
Paradise Lost

Description

This pro-seminar is about a single poem: John Milton's *Paradise Lost*. The course's main focus will be a review of important critical work on *Paradise Lost* and what makes it important. We'll also read literary precursors to and influences on the epic (excerpts at least from Virgil's *Aeneid* and Torquato Tasso's *Gerusalemme Liberata*) and discuss its later adaptation, especially in different generic forms like Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, Ridley Scott's *Bladerunner*, and Ronald Johnson's *Radi Os*, all so as to orient it within a specifically literary and cultural history. The pro-seminar's attention to critical and literary history is designed to train students to write professional, scholarly essays. This is often termed a "research methodology" seminar. Sometimes, that gets confused with a theoretical approaches survey. This course isn't so much that as it is an introduction to the scholarly handling of the poem that must undergird any professional intervention (as opposed to analogy mongering or hot-takism). This course will walk students through the various tasks and documents that go into producing worthwhile scholarship. Students will produce several article synopses and critiques (a disarticulated lit review, in other words), a monograph review, an initial abstract or paper proposal by week ten, followed by a conference paper, and finally an article-length seminar paper.

Readings

Paradise Lost

Important books and essays written about the poem
Prior epics that influenced Milton's poem
Later poems, novels, and films influenced by Milton's epic

Required Texts

John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, ed. Barbara K. Lewalski (Blackwell, 2007).
Vergil, *The Aeneid*, trans. Sarah Ruden, rev. ed. (Yale University Press, 2021).
Torquato Tasso, *Gerusalemme Liberata*, trans. Max Wickert (Oxford University Press, 2009).
Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, ed. Thomas P. Roche and C. Patrick O'Donnell (Penguin, 1979).

Requirements

One paper proposal/abstract, four article critiques, one presentation on a monograph, one conference paper presentation, one article-length seminar paper.