



TLPL 188A Wordsmith: Level Up Your Writing!

Term: Summer 2026

Credits: 3

Course Dates: July 13 - July 31

Course Times: 9am – 12pm

Classroom: TYD 2111

Professor: Taylor Togafau-Lewis (she/her)

Email: tlewis24@umd.edu

Office Hours: Monday – Friday, 12 - 1pm

Course Description

This three-week intensive course is designed to help high school students strengthen their writing skills. Students will practice writing across different genres, learning how to develop their voice, generating ideas, construct strong arguments, and write with clarity and precision. Through workshops, peer review, and targeted feedback, students will learn how to adapt their writing for various purposes and audiences. They will apply these strategies to a final writing project of their choice, such as: the college admissions essay, an analytic essay, op-ed/editorial, personal narrative, interview article, or research mini-paper. By combining general academic writing skills with a concrete and practical outcome, this course equips students to enter college with confidence as writers.

Learning Outcomes

After successfully completing this course you will be able to:

- Analyze the purpose and audience of academic and personal writing tasks.
- Develop a clear and authentic personal and academic voice.
- Construct strong thesis statements and use evidence effectively.
- Apply coherence and transitions across essays.
- Revise essays through guided feedback and reflection.
- Produce a polished college admissions essay.

Required Resources

- Course Website: elms.umd.edu
- Each class, bring paper, pencils/pens and a computer/portable electronic device.
- There are no textbooks required for this course. Assigned readings will be available on ELMS.

Course Structure

This course meets in person Monday–Thursday, 9:00 am – 12:00 pm. Each session includes community-building, direct instruction, practice, feedback, and reflection.

Tips for Success

1. **Participate.** Participate actively in workshops and peer review.
2. **Manage** your time carefully — this is a fast-moving course.
3. **Be open** to feedback and revision.
4. **Support** classmates with constructive feedback..

Policies and Resources for Undergraduate Courses

It is our shared responsibility to know and abide by the University of Maryland's policies that relate to all courses, which include topics like:

- Academic integrity
- Student and instructor conduct
- Accessibility and accommodations
- Attendance and excused absences
- Grades and appeals
- Copyright and intellectual property

Please visit www.ugst.umd.edu/courserelatedpolicies.html for the Office of Undergraduate Studies' full list of campus-wide policies and follow up with me if you have questions.

Land Acknowledgement (2022)

Every community owes its existence and strength to the generations before them, around the world, who contributed their hopes, dreams, and energy into making the history that led to this moment. Truth and acknowledgement are critical in building mutual respect and connections across all barriers of heritage and difference.

So, we acknowledge the truth that is often buried: We are on the ancestral lands of the Piscataway People, who are the ancestral stewards of this sacred land. It is their historical responsibility to advocate for the four-legged, the winged, those that crawl, and those that swim. They remind us that clean air and pristine waterways are essential to all life.

This Land Acknowledgement is a vocal reminder for each of us as two-leggeds to ensure our physical environment is in better condition than what we inherited, for the health and prosperity of future generations.

Enslavement Acknowledgement (2024)

We, at the University of Maryland, recognize and honor the exploited labor of forcefully enslaved people upon which the foundations of the United States and our institution were built.

Enslaved people of African descent farmed, paved, maintained, and developed the land on which our university stands today. Through intergenerational resistance, leadership, and a steadfast pursuit of freedom and justice, their descendants fought and continue to fight for a societal transformation in defiance of the profound injustices of the transatlantic trade, chattel slavery, convict leasing, Jim Crow laws, dehumanization, and the caste system that permeates our existence. They desegregated and integrated our classrooms and now lead our university and Maryland Terps forward to achieving a better world.

We are forever indebted to the unwilling generational sacrifices and stolen labor of the enslaved Africans and their descendants. Together, we will strive to atone, heal, and uplift the unbreakable spirit and beauty of Black Americans.

