GUIDELINES

The assignment is to develop some interesting and original points (beyond the obvious, but nevertheless strongly supported) about what Lucretius is saying in his poem, and how he says it (the subtleties of his philosophic meanings and his poetic methods). Tie these points together with a thesis that boldly and clearly adds to our understanding of Lucretius, and throughout your paper make it clear how each point relates to your big picture. Do this through close reading and interpretation of well-selected details from Lucretius’ poem.

Tip. After you’ve developed a few ambitious and well-argued points, see if in any way they can be used as a testable hypothesis about Lucretius—so that you can go back into Lucretius’ poem and deepen or complicate your point by discovering non-obvious connections to other passages that would not have been significant to you without the benefit of your initial arguments.

The paper is subject to only one important limitation on the subject matter: Your argument must take into account evidence from throughout Lucretius’ poem. The final paper is meant to consolidate and culminate your study of a poem to which the last third of the course has been devoted; therefore, for example, a paper that considers only the atomic theory developed in Books 1-2 would be inappropriate.

It is fine to bring in your knowledge of the Presocratics occasionally, if it will help your reader understand something about Lucretius—but this is incidental, not part of the paper’s formal task.

At this point there is little new to say about how to write a paper for this course. The most important thing is for you to make use of all the prior guidance you have received, namely:

- the guidelines for Paper #1 and Paper #2
- the feedback you received on your Paper #1 and Paper #2 (and on other assignments)
- lectures, discussions, and writing-process exercises in class
- homework assignments, especially the Final Paper Development Worksheet

Length, Due Date, (No, Really No!) Late Paper Policy

The paper must be 1500-2100 words, with a word count included at the end.

The paper is due, in the box on my office door (Humanities 214A), on Wednesday, June 7, at 2 p.m. (Please submit papers by email only in case of emergency—but please do use email if you are unable to get your paper in physically by the deadline.)

NO LATE PAPERS WILL BE ACCEPTED. This policy is necessary because you have already been given as late a deadline as the term schedule allows, with very little time remaining before grades are due. A late paper would mean an Incomplete grade, and the Union College policy makes approval of an Incomplete grade very unlikely unless you are in the hospital. I will not give my approval to extensions or Incompletes except for the direst of documented emergency circumstances.