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## *Paradise Lost*

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### **Description**

This seminar is about a single poem: John Milton's *Paradise Lost*. Part of the course will be a review of important critical work on *Paradise Lost*, literary precursors to and influences upon the poem, the historical context in which it is written, and its bibliographic history. We'll also spend some time discussing its later adaptation and appropriation, in works like Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* or Ridley Scott's *Bladerunner* (the poem's wide-ranging influence on later literary works is one of the central reasons to focus on it in a course like this; it allows students with later historical foci to produce work relevant for their own projects). In short, this course will be a survey of the various scholarly approaches to this poem (not so much a reading of the poem itself, although there will be some of that).

The proseminar is designed to train students to write professional, scholarly essays, what is often termed a "research methodology" seminar. This seminar will walk students through the various tasks and documents that go into producing worthwhile scholarship. Students will produce a series of article synopses and critiques (a disarticulated lit review, in other words), an initial abstract or paper proposal by week ten, followed by a conference paper, and finally an article-length seminar paper and revised abstract. Because this course is about scholarly, professional writing, in addition to being about *Paradise Lost*, we will spend some class periods talking about students' work. That means that some class periods will have a workshop or writing-group feel to them.

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### **Readings**

#### *Paradise Lost*

Important books and essays written about the poem  
Other classical and contemporary pastorals and elegies that influenced Milton  
Later poems, novels, and films influenced by Milton's elegy  
The work of your scholarly comrades in the seminar

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### **Required Texts**

John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, ed. Barbara K. Lewalski (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 2007).

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### **Requirements**

One paper proposal/abstract, one conference paper presentation, eight article synopses/critiques, and one article-length seminar paper (with revised abstract).