

**Course:** College Essay Writing

**Dates:** July 6-9, 10:30 a.m. – 1 p.m. District Office

**Instructor:** Michelle Balmeo, balmeo@gmail.com

**Description:** This advanced workshop is for students looking to spend one week brainstorming, writing and refining the personal statement essay required for UC applications, or one of the essays necessary for private college applications. Students will have several opportunities to work one on one with FUHSD staff and receive personalized feedback on their college application essay. At the end of the course, students will have a completed essay ready for submission with either a UC or a private college application. Suggested prerequisite: College Planning Workshop.

**Expectations:**

- Come to class each day on time and ready to work. Bring a binder or notebook with lots of paper and several pens or pencils. Personal laptops are acceptable but not required, and you bring them at your own risk.
- You will receive assignments to complete at home each night. Expect these assignments to take at least one hour, and understand that they must be complete in order for you to progress with the rest of the class.
- Be critical but respectful of the work of others. You will be asked to engage in several peer workshops and activities that will require that you offer critique and feedback to your peers. Remember to treat as others as you would like to be treated.
- You can expect to get out of this course what you put in. Coming to class with a positive attitude and energy will contribute to your success in walking away from this experience with a strong essay.

**Course outline:**

Day 1      **Guiding questions:** What is this scary and unfamiliar thing called the college essay? How does it differ from the other essays I've written? But more importantly, what could I possibly write about that someone else will find interesting?

**Homework:**

- Read "What is the Reflective Essay?"
- Select a prompt (UC or Common Application)
- Write 5-8 mini-introductions based on topic ideas generated in class
- Bring a candid photo of yourself from childhood

Day 2      **Guiding questions:** I picked a topic... now what? How do I show without showing off? I know what I want to say, but how do I make it interesting? And how do I avoid sounding like every other applicant?

**Homework:**

- Read “The Lively Art of Writing”
- Write a draft of your essay (~500 words) and share it with me via Google Docs <balmeo@gmail.com> by 8:30 p.m.

Day 3

**Guiding questions:** What does my essay really say about me? How do I say more with less? Where do I need to focus my attention in revision? How can I revise more effectively?

**Homework:**

- Read sample essays
- Revise your essay on Google Docs by 8:30 p.m.

Day 4

**Guiding questions:** What will take my essay from good to great? How can I replicate this process for other essays? What are my next steps?

**Homework:**

- Work on that final draft!