WELCOME TO THE NWP

Congratulations! Every year, we receive far more applicants than we can accept, and please know that we chose you carefully. No; it’s not a mistake! You had a strong, promising background: great recommendations, fine writing and scholarship, and clear evidence you’ll be a contributing citizen of our program. With that, here’s a summary of our program, our expectations, and our surroundings.

ETHICS AND WORKSHOP ETIQUETTE

The faculty of the NWP is committed to making the program one in which each student feels supported in his or her endeavors. We also expect that students will treat one another with courtesy as they approach one another’s essays. While nonfiction is a very big genre with many different aesthetic and formal possibilities, and while we all might not share the same views about the genre, it is important for our own development as individual writers and for the intellectual integrity of the program as a whole that we remain open to as many different approaches to the genre as possible.

Likewise, the Nonfiction Writing Program is a small community in a bit of a hothouse environment. In New York or L.A., there’s a certain amount of anonymity afforded by the large populations of those cities, but this is not the case in Iowa City and certainly not in the Nonfiction Writing Program. Writing by its nature is a private act, but in a workshop environment it is necessarily public. Consequently, we urge that you refrain from invading the privacy of any of your fellow students. We especially ask that you don’t write about others in such a way as to embarrass or demean them. And if you write of them at all, please do so with permission. As nonfiction writers, ostensibly writing about “real” events, it’s especially important that we respect the lives and boundaries of our fellow writers in the program.