

John Leonard UC 3423 Office Hours TBA

Course Location and Time: UC 4415 Fridays 9:30-12:30

PARADISE LOST

ENGLISH 9053B

Is *Paradise Lost* an epic? Is “the grand style” sublime or merely bombastic? Was Milton “of the Devil’s Party without knowing it”? Were Adam and Eve “fallen before the Fall”? Was Milton a misogynist? Questions like these have recurred over the centuries, but they have been asked in different ways, at different times. One eighteenth-century editor was so enthused by fallen Adam’s diatribe against women that he added an icon of a pointing hand in the margin of the text, for fear that readers might miss a valuable gobbet of Miltonic wisdom: “OBSERVE. Here, an excellent Caution, how to rule a Wife.” A few years later, Samuel Johnson deplored Milton’s “Turkish contempt of females.” A few years after that, Mary Wollstonecraft chided Milton not for despising women, but for loving them in the wrong way. In recent times, Joseph Wittreich has lauded Milton as a “feminist.” Early editors believed that Milton’s universe accorded with the post-Copernican model of multiple solar systems, but most critics since the nineteenth century have assumed that Milton adopts the Ptolemaic system, which was obsolete decades before *Paradise Lost* was published. Can all these conclusions follow from the same text? This course will trace a number of controversies over the centuries, exploring the ways in which critics have made one of English literature’s most canonical texts accord with their own

## Syllabus

campus transportation, learning strategy instruction, writing exams and assistive technology instruction.

For more information, see <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/ssd/>