

ENGL 4360  
Milton  
Fall 2002

## **Assignment: Study Project**

Graded

### **Objective**

This project is designed to help you progress toward three major educational goals of this course. First, working on a study problem for a few weeks should strengthen your ability to think holistically about a literary text or problem, seeing the whole as well as the parts. Second, it should strengthen your capacity to think for yourself about literature. This capacity means not only independent judgment (not being taken in by others' views) but also independent inquiry (not settling for superficial answers or a limited set of "askable" questions). Finally, by asking you to manage a substantial project organized around inquiry, this project should strengthen your writing skills.

### **Specific Terms and Timetables**

You are to write a paper of around 20 typewritten pages that *uses information to answer a question your reading has inspired you to ask*. Strictly, then, you are to write a research paper, since research does not mean piling up long lists of sources but rather formulating questions that are worth asking. In the big leagues, you have to formulate questions that *the community of experts* thinks are worth asking. In an undergraduate course like this one, it will be enough to formulate a question that *advanced common readers* of Milton would find worth asking.

You will do this assignment in three stages, from little to big. Believe me, the little stages at the front end of the process are crucial to your success.

1. Statement of your study problem, the question you are asking (due October 4)
2. Reading list of primary and secondary sources that may help you formulate an answer to your study question (due October 18)
3. Completed paper (due November 22)

We will work on each stage in class.

### **How To Start**

The trick is to move from a general interest or topic area to a focused study question. A related document called "From Broad Topics to Workable Study Questions" is posted on the class WebCT site. I have asked you to bring a list of broad topic areas to class on Monday, 30 September 2002.

Through class exercises, we should get you moving. But always ask for help!