

English 101, Section 0204: Academic Writing

Chemistry-Biochemistry Building 0127, MWF 10-10:50

Instructor: Justin Lohr

Office Location: Tawes 2232

Office Hours: M 2:30-3:30, Th 9:30-12:30, or by appointment

Email: jlohr@umd.edu

“Why am I here?”

English 101’s primary goal is to develop your skill in academic composition. Academic composition is a distinct kind of composing that requires you to consider and engage the ideas and arguments of others as you take a stand on an issue.

“But I’m already a good/bad writer. What’s the point of this class for me?”

Writing is not a magical talent mystically awarded to the blessed and denied to the cursed. It is, first and foremost, a craft and, like any craft, it can be improved through practice and through understanding the techniques employed by masters of the craft. Writing is not sorcery, but rather very much like its homophone “wrighting” (as in “shipwrighting”), meaning the construction of an object (such as a boat) through a process of deliberate choices. “Good” writer, “bad” writer, A student, or C student, you can always become a better writer. And that’s the aim of this class: no matter where you’re starting from, you can improve the writing skills you already have and, over the course of the semester, become a better, more confident writer. Specifically, you will

- learn to read like a writer and to analyze texts in order to see the choices that other writers make,
- hone your ability to observe and interrogate the world around you,
- develop effective brainstorming and invention strategies to build from observations to a specific argument,
- structure, reconsider, refine, and revise that argument as you investigate it further,
- learn how to incorporate and engage the ideas and opinions of others,
- learn how to identify and use the strategies of persuasion that best suit your audience and topic, and
- learn to develop your voice as a writer and build confidence in voicing your stance within academic and civic settings.

To support this first goal, you will learn concepts and vocabulary related to persuasion and **rhetoric**, particularly in the context of how the media influences us as individuals and as a society. The more you know about how rhetoric and persuasion work, the more you will be able to purposefully incorporate the strategies and techniques of great writers into your own writing.

“Okay, thanks for the motivational speech. Seriously, though, what are the details?”

The spine of the course is a series of assignments that will build on each other in terms of both skills and content. Over the course of the assignment sequence, you will develop your own topic related to the course theme, **“The Languages We Live,”** and build gradually from observations about the world around you to specific questions that will, in turn, be your entryway into the larger academic conversation about your topic. College might be a much bigger world than you ever could have imagined, but that doesn’t mean your voice and opinions are suddenly invalid. This course will help you connect the stuff of everyday life to the big issues confronting our society and allow you to investigate ideas and pose arguments that have loftier ambitions than just earning you a good grade.

Improving your writing requires working simultaneously on different skills in different ways, so English 101 includes the following activities:

- Engagement– Just being physically present in class won’t cut it. You are expected to be an active and engaged participant in class discussions as well as during small group and individual exercises. ***Also, please note that cell phones are to be off and out of sight during class. If I see you using one during class, you will lose all engagement points for the day. Trust me, that text can wait.***
- Writing “Journal”: Once upon a time, a young Henry David Thoreau walked up to Ralph Waldo Emerson and told Emerson that he wanted to be a writer. Emerson’s first piece of advice? “Keep a journal.” Journaling is an essential part of the writing process; it is a place where you can be sloppy and messy and scrawl out the crude ideas that you will later refine into more formal arguments. (Another analogy for writing: cooking. You can’t make a meal without ingredients, and these initial ideas are those ingredients. You want your pantry as well stocked as it can be when it comes time to write your major assignments.)

In addition to a digital “Reflection Journal, which you will maintain all semester, I expect you to keep a two-pocket folder in which you will store all responses (both those written in class and those written at home) as well as all exercises done in class because these responses and exercises will be the foundation of the formal assignments for the class. Throughout the semester, you will use the materials in your folder and digital journals to help you in brainstorming, organizing, drafting, and revising your work. Keep all of your work; you never know when an exercise or idea from three papers ago will help you with your current assignment.

In-class writing will often, though not always, be collected and read. Homework will always be collected and graded, evaluated not only on completion, but also on how well it was done.

