



THE VOICE

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The Best for Last

Anticipating the Final Course

All the Music be Happenin' Now

The Obstinate Raging Child

Celluloid Psychology

Equilibrium and You

Plus:

Course Exam: Psych 289

The Giller Prize, 2017.

and much more!



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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



We love to hear from you! Send your questions and comments to voice@voicemagazine.org, and please indicate if we may publish your letter.

Hey! Did you know the Voice Magazine has a [Facebook page](#)?

No kidding! We also do the [twitter](#) thing once in a while if you're into that.

Editorial

The Necessary Apology

Karl Low



Today, Prime Minister Trudeau apologized to the survivors of the residential school system in Newfoundland and Labrador. This is part of a \$50 million settlement reached between the government of Canada and those survivors. Lately, I've started to see people start to refer to Mr. Trudeau as "The Sorry Prime Minister", others joke that he's playing into the stereotype of Canadians always apologizing. Still others I've seen have wondered when he'll stop his "World Apology Tour" and return to governing Canada.

Personally, I think what he's doing is an important part of governing Canada. Apologies are worthwhile things, because with an apology is an acknowledgement that the one apologizing understands they did something wrong, and, when not just a pro forma saying, a commitment to learn and be better in future. In that respect, apologizing is governing our country. It's laying out a future course that we, both as individual citizens and in the collective sense that we call government, should strive to adhere to.

However, this particular apology bothers me. It shouldn't have been necessary. In 2008, Prime Minister Stephen Harper made an apology, along with a settlement, to the survivors of residential schools across Canada, with the exception of Newfoundland and Labrador. The reasoning was that since the residential schools that were in Newfoundland and Labrador had not been established or run by the Canadian government (as they were set up before the province was part of Canada) that Canada had no fault in them to play. This strikes me as particularly facile reasoning used primarily to