

## **University Honors Program Honors Study Abroad: Reflection Paper Guidelines**

### **Introduction**

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We hope that your study abroad experience is enriching—academically, socially, and culturally—and will not only add to your undergraduate experience but will also stand out as you begin exploring graduate, professional, and employment opportunities. Much of the power of a superior study abroad experience is the ability critically reflect on that experience and then to articulate it well to others. Consequently, one requirement you must meet in order to fulfill three credit hours of UHP requirements is to write a reflection paper.

### **The Reflection Paper**

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There is no page limit to this paper, but considering the scope of the work, an introspective review of your study abroad experience, a paper of between 5-10 pages seems a good target.

### **Considerations**

1. Plan in advance for this paper by keeping a journal, mementos, or correspondence.
2. If you do not keep a journal, spend some time brainstorming: review and take notes about specific events, striking conversations, sights, sounds, and even smells.
3. Try to sum up your experience in a sentence or two. Is there a word, phrase, or theme that encapsulates it?

### **Analyze Your Experience**

1. Let broad, general questions be your starting point. Types of questions to ask yourself include (but are in no way limited to) the following
  - Was this experience what I expected? Why or why not?
  - What have I learned about myself?
  - What have I learned about others?
  - How did my academic experience differ from what I expected?
  - How do different societies define concepts like “learning” or “knowledge”?
  - What would I have changed about the experience, if anything?
  - In what ways was this culture different from my own?
  - How is this culture similar to my own?
  - What, if anything, shocked me the most?
2. From these broad questions, more detailed questions may arise. For example, from exploring the cultural differences, you might then ask yourself
  - How have cultural differences made me more aware of my own culture, of its benefits, limitations, strengths, or biases?
  - In what ways might my own culture/society benefit by learning from others?
  - How do cultural differences allow others to view me differently from the way I view myself?
3. As you review your notes and remember your experiences, ask yourself the following:
  - How does my study abroad experience relate to my past academic experience?
  - How will this experience affect my future, whether in academic, social, career, or personal choices?

Submit your Reflection Paper to the UHP Office (Clark 219) prior to the last day of classes of the semester involved.