- Peer editing – you will be responsible for reading and responding to the work of your classmates.
- Formal assignments – will include papers and one digital project

Texts (required):

Inventing Arguments: A Rhetoric and Reader for the University of Maryland's Academic Writing Program. Second Edition. Boston: Pearson, 2017.

Graff, Gerald, and Cathy Birkenstein. *They Say/I Say: The Moves that Matter in Academic Writing*. Third Edition. New York: Norton, 2014.

Wysocki, Anne Francis and Dennis A. Lynch. *The DK Handbook with Exercises*. Fourth Edition. Boston: Longman, 2014.

Stevenson, Bryan. *Just Mercy*. New York: Spiegel & Grau, 2014. (You may obtain a free copy of this by going to the STAMP front desk.)

NOTE: Many course readings will be posted to the course Canvas site. As soon as you are able, please check to make sure you can access the course website. If not, please let me know as soon as possible. You may either print readings or bring a laptop to class. If you choose the latter, however, I expect that you will use the laptop only to access class readings, not to send e-mails or chat or anything else. Please take notes in a separate notebook (not in a word processor) to avoid any confusion. Also, any time we have reading assigned for a class, please bring the texts with you to class. We will often consult them over the course of the class period.

“So far, so good. What else?”

1. Regular and punctual attendance. The writing you will do in English 101 will be based on skills you will develop and hone in class; for that reason, your attendance and participation will have a direct effect on your work and, ultimately, your grades. If you miss class for any reasons, it will be your responsibility to find out what you missed and how you can make up the work. Your engagement grade and the quality of your work will suffer if you miss class. You are also expected to arrive on time; if you are late, you will disrupt class, and your engagement grade will suffer. Also, you may miss the day's warm-up writing exercise, meaning additional lost points.

Whether or not you are allowed to make up that work will depend on two factors:

- 1) whether your absence is excused or unexcused (please see the University's statement on excused and unexcused absences at

https://www.faculty.umd.edu/teach/attend_student.html);

- 2) whether the work you handed in or the activity you missed during class constitutes a “major course event.” Rough draft workshops and final due dates of formal assignments constitute major course events. Any work connected to a major course event is due on the date stipulated unless an alternative arrangement has been worked out ahead of time.

There is a limit to the number of *unexcused absences* that you may accrue over the course of the semester. For MWF classes, you have six. While you are allowed these absences, missing class sessions still means that you will lose participation points for that day and for any in-class exercises that your peers complete. For *each additional unexcused absence beyond six*, your final grade for the course will be lowered by one full letter grade. This means that if you have earned an A average but exceed the allowed number of unexcused absences by one, you will earn a B in the course; if you have earned an A but exceed the allowed number of unexcused absences by two, you will earn a C in the course.

2. Late Papers -- Papers are due at the beginning of class on the day they are due; otherwise, they are late. Late papers will be marked down one letter grade per class late. If you must hand a paper in late, you must also contact me the day the paper is due, so that I know when to expect your paper and so that we can make arrangements for delivery (whether you'll give it to me in class, or deliver it to my office, etc.)

That said, I recognize that adjusting to a college workload is no small feat, and, so you are entitled to one Late Paper Pass for the semester. That is, for one paper due date, you can have a "pass" and submit the paper next class without penalty. So, if you choose to use your late paper pass for a paper due on a Wednesday, I will accept the paper on Friday. I do not need any explanations; just tell me at the beginning of class you are using your pass, and that's it. Keep in mind, though, that you only get one and, after it's gone, the standard late paper penalty will apply.

Note: I will not accept a pass for Assignment #5: Position Paper or Assignment #6: Revision and Reflection. They will be due by 4:00 p.m. on their respective due dates.

3. Writing Workshops -- Every great writer is also a great reader, and analyzing the choices that others have made is one of the best methods for developing your own skill as a writer. For each assignment, we will have a draft workshop before your paper is due. By the start of the *class before the workshop*, you will post your rough draft to the class Canvas page (look for the designated assignment). You and your peers will then provide digital comments on each other's work *prior to the workshop* so that the workshop itself can be primarily focused on discussing suggestions and comments and getting the ball rolling on revision.

