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Dear Students of the 2018 College Writing Workshop,

Welcome to New York University!

In this edition of West Fourth, you will find six exemplary essays from last summer’s Precollege students—engaging works that navigate difficult discussions related to gender, race, sexuality, faith, and nationality. We encourage you to read the fine work of your predecessors for inspiration, paying close attention to the creativity, research, analysis, and eloquence of these open minds.

These investigations explore evidence ranging from the essays of Zadie Smith and Ta-Nehisi Coates to Jordan Peele’s Oscar-winning film Get Out and Tom Hooper’s controversial film The Danish Girl. Each essay attempts to break away from simplistic, dualistic thinking; by turning to research, our students recognize a multiplicity of compelling perspectives and begin to embrace a more nuanced stance in their writing—one in which some of the claims they read are subject to scrutiny. These writers strike a balance between humility (feeling overwhelmed by everything that “the experts” have already claimed about a given topic) and confidence (assuming they have all the answers).

Here you will encounter work that is smart, exciting, and full of curiosity. While opportunities for improvement still remain in these final drafts, each writer is actively engaging us with the pleasure of discovery.

I would like to thank all those who made this year’s publication possible: Dara Regaignon, Dean Gene Andrew Jarrett, Kristin Balicki, Shannon Riley, Noelle Marchetta, Jennifer Spirer, our team of faculty editors (Bruce Bromley, Joshua Weber, and Amanda Yesnowitz), Beth Machlan, Jono Mischkot, Richard Larson, Christine Jensch, Christopher Cappelluti, and John Maher.

We hope to see your writing here next year!

Best of luck in your writing courses,

Zach Udko
Coordinator, College Writing Workshops
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