

INSTRUCTIONS FOR REFLECTIVE ESSAY¹

The reflective essay will give you the opportunity to reflect and comment on what you have read, discussed, written, and learned throughout your career as a history major at the College of Charleston. We hope you will take this final “assignment” seriously, as a way both to reflect on your own development as a historian and as valuable feedback on what works best in the department and where we have room to improve. Please be assured that we take your input seriously.

The 3-5 page essay (750-1250 words) should address your development as a historian, with particular focus on your research and writing, both in the capstone seminar and in other history classes.

There are a number of questions you can ask yourself to facilitate writing this reflective essay. What have you learned about conducting research in your history courses? What types of assignments have you found most helpful? Have you gained any new ideas about how to research and write history papers from your experience? In reflecting on your historian’s skill set—critical analysis, ability to lay out a cogent argument, and clarity of writing—please give us some insight on how these abilities have changed during your time at CofC. What, if anything, have you learned? What ideas or methods can you carry over from your classes at the College of Charleston to future writing projects?

You may also want to consider the content of your courses, especially those in your concentration, and discuss the ideas or issues raised in these classes that have most affected your understanding of historical development. Has your view of the historical process been altered or reaffirmed by your studies? Have you been intellectually challenged as a history major? It’s okay to name names; we’d like to hear about specific courses or instructors who had an impact on you.

Finally, please share with us: what’s the next step? What will you be doing after graduation? Where do you envisage your career going?

¹Prepared by Professor Amy T. McCandless, History Department, College of Charleston, revised by Dr. Phyllis Jestice (2016).