If you do not provide a rough draft or fail to provide meaningful comments on your peers' writing, your final grade for that paper will be reduced by a letter grade – that is, an A paper will become a B paper. On workshop days, you will discuss drafts and offer suggestions for how to improve those drafts; I will also provide specific criteria that you can use to evaluate each other's work. You will also have the chance to ask me questions about the paper.

You will also write a reflection on each assignment after you turn in your final draft. In this reflection, you will critically consider the writing strategies you employed in your draft, your success in revising it following the workshop, and the specific writing knowledge you will carry forward as a result of having completed the assignment.

Writing is a public act as well as a private one, and peer editing is one important means by which we will integrate this social aspect into the classroom. You will receive a grade for your peer editing skills, which I will determine based on your engagement in workshops as well as on the quality of the written comments you provide on your peers' drafts. I recognize that this sounds like a good deal of additional work, but remember that a good comment from a peer can substantially improve or unknot an ongoing challenge in your work. You owe it to yourselves and each other to be active and insightful workshop participants.

Use the following schedule to help you remember rough and final draft submission deadlines for the six major assignments:

Assignment	Rough Draft Due	Workshop Date	Final Draft Due
Summary	Sept 7 th (post by 11:59 pm)	Sept. 9 th	Sept. 14 th
Inquiry Essay	Oct. 3 rd	Oct. 5 th	Oct. 12 th
Rhetorical Analysis	Oct. 17 th (post by 11:59 p.m.)	Oct. 19 th	Oct. 24 th
Digital Forum	Oct. 31 st (post by 11:59 p.m.)	Nov. 2 nd	Nov. 7 th
Position Paper	Part One: Nov. 21 st (in class) Part Two: Nov. 28 th (in class)	Part One: Nov. 21 st Part Two: Nov. 28 th	Dec. 2 nd
Revision and Reflection	December 9 th (posted by 11:59 p.m.)	December 12 th	Dec. 15 th (by 4:00 p.m.)

4. Format for papers -- The format for papers will vary, but unless otherwise indicated, standard format is double-spaced throughout (with no extra spaces between paragraphs), readable font (12 point Times New Roman, no italics except for titles or emphasis), one-inch margins on all sides, left justified, with your name, my name/the section number, and a telling title on the first page. When you have cited information, you should follow the MLA style guidelines appropriate for the topic or situation. Number all pages. Unless instructed to do so, do not use subtitles or headers to divide the text of the paper into sections. The final draft of each assignment should be clearly labeled as such. Do not bother with cover pages; they are a waste of paper, and Mother Nature will thank you for not using them.
5. Turning in Papers – All assignments are to be uploaded in either **.doc or .docx** format to the designated assignment space in Canvas. Typically, assignments will be due by the start of

class on the day they are due; however, the procedure for Assignments #5 and #6 will be slightly different.

“We’re getting close to the end. I can feel it...”

Making Up Work: Timeliness is important in making up work. As soon as possible, make an appointment with me, or come to my first available office hour so you can arrange a schedule to make up the work you have missed.

E-mail Correspondence: I will make reasonable attempts to respond to your questions by e-mail, but I am not online constantly; if you write to me by 9 pm, expect an answer before midnight, but if you write after 9 pm, do not expect a response before 9 am the following day. On weekends, I will promise to check my e-mail once on Sunday nights, but not each evening.

Visiting My Office and Arranging Appointments: As resources for the course go, I’m probably one of the better ones. (Probably.) If you have questions about an assignment or want additional help brainstorming or organizing ideas—or even just want to sound a working thesis or some dim ember of an idea—feel free to stop by during my office hours. My hours will likely expand as the semester goes on, and, and I will be sure to inform you of all changes to my schedule. If you need to arrange an appointment at another time, let me know by e-mail so that we can find a mutually agreeable time.