College of Education Hate and Bias Policy

The College of Education at the University of Maryland is committed to creating a robust, inclusive and inviting climate in which all students, staff, and faculty are inspired to achieve their full potential. We believe in the dignity and humanity of all people and **value the identities of our students, faculty, staff, and alumni**. We seek opportunities to provide development in the facilitation of positive interactions among our college and campus community. The COE **consistently strives to reduce any barriers that exist across race, ethnicity, gender, age, religion, language, dialect, health, veteran status, abilities/ disabilities, sexual orientation, gender identity, socioeconomic status, and geographic regions**. Racist, sexist, homophobic, or other oppressive language or behavior should be immediately reported. Those experiencing harm can report their experiences to:

- The department chair, program coordinator, or director of undergraduate or graduate studies;
- Associate Dean of Faculty Affairs or Undergraduate and Graduate Studies; or
- a member of the COE Bias Incident Response Team and the Office of Diversity and Inclusion [Bias Incident Support Services](#) as appropriate.

Review the full [COE Hate and Bias Policy](#).

Course Guidelines

Diversity and Inclusion in the Classroom

TLPL is committed to creating a nurturing climate for students, staff, and faculty. Our mission is to improve the lives of children, families, and education through equitable research practices and partnerships. We value diverse perspectives and experiences because we believe education and science is much richer with inclusion of individual strengths and identities. Our views of diversity are broad, and we value diversity across numerous groups (race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and gender identity, abilities), and we are aligned with the broader College of Education and UMD commitment to DEI efforts and supporting a diverse campus.

To foster a supportive and appreciative environment, students are encouraged to participate in discussion with their classmates who may represent a diversity of individual beliefs, backgrounds, and experiences. We each have the right to be heard and understood, and therefore have a responsibility to listen and attempt to understand. Statements and questions should be shared respectfully. In an authentic and honest discussion, people might make mistakes, and when this inevitably occurs, we will pursue mutual understanding.

A Multilingual Space

I strive to create a multilingual space with you in this course. As a Black queer femme educator, I know about these benefits first hand. When I am able to use my languages (including African American Language) and translanguage (creatively and fluidly moving between two or more languages to make meaning), we nourish our own linguistic and cultural funds of knowledge and identities.

Therefore, in this course, I welcome and encourage you to use all your language(s), including all forms of English in class, orally and in writing. Todo su repertorio lingüístico es valorado e importante, tout de ton répertoire linguistique est valide et important. No matter what languages you decide to mobilize in class, we will make sure we understand each other by relying on peers, tech, self translation, context clues, and other supports.

Names/Pronouns and Self-Identifications

The University of Maryland recognizes the importance of a diverse student body, and we are committed to fostering inclusive and equitable classroom environments. I invite you, if you wish, to tell us how you want to be referred to in this class, both in terms of your name and your pronouns (he/him, she/her, they/them, etc.). Keep in mind that the pronouns someone uses are not necessarily indicative of their gender identity. Visit lgbtq.umd.edu to learn more.

Additionally, it is your choice whether to disclose how you identify in terms of your gender, race, class, sexuality, religion, and dis/ability, among all aspects of your identity (e.g., should it come up in classroom conversation about our experiences and perspectives) and should be self-identified, not presumed or imposed. I will do my best to address and refer to all students accordingly, and I ask you to do the same for all of your fellow Terps.

Communication with Instructor

If you need to reach out and communicate with me, please email me at tlewis24@umd.edu. If you ask a question that may be easily answered by looking at the syllabus or on ELMS (i.e. When is this assignment due? How much is it worth? etc.). I will refer you to those materials. Please **DO** reach out about personal, academic, and intellectual concerns/questions. I do not respond to emails on weekends, except in the case of emergencies.

