

### Guidelines--Paper #1

- Papers are due by **3 p.m. on Friday, April 25**. A late paper will be graded 1/3 grade down for every day it is late.
- Papers should be **4 pages (1000 words) long**. I'm not going to count your words but please do not write an inordinately long or short paper. Papers should be **double-spaced with one inch margins**. Title pages are not necessary (they waste paper), but do **have a title** (preferably one to which you have given some thought). **Save your work** in multiple places.
- In this essay you will demonstrate an ability to make sense and make use of Milton's poetry. You should demonstrate that you are able to read Milton's verse with a strong level of reading comprehension and that you can go beyond that comprehension to argue something specific about the text.
- To this end, your paper should have a **clear and interesting (original) thesis**. Your thesis must be an argument that requires textual support. You can test your thesis by asking yourself if someone could make an argument *against* it. If no one could, then it is self-evident and does not need a paper to support it (i.e. "Satan feels remorse at different points in Paradise Lost" is a relatively unarguable--and obvious statement). Importantly, you should **do in your paper what you claim in your thesis**.
- Go beyond translation. **Avoid plot summary in your paper**, though you may use short statements about the plot in order to contextualize your argument. Milton's language is often complex and you will need to work out what the text is saying. But don't stop there. I'm mostly interested in *your* thoughts, not Milton's. Don't settle for writing about *what* he says; ask *why* he says it, *how* he says it, and notice *when* and *where* he says it.
- While you may use points brought up in lecture or discussion, go beyond these points and **discuss unexplored issues**.
- You should logically and clearly argue your point(s). Presentation--that is, logic, connection between points, introduction, conclusion, word choice, and evidence--is vital. **How you say something is as important as what you are saying**. In other words, I care about your writing.
- **You must use textual support**--i.e. quotations--to support your argument. When you use quotations, you must use the correct form (MLA). Also, remember to set up your quotations so that they flow logically at the sentence level. Make sure they don't randomly pop up in your paper. There should be a clear reason why you are using specific textual support. Don't just stick a quotation in and leave it hanging. You need to talk about it, analyze it, take it apart.
- The best papers will be focused and specific with close attention to the text *and* will also situate the argument within the text at large.
- If you use any sources outside the poem (critical essay, biography, etc.), please make sure they are properly acknowledged in a list of works cited. If you have any questions about attribution, please ask. You don't want to unintentionally plagiarize!
- **Proofread your papers; they should be free of spelling and grammatical errors.**
- I am more than happy to meet with you to discuss your papers. You should, however, try to see me before too long. Come with issues, ideas, problems. It will probably be most helpful for you if you come with actual writing--a thesis statement, at least, or a rough draft. Please note I will be unavailable for appointments Thursday, April 17th. I am, however, having extra Office Hours this week: **Tuesday, April 22, 10-12; Wednesday, April 23, 11-1**. My office is in South Hall 2431 K.