

Power of the Pen: Identities and Social Issues in Fiction and Nonfiction

Farewell Video – Transcript

>>[Text on screen] Power of the Pen: Identities and Social Issues in Fiction and Nonfiction.

>>We have come to the end of Power of the Pen; but of course for writers, it never really ends. One completed work seems to open up space for the next investigation. And we hope that over the course of these weeks, you have begun to cultivate the best writing habits. The habits that all good writers have: to work as regularly as possible, to read widely and with discrimination, to look hard at your work and at the work of others in the hope of making your work better day, by day, by day. That's the great thing about art, is that unlike a gymnast whose peak comes early, writers have the chance to get better over the ages. We acquire wisdom. We acquire experience with our gray hairs, and that's useful for writing. So, we hope that as you go onward, you will take some of these lessons and stay in touch.

>>What we also hope is that during the last six weeks, you now understand better why you write. What is your motivation for writing? And where you write. Where you write best. Those are the two elements that are going to keep you writing after you finish this class. Some people write an hour a day, it works for them. Some people write in the morning. Some people write in the evening. Some people block off days at a time, which is my favorite way to write. But you need to decide what's best for you, what works for you. The other two things I want to talk about quickly is I love the internet. And I come from a time in the past where we didn't have the internet and we dealt with typewriters, and we had to go physically to the library, and look up the books and pull the information out. So, the internet is such a wonderful, wonderful tool that you should learn to use effectively. And finally, I think it's also important to think about the difference between editing and writing. Some people get stuck. And you have this one or two chapters and you continue to edit, and you edit, and you edit, and you never move forward to your next chapters. So, really think about the fact that you want to get it down on paper. That's what I try to do, is get the whole thing down on paper first, and then start editing, and then start layering, and then start building your story the way that you want it to be in the final phase. So, good luck and keep writing.

>>And two things I want to add to that because you're exactly right: finish the draft. I'm always saying both to myself and to students. And the other thing is, I'm guessing your journalism students know this, with the internet, there really is no excuse for getting facts wrong now, right?

>>Absolutely!

>>I mean you can track them down and when you're writing non-fiction, you are obliged to track them down. I live in mortal fear of getting facts wrong.

>>I agree.

>>As the IWP Online Writing Summer continues, we hope you'll join us for our next MOOC, Power of the Pen: Identities and Social Issues in Poetry and Plays. Onward!