Reflect II

Due Monday, November 30

At the end of Reflect I, you wrote a plan for yourself: what you would keep doing, what you would change, and how you would spend your time on this class. This reflection begins where that one ended, by asking how it went. The three reflections this term fit together. In Reflect I you made a plan. Here you look at how that plan went, and make realistic corrections to it. In Reflect III, after the third exam, you will look at how those corrections went.

We are also about halfway through the term, which makes this a good moment to step back and look at all of your courses together, not just this one.

Like Reflect I, this is worth points on the *Hold Me Accountable* scale.

The assignment

Before you begin, reread your Reflect I, especially the plan at the end. Then write a reflection addressed to yourself, focusing on how your plan went, how that showed up on the exam, and what your plan for the rest of the term should be. Work through the prompts below, in whatever order makes sense to you, and write in full paragraphs with complete sentences. This should be a finished piece of writing, two to three pages, and longer if you find it helpful to discuss your other courses in depth. A rough draft, a single page, or bullet points will receive no credit.

There are no wrong answers, but only submissions showing real work at introspection will receive credit. This only works if you are honest with yourself.

How did your plan go?

Start by restating the plan you made at the end of Reflect I, as concretely as you can. Then go through it piece by piece.

Which parts of your plan did you hold to? For each one, think about why. What made it possible to keep doing, and did it actually help? Knowing what works for you is worth as much as knowing what does not, because it is what you can rely on going forward.

For every part of your plan that you did *not* follow, you need to really talk about it. Plans change for many honest reasons. Perhaps that part was unrealistic, and did not fit alongside everything else in your week. Perhaps you realized it was not helping, and followed through with something else instead: if so, what did you do, and did it work better? Or perhaps you let yourself down, and did not do something you could have done. That happens to everyone, and it is worth saying plainly,

because it is the part you can learn the most from. What got in the way, and what would hold you more accountable next time?

Did you add anything that was not in your plan? And check yourself against the basics. How many hours a week outside of class do you spend on this class now, compared with before Exam 1, and compared with the eight hours the university expects for a four credit course? Have you been attending class, coming to office hours, and using the notes, the interactive figures, and the chapter problems the way you intended?

How did it show up on Exam 2?

How did you do compared to how you expected to do (after studying, but before the exam), and compared to how you felt after leaving the exam? How does your result compare with Exam 1? Whether you did better, worse, or about the same, which of the changes you made, or did not make, do you think are responsible?

Sort out where the points went, as you did last time. Which topics were weak, and what kinds of errors cost you? The most important kind is conceptual: not understanding an idea well enough to use it, or misunderstanding an idea, such as what the kernel of a map is, or why uniqueness lets you conclude that two functions are equal. Other kinds include slips like a lost sign, not knowing a definition or the statement of a theorem, misreading what a problem asked, and running out of time. Even though the material changed, the same kinds of errors can show up on both exams. Which ones cost you points both times? If any did, did your plan from Reflect I try to fix it?

How did you prepare for this exam, and how did you use your study guide? The first exam was mostly about calculation. This one was mostly about concepts: linear algebra, vector spaces of functions, linear maps such as the evaluation map, and proofs that use uniqueness. How did your studying for this exam differ from your studying for Exam 1? How well did that work?

All your courses at the halfway point

Now step back from this class, and think about every course you are taking this term. For each one, how is it going? Where do you stand compared with where you want to be, and roughly how many hours a week does it take? What is coming in the second half: exams, projects, papers, and weeks where several deadlines land at once?

Which of your courses matter most to you right now, and why? Perhaps one is in your major, or a prerequisite for something you need next term, or a requirement you have to pass, or simply the one you care about most. Then compare that with where your time actually goes. Does your time follow your priorities? Is there a course where you are struggling and need to act now, for example by talking to the instructor or finding tutoring, rather than hoping it improves on its own?

A plan for the second half

Now use everything above to build a new plan. Start with all of your courses: a weekly budget of time that reflects your priorities, and a way of handling the crunch weeks you identified. Then, for this class specifically, say what you will keep doing, what you will change, and what you will stop doing. If part of your first plan fell through because you let yourself down, say what you will do differently so that it does not happen again.

The goal is a *reasonable* plan. Don't just say "I will study X more hours" if adding X hours leaves you with an unsustainable workload across your classes. Your first plan is the best evidence you have of what you will actually do, so use what it taught you. Make the new plan concrete enough that you will be able to tell whether you followed it: Reflect III will ask how it went.