I will send **IMPORTANT** announcements via ELMS messaging. You must make sure that your email & announcement notifications (including changes in assignments and/or due dates) are enabled in ELMS so you do not miss any messages. **You are responsible for checking your email and Canvas/ELMS inbox daily.**

Communication with Peers

With a diversity of perspectives and experience, we may find ourselves in disagreement and/or debate with one another. As such, it is important that we agree to conduct ourselves in a professional manner and that we work together to foster and preserve a virtual classroom environment in which we can respectfully discuss and deliberate controversial questions. I encourage you to confidently exercise your right to free speech—bearing in mind, of course, that you will be expected to craft and defend arguments that support your position. Keep in mind, that free speech has its limit and this course is **NOT** the space for hate speech, harassment, and derogatory language. I will make every reasonable attempt to create an atmosphere in which each student feels comfortable voicing their argument without fear of being personally attacked, mocked, demeaned, or devalued.

Any behavior (including harassment, sexual harassment, and racially and/or culturally derogatory language) that threatens this atmosphere will not be tolerated. Please alert me immediately if you feel threatened, dismissed, or silenced at any point during our semester together and/or if your engagement in discussion has been in some way hindered by the learning environment.

Late Work

Late work will not be accepted without communication with the instructor. I am happy to discuss any grades in a meeting, **but I will not discuss grades over email. Appointments to discuss grades must be made within one week of receiving the grade.** Final letter grades are assigned based on the percentage of total assessment points earned.

Major Assignments

Participation

Active engagement is essential in a writing workshop. Participation includes contributing to class discussions, completing in-class exercises, offering constructive feedback in peer review, and showing respect for others' ideas. This portion of your grade reflects your effort to build a supportive community of writers.

In-Class Writing Assignments

Throughout the course, you will complete short writing tasks that build toward your final project. These may include reflections, practice paragraphs, short analyses, and draft sections of essays. These assignments are graded primarily on completion and effort, and they give you opportunities to try new strategies and receive feedback.

Final Writing Assignment

By the end of the course, you will produce one revised piece of writing in a genre of your choice (some options include the college admissions essay, an analytic essay, op-ed/editorial, personal narrative, interview article, or research mini-paper). You will develop this piece through brainstorming, drafting, feedback, and revision. The final version will be graded using a rubric that values clarity, coherence, voice, and revision effort.

Reflective Self-Assessment

In this final reflection (500–750 words), you will evaluate your growth as a writer. You'll describe your starting point, the challenges you faced, the strategies you developed, and the skills you will carry into future academic or personal writing. This assignment is an opportunity to step back and recognize your progress. What are the components of the team project

Grading Structure

Assignment	Percentage %
Participation	25%
In-Class Writing Assignments	45%
Final Writing Assignment (20%)	20%
Reflective Self-Assessment (10%)	10%
Total	100%

Academic Integrity

For this course, some of your assignments will be collected via Turnitin on our course ELMS page. I have chosen to use this tool because it can help you improve your scholarly writing and help me verify the integrity of student work. For information about Turnitin, how it works, and the feedback reports you may have access to, visit [Turnitin Originality Checker for Students](#)

The University's Code of Academic Integrity is designed to ensure that the principles of academic honesty and integrity are upheld. In accordance with this code, the University of Maryland does not tolerate academic dishonesty. Please ensure that you fully understand this code and its implications because all acts of academic

dishonesty will be dealt with in accordance with the provisions of this code. All students are expected to adhere to this Code. It is your responsibility to read it and know what it says, so you can start your professional life on the right path. **As future professionals, your commitment to high ethical standards and honesty begins with your time at the University of Maryland.**

It is important to note that course assistance websites, **such as CourseHero, or AI generated content** are not permitted sources, unless the instructor explicitly gives permission. Material taken or copied from these sites can be deemed unauthorized material and a violation of academic integrity. These sites offer information that might be inaccurate or biased and most importantly, relying on restricted sources will hamper your learning process, particularly the critical thinking steps necessary for college-level assignments.

In this course, I permit you to use some artificial intelligence (AI)-powered programs to help you with idea generation or final proofreading of your essays. However, all writing must be your own work. When you use these tools, it is your responsibility as a scholar to make sure you are clearly communicating the AI involvement in your work. Please make sure to use phrases such as “This paper was generated with the help of Grammerly” (for essays). Please review the instructions in each assignment for more details on specifically how to show your work.

