativity" (1629), pp. 42-50 [18-30]
- "At a Vacation Exercise in the College" (1628), pp. 30-32 [11-15]
- "Elegia sexta" (1629), pp. 50-53 [190-193]
- Lecture 2: The Infant Cry of God

Wednesday, May 29, 2019: Paradise Lost: The Brightness Visible of Hell

- Paradise Lost, Books I and II
- Lecture 9: Paradise Lost, Book I
- Lecture 10: God and Mammon: The Wealth of Literary Memory

Monday, June 3, 2019: Paradise Lost: Hail Holy Light

- Paradise Lost, Books I and II, and lines 1-55 of Book III
- Essays on Milton’s similes by Geoffrey Hartman ("Milton’s Counterplot") and Stanley Fish (selection from Surprised by Sin)
- Lecture 11: The Miltonic Simile
- Lecture 12: The Blind Prophet

Wednesday, June 5, 2019: Paradise Lost: Heaven and Earth

- Paradise Lost, Book III
- Lecture 13: Paradise Lost, Book III
- Paradise Lost, Book IV
- Excerpts from Thomas Hobbes, Leviathan(1650)
- Lecture 14: Paradise Lost, Book IV

Friday, June 7, 2019: Paper #1

- Upload Paper #1 (4-6 pp.) to the “Essay 1 Submission” in June 9 Module by 5:00 pm EST
  - Guide for the First Essay
  - Some Matters of Form -- a style sheet for English literature essays.pdf
Monday, June 10, 2019:  *Paradise Lost*: Flashback to the First Event in History

- *Paradise Lost*, Books V and VI
- Lecture 15: *Paradise Lost*, Books V-VI

Wednesday, June 12, 2019:  *Paradise Lost*: Creation Stories

- *Paradise Lost*, Books VII and VIII
- Lecture 16: *Paradise Lost*, Books VII-VIII
- Pullman, *The Golden Compass*

Monday, June 17, 2019:  *Paradise Lost*: The Fall

- *Paradise Lost*, Books IX and X
- Lecture 17: *Paradise Lost*, Book IX
- Lecture 18: *Paradise Lost*, Books IX-X
- Pullman, *The Subtle Knife*

Wednesday, June 19, 2019:  *Paradise Lost*: The Aftermath of the Fall

- *Paradise Lost*, Books XI and XII
- Lecture 19: *Paradise Lost*, Books XI-XII
- Lecture 20: *Paradise Lost*, Books XI-XII (cont.)

Friday, June 21, 2019: (Optional) revision of Paper #1 due

- Upload (optional) revision of Paper #1 to the “Essay 1 Submission” in June 10 Module by 5:00 pm EST

Monday, June 24, 2019: Reading *Samson Agonistes* after 9/11

- The Bible, Judges, chap. 13-16
- Lecture 23: *Samson Agonistes*
- “Of That Sort of Dramatic Poem Which is Call’d Tragedy,” pp. 549-550 [707-709]
- “The Passion” (1630), pp. 61-63 [30-33]
- Lecture 24: *Samson Agonistes* (cont.)

Wednesday, June 26, 2019: The Science Fiction Legacy of Milton’s Dark Materials

- Finish *His Dark Materials*. We’ll discuss *The Amber Spyglass* and its relation to *Paradise Lost*.

Friday, June 28, 2019: Paper #2
• Upload Paper #2 (6-8 pp.) via the “Essay 2 Submission” in the Week 5 Module by midnight. Suggested paper topics are available under that same link in the Week 5 Module.

Note about the required three short written responses:

Each student must produce three written responses over the course of the term. Each response should center on the specific passage noted, or the question asked, under the "Directed Reading Response" link on the "module" for each class meeting (beginning Wednesday, May 30). Each contribution should be the length of a brief paragraph and should be posted on the course’s Canvas website before noon (Eastern Standard Time) on the day of our class meeting. You will likely find yourself sharing a passage with a fellow student, and so you can choose whether to initiate a response (by clicking "reply" to the "Directed Reading Response" question itself, or by clicking "reply" to one of your classmate’s contribution to an ongoing discussion thread). Use these postings to share reflections, ask questions, launch arguments, express puzzlement, or do something else altogether, about the material assigned for the upcoming class. You must also regularly read the online discussions, even when not assigned to post for that session. You may find that a point you articulated earlier has been taken up, agreed with, or, in the spirit of Miltonic disputation, even refuted.

Feel free to re-use any response you’ve written in one of the two essays. Just add a footnote indicating where you’d written that before. You may also refer in one of your essays to one of your classmate’s written responses, in which case you would also write footnote the source.

Note: Your three required responses must be spread out over the course of the term, with only one response for any given week. Be sure you’re posting a response for an upcoming class, and not a class meeting that has already occurred.