

Dr. Don Rodrigues

Fall 2021

ENGL 4234

Second only to William Shakespeare among early modern British writers, John Milton is best known for having written the most important and influential epic poem in English, *Paradise Lost*. This course will cover the full range of Milton's poetry and nonfiction, from *Paradise Lost* (which you will read and listen to in its entirety—a chance rarely available to students!) to his often-quoted treatise on censorship, *Areopagitica*. Our general method will be to situate Milton's work in historical context, examining influential political, religious, intellectual, and artistic movements with which he was associated; we will also consider Milton's influence in cultures outside of England, particularly early colonial US America. Finally, we will take a look at examples of contemporary literature influenced by Milton's vast output, in the process considering just how relevant Milton remains to the issues of our day, from the question of free speech to the role of women in society. Class will be largely discussion-oriented, so consistent attendance will be critical to success in the course. You will write one final paper and complete a take-home midterm exam along with shorter writing assignments interspersed throughout the semester.