Grades

Final letter grades are assigned based on the percentage of total assessment points earned.

Final Grade Cutoffs									
+	97.00%	+	87.00%	+	77.00%	+	67.00%	+	
A	94.00%	B	84.00%	C	74.00%	D	64.00%	F	<60.0%
-	90.00%	-	80.00%	-	70.00%	-	60.00%	-	

Course Outline

Date #	Topic
Week 1: Writing Foundations and Voice	
Monday July 13	Orientation & Introductions Activities: Icebreakers, introduction to course, writing sample. Assignment: Writing sample (250 words on a reflective prompt).
Tuesday July 14	Purpose & Audience Activities: Explore why we write, compare academic and personal writing samples. Assignment: Write two short reflective responses to prompts.

Wednesday July 15	<p>What Makes Writing Effective?</p> <p>Activities: Deconstruct academic, narrative, and public genres, analyze choices writers make.</p> <p>Assignment: Short analysis (1–2 paragraphs) of a sample essay.</p>
Thursday July 16	<p>Reflection & Narrative Writing</p> <p>Activities: Guided brainstorming of meaningful experiences, narrative drafting practice, writing voice exploration.</p> <p>Assignment: Write a short reflective essay (300 words).</p>
Friday July 17	<p>Writing Workshop</p> <p>Assignment: Revise reflective essay; bring a draft for feedback.</p>
Week 2: Academic Writing Strategies Across Genres	
Monday July 20	<p>Crafting Introductions & Thesis Statements</p> <p>Activities: Practice introductions and in various genres.</p> <p>Assignment: Write two different introductions to the same prompt.</p>
Tuesday July 21	<p>Using Evidence</p> <p>Activities: Explore how evidence supports arguments</p> <p>Assignment: Write a body paragraph that supports a thesis using specific examples.</p>
Wednesday July 22	<p>Building Coherence & Transitions</p> <p>Activities: Practice connecting ideas across paragraphs; transition strategies.</p> <p>Assignment: Revise Monday and Tuesday’s writing into a coherent 2–3 paragraph draft.</p>
Thursday July 23	<p>Linking Purpose to Audience Expectations</p> <p>Activities: Guided discussion of how experiences connect to writing sample.</p> <p>Assignment: Draft a body paragraph that ties to writing goals.</p>
Friday July 24	<p>Writing Workshop</p> <p>Assignment: Draft a partial writing sample (intro + body paragraphs).</p>
Week 3: Revising and Polishing Writing in Chosen Genre	
Monday July 27	<p>Draft Construction & Peer Review</p> <p>Activities: Draft full essay; guided peer review.</p>

	Assignment: Complete full first draft
Tuesday July 28	Revision Strategies Activities: Workshop on revision for clarity, style, grammar, and mechanics. Assignment: Revise essay draft; submit for instructor feedback.
Wednesday July 29	Writing Workshop Activities: Essay polishing strategies; Genre exploration options; Revision sprint; Community Gallery Walk
Thursday July 30	Essay Polishing Assignment: Final polished essay due.
Friday July 31	Reflection & Course Wrap-Up Assignment: Reflective self-assessment and Feedback

Note: This is a tentative schedule, and subject to change as necessary – monitor the course ELMS page for current deadlines. In the unlikely event of a prolonged university closing, or an extended absence from the university, adjustments to the course schedule, deadlines, and assignments will be made based on the duration of the closing and the specific dates missed.

