

PHI 171 – PROBLEMS OF PHILOSOPHY – FALL 2017 – ASGN. #5 – DUE NOV 20

Hand in a paper copy in class and submit an electronic copy on the course website.

This assignment consists of three parts: first, writing a poem or a lyrics; second making a video of you reciting or singing it; third, reflecting on what you have done.

FIRST - WRITING

Write a poem—or lyrics for a song—about one of the topics below:

(book 1)

- atoms and void as the basic components of the universe
- the infinity of the universe

(Book 3)

- the materiality of the soul, mind and spirit
- the mortality of the soul and fear of death

(Book 4)

- the five senses (sight, hear, etc.) and how we perceive things around us
- sexuality and love

Be original and creative! Use Lucretius as an inspiration and a model. In particular, as you write your poem or lyrics, keep in mind that you should

- focus on a few claims, or even just one claim;
- support your claim(s) with logic, evidence, science and observations;¹
- think of objections an imaginary opponent might raise and respond to them.
- use poetic language, such as images, metaphors, stories, lyrical expressions.

SECOND – ACTING AND VIDEO EDITING

Make a video in which you—or a friend—recite or sing what you have written.

¹Following Lucretius, recall the different types of argument we examined, such as *argument by contradiction*; *argument by cases*; *inference to the best explanation*. See previous assignment for examples.

THIRD - REFLECTING

Answer the following questions and carefully and honestly:

- (i) What type of arguments did you use? Why did you chose those particular arguments rather than others to defend your claim(s)? Do you think you were successful? What weaknesses do you see in your arguments?
- (ii) What type of poetic language did you use? How did the language you used help you defend your claim(s)?
- (iii) What did you struggle with the most while writing? In your judgment, what still needs improvement in what you have written (if anything)?

Desiderata:

- 4-8 minute long when the text is read or sung
- focuses on a well-defined philosophical question
- defends a well-defined philosophical claim
- demonstrate master of different argument types
- considers objections and answers them
- demonstrates independent and creative thinking
- beautifully and poetically written

NB: Group work is encouraged. Group members will receive the same grade. Whether you decide to work individually or form a group, you must discuss your ideas with me, through e-mail or in person, before you start working on this assignment. My office hours are M-W 2-3PM in Carman 365. Prerequisite for this assignment is having completed all the previous assignments.