I will require you to visit my office at least twice during the semester (we will discuss when later on in the semester), but I strongly encourage you to visit my office more regularly. Bring your writing “journal” with you, and we can begin transforming that crude matter into some slightly more shapely. (We will also do this in class, but, if you’re going to commit to a topic for three assignments and 80% of your grade, it should probably be a good one.)

The Writing Center

The Writing Center is open at 1205 Tawes Hall. Hours and other information are available on the Center’s website: <http://www.english.umd.edu/academics/writingcenter>. The Writing Center is a great resource to help improve your writing and better present your ideas (and not just for 101, but for any class that requires writing). As is true with any resource, it will be most useful to you if you have a plan and have done some thoughtful preparation before your tutoring appointment. Therefore, try to make a full appointment with lots of lead time (they fill up fast, especially later in the semester). Writing Center tutors have experience with the 101 syllabus and assignments, but they cannot be expected to know about the particular requirements or individual specifications that I may have instituted for any given assignment. Tutors can best help you when you show them the following: (1) the assignment sheet, (2) any additional assignment sheets or printed information I have given to you, (3) any in-class notes you may have taken on the assignment, (4) any drafts you’ve worked on so far (not just the most recent), and, most importantly, (5) a list of specific issues you’d like to work on in that session. Note that Writing Center tutors do not give out grade judgments or predictions, nor do

they proofread. Do not, for example, ask them whether your paper “will get an A.” They cannot answer such questions. They *will* give you advice and feedback, but you must evaluate all of this advice and feedback for yourself before turning in your paper. Final responsibility for the paper rests with **you**, not with them. (The same is true for draft workshops with your classmates.)

Grading and Revision

In any skills course, improvement is important. Therefore, the grades you earn on later papers count for more than grades on earlier papers. The percentages of contribution to your final grade are as follows:

Writing Journals, Exercises & Discussion Board Posts	10%
Engagement & Peer Editing	5%
Summary	5%
Inquiry Essay	15%
Rhetorical Analysis	15%
Digital Forum	15%
Position Paper and Reflective Letter	20%
Revision and Reflection	15%

Comments:

At its best, responding extends and deepens the exchange that begins in the classroom, and it offers opportunities for students and teachers to engage in dialogue. The role of the student in this exchange is to be open to a teacher’s comments, reading and hearing comments not as personal attacks or as the teacher’s idiosyncrasies but rather as instructive words to carry to the next draft or assignment. And the role of the teacher in this exchange is to welcome students into the process by engaging with their ideas, respectfully and thoughtfully, treating students as apprentices, with much to gain and much to give. (Nancy Sommers, *Responding to Student Writing*, p. 10)

I could not have said it better myself. (That’s why I quoted her.) Please do not consider the comments that you receive on your writing as justifications for a grade; instead, think of them as a means of applying the principles and concepts we discuss in class to the specific piece you have submitted. Use the comments I provide on your writing as a guide for approaching your future writing assignments. That said, I would also strongly encourage you to see my comments as only a *starting point* for further discussion about your progress in the course and your development as writer. Margin comments and endnotes can only accomplish so much; conversation between the two of us can accomplish much more.

Interpolations

Interpolations is the official student journal of the Academic Writing Program and sets out to highlight the very best work being produced in English 101 classrooms. Once a year, the editorial board of *Interpolations* selects from hundreds of submissions roughly 15-20 pieces and publishes them online for a global audience. Submitting your best work to *Interpolations* opens up the possibility of your work reaching far larger audiences and, thus, I would encourage you to do so come the end of the semester.

Academic Integrity and Honor Pledge

Plagiarism, whether it is submitting someone else's work as your own, submitting your own work completed for another class without my permission, or otherwise violating the University's code of Academic Integrity, will not be tolerated. You are expected to understand the University's policies regarding academic integrity. These can be found at the Student Honor Council website at www.studenthonorcouncil.umd.edu. Please visit this website, click on the "Students" link, and read the information carefully.

