

<b>Veranstalter</b> .....	<b>Dr. Philipp Hunnekuhl</b>
<b>Thema</b> .....	<b>,No light, but rather darkness visible': Milton, influence, and intertextuality</b>
<b>Art der Veranstaltung</b> .....	<b>Seminare II</b>
<b>Veranstaltungsnummer</b> .....	<b>53-549</b>
<b>Zeit</b> .....	<b>2st., Di 12-14</b>
<b>Raum</b> .....	<b>Phil 1250</b>
<b>Beginn</b> .....	<b>04.04.2017</b>

### **Description:**

John Milton (1608-74) still survives in contemporary popular culture. The American singer/songwriter and cartoonist Jeffrey Lewis, for instance, in his 2005 song 'Williamsburg Will Oldham Horror', traces literary greatness, hope, envy, dejection, and the impostor syndrome thus:

Steamboat Willie Bonnie Prince of all this shit,  
You're like the king of a certain genre  
But even you must want to quit  
Like if you hear a record by Bob Dylan or Neil Young or whatever  
You must start thinkin', "Yeah, people like me, but I won't be that good ever"  
And I'm sure the thing is probably Dylan himself too  
Stayed up some nights wishing he was as good as Ginsberg or Camus  
And he was like, "Dude, I'm such a faker, I'm just a clown who entertains  
And these fools who pay for my crap, they just have pathetic puny brains".  
And Camus probably wished he was Milton too or whatever, you know what I'm sayin'?!"

Milton, not Shakespeare, is Lewis's choice of a strong precursor. A coincidence? For a variety of reasons, the influence of Milton the poet was particularly strong during the Romantic period, from c.1789-1837. Peter Kitson hence observes that

For the Romantic writers, Milton was, to a greater extent than Shakespeare, the prime precursor poet. Whether we think in terms of traditional notions of influence, more sophisticated notions of the anxiety of influence, or the poststructuralist orthodoxies of intertextuality, Milton is generally the poet most often invoked and alluded to in the period.

Disentangling and discussing 'notions of influence', 'anxiety of influence', and 'intertextuality' with respect to Milton and the Romantics is precisely what this course aims to do. Following our introductory session, we will establish our theoretical framework through reading Harold Bloom on the anxiety of influence and Julia Kristeva on intertextuality. In seminar three, we shall put these theories to a first test by reading William Wordsworth's 'Tintern Abbey' against its precursor text, Milton's 'Lycidas'. Seminars 4 through 9 will then constitute the core of this course: Milton's *Paradise Lost*, the story of Satan's rebellion against God's regime in heaven. You will be required to read two 'books' (as its chapters are called, each consisting of some 20-25 pages) per week. In the remaining three seminars – there are only 12 in total, which is why we will mostly start or conclude *s.t.* – we will then read selected poems by William Blake, Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, John Keats, and Percy Bysshe Shelley in the light of *Paradise Lost*, in order to discern further instances of influence, its anxiety, or intertextuality.

The only book you will need to buy for this course is a paper(!) copy of Milton's *Paradise Lost*, containing all twelve 'books'; all other reading will be provided. Although our seminars will focus on Milton and the Romantics, you will be free to explore any other aspect relating to Milton in your written coursework.

**Requirements for successful completion:** regular attendance, detailed knowledge of assigned texts, and a final 3,000–4,000 word essay. (I may test you on your reading of *Paradise Lost* as it is absolutely crucial for this course.)

**Introductory reading:** Peter J. Kitson, 'Milton: The Romantics and After', in *A New Companion to Milton*, ed. Thomas N. Corns [There's a copy in the *Teilbibliothek*]

<b>Sprechstunde während der Vorlesungszeit:</b>	<b>s. Online-Sprechstundenliste</b>
<b>Sprechstunden während der Semesterferien:</b>	<b>s. Online-Sprechstundenliste</b>