

## Fall 2019 Course Descriptions

**Instructor:** Margaret Ezell

**Course:** ENGL 414

**Title:** John Milton Major Works

**Description:** This upper-level course focuses on writings of John Milton (1608-1674) in the context of the complicated political, religious, and social upheavals that occurred during his lifetime. This historically oriented course will be investigating how his classical training merged with his profound Christian beliefs, and how his early political writings—the nature of power and authority in government as well as in the family—raise issues he explored in *Paradise Lost* at the end of his life. Beginning with Milton's early career writing courtly entertainments for some of England's most powerful families, *Comus: The Masque Performed at Ludlow Castle*, and his early success as poet, we will then explore his reactions to the English Civil War and the trial and execution of England's King. We will read contemporary political writings from the war years together with Milton's political pamphlets, including his writing on freedom of the press, *Areopagitica*, on the marriage and divorce, and on the limits to a King's authority. We will conclude with Milton's *Paradise Lost*, his epic poem retelling the creation story and the loss of Eden.

**Proposed Readings:**

- Norton Critical Edition, *Paradise Lost* 3rd ed.( ed. Gordon Teskey, 2005)
- Norton Critical Edition, *Milton's Selected Poetry and Prose* (ed. Jason Rosenblatt, 2011)
- Cambridge Companion to Milton, 2nd edition (ed Dennis Danielson)