You will be asked to write and sign The Honor Pledge, a statement of integrity, alongside the heading of each formal paper you turn in for this class. For Academic Writing, the Honor Pledge is as follows: "I pledge on my honor that I have not given or received any unauthorized (or unacknowledged) assistance on this assignment. Moreover, I have not taken or 'borrowed' the ideas or words of another without properly citing that source."

Grading Scale

<u>Grade</u>	<u>University Definition</u>
97-100: A+ 93-96: A 90-92: A-	Superior Achievement
87-89: B+ 83-86: B 80-82: B-	Good
77-79: C+ 73-76: C 70-72: C-	Average
67-69: D+ 63-66: D 60-62: D-	Passing, but not satisfactory

59 and below: F

Failure

Note: You must complete all six major assignments. Failure to do so will result in an automatic “F” for the course.

What to do about additional questions or problems

If you have questions about procedures, if a problem occurs, or if you want to request flexibility in connection with a course requirement, write me a memo, making clear what you are asking for and telling me whatever I need to know to make a decision. Usually, I cannot give you good information in the “after-class ambush” and, in fact, I cannot stand by anything you think you hear under such circumstances. I can make better decisions if I am given good information and time to consider a question or problem.

The course will require discipline and hard work from you, but there is enough leeway built into the requirements that, if you allow yourself the time and energy to put into the course the kind of effort it requires, you should be able to pass, at least. Do not wait until the end of the semester to try to get help for special problems or to reconsider whether this was the best semester to take the course. If you have questions or problems, see me right away about them.

Student Learning

Your success in the class is important to me. If there are circumstances that may affect your performance in this class, please let me know as soon as possible so that we can work together to develop strategies for adapting assignments to meet both your needs and the requirements of the course.

In order to receive official university accommodations, you will need to register and request accommodations through the Office of Disability Support Services. DSS provides services for students with physical and emotional disabilities and is located in 0106 Shoemaker on the University of Maryland campus. Information about Learning Assistance Service and/or Disability Support Service can be found at:

www.counseling.umd.edu/LAS or www.counseling.umd.edu/DSS.

You can also reach DSS by phone at 301-314-7682.

Moreover, I would like to make a brief note about the University's mental health services. I know that "mental health" is something of a dirty phrase in our culture, but college is a transition, and transitions often mean grappling with a variety of stresses. Seeing a counselor or opening up about your honest emotions does not make you a "basket case" or "weak." The word "courage," in fact, comes from the Latin meaning "to wear one's heart (on one's sleeve)" —that is, real courage comes from being honest and open about our vulnerabilities, not denying their existence or seeing them as deficiencies. The following services here on campus are more than equipped to help you, even if you just feel the urge to speak to someone:

Counseling Center (Shoemaker Building): (301) 314-7651

Mental Health Service (Health Center): (301) 314-8106

C.A.R.E. to Stop Violence: (301) 314-2222, (301) 741-3442 (24 hour hotline)

Campus Chaplains: (301) 314-9893

HELP Center (peer to peer support): (301) 314-HELP (4357)

Diversity

The University of Maryland values the diversity of its student body. Along with the University, I am committed to providing a classroom atmosphere that encourages the equitable participation of all students regardless of age, disability, ethnicity, gender, national origin, race, religion, or sexual orientation. Potential devaluation of students in the classroom that can occur by reference to demeaning stereotypes of any group and/or overlooking the contributions of a particular group to the topic under discussion is inappropriate.

"All right, I'm drowning in details. Please tell me there's a final pep talk in all of this."

Remember that writing isn't a magical "talent" that some possess in volumes and some do not; it is, first and foremost, the product of discipline, patience, and persistence. Writing is like any skill—it takes time, and, with practice, anyone can become a better writer. Great writers labor over drafts as much as beginning writers (look at the seven editions/revisions Walt Whitman published of *Leaves of Grass* or the 3000 pages Toni Morrison *didn't* use in the final version of *Beloved*). I have three pieces of advice for this course: start early, write often, and put your heart into your writing. Simply put, there's a chemical formula for "talent": diligence plus discipline plus passion. Those are things of which we are all capable.

And so is writing.