Resources & Accommodations

Accessibility and Disability Services

The University of Maryland is committed to creating and maintaining a welcoming and inclusive educational, working, and living environment for people of all abilities. The University of Maryland is also committed to the principle that no qualified individual with a disability shall, on the basis of disability, be excluded from participation in or be denied the benefits of the services, programs, or activities of the University, or be subjected to discrimination. The [Accessibility & Disability Service \(ADS\)](#) provides reasonable accommodations to qualified individuals to provide equal access to services, programs and activities. ADS cannot assist retroactively, so it is generally best to request accommodations several weeks before the semester begins or as soon as a disability becomes known. Any student who needs accommodations should contact me as soon as possible so that I have sufficient time to make arrangements.

You have the right to NOT disclose reasons for requesting accommodations from me, whether or not you have engaged with ADS. I request that you reach out within 24 hours before/after a class and/or assignment if you need extra time or other accommodations.

For assistance in obtaining an accommodation, contact Accessibility and Disability Service at 301-314-7682, or email them at adsfrontdesk@umd.edu. Information about [sharing your accommodations with instructors, note taking assistance](#) and more is available from the [Counseling Center](#).

Student Resources and Services

Taking personal responsibility for your own learning means acknowledging when your performance does not match your goals and doing something about it. I hope you will come talk to me so that I can help you find the right approach to success in this course, and I encourage you to visit [UMD's Student Academic Support Services website](#) to learn more about the wide range of campus resources available to you.

In particular, everyone can use some help sharpening their communication skills (and improving their grade) by visiting [UMD's Writing Center](#) and schedule an appointment with the campus Writing Center.

You should also know there are a wide range of resources to support you with whatever you might need ([UMD's Student Resources and Services website](#) may help). If you feel it would be helpful to have someone to talk to, visit [UMD's Counseling Center](#) or [one of the many other mental health resources on campus](#).

UMD Student Resources and Services

- [Tutoring & Academic Success](#)
- [UMD Writing Center](#)
- [UMD Counseling Center](#)
- [Thrive Center for Essential Needs](#)
- [First-Gen Terps](#)
- [Multicultural Involvement & Community Advocacy](#)
- [UMD Campus Pantry](#)
- [UMD Health Center](#)
- [International Students & Scholars](#)

Notice of Mandatory Reporting

Notice of mandatory reporting of sexual assault, sexual harassment, interpersonal violence, and stalking: As a faculty member, I am designated as a "Responsible University Employee," and I must report all disclosures of sexual assault, sexual harassment, interpersonal violence, and stalking to UMD's Title IX Coordinator per University Policy on Sexual Harassment and Other Sexual Misconduct.

If you wish to speak with someone confidentially, please contact one of UMD's confidential resources, such as [CARE to Stop Violence](#) (located on the Ground Floor of the Health Center) at 301-741-3442 or the [Counseling Center](#) (located at the Shoemaker Building) at 301-314-7651.

You may also seek assistance or supportive measures from UMD's Title IX Coordinator, Angela Nastase, by calling 301-405-1142, or emailing titleIXcoordinator@umd.edu.

To view further information on the above, please visit the [Office of Civil Rights and Sexual Misconduct's](#) website at ocrsm.umd.edu.

Basic Needs Security

If you have difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day, or lack a safe and stable place to live, please visit [UMD's Division of Student Affairs website](#) for information about resources the campus offers you and let me know if I can help in any way.

Veteran Resources

UMD provides some additional supports to our student veterans. You can access those resources at the office of [Veteran Student life](#) and the [Counseling Center](#). Veterans and active-duty military personnel with special circumstances (e.g., upcoming deployments, drill requirements, disabilities) are welcome and encouraged to communicate these, in advance if possible, to the instructor.

Course Evaluation

Please submit a course evaluation through Student Feedback on Course Experiences in order to help faculty and administrators improve teaching and learning at Maryland. All information submitted to Course Experiences is confidential. Campus will notify you when Student Feedback on Course Experiences is open for you to complete your evaluations at the end of the semester. Please go directly to the [Student Feedback on Course Experiences](#) to complete your evaluations. By completing all of your evaluations each semester, you will have the privilege of accessing through Testudo the evaluation reports for the thousands of courses for which 70% or more students submitted their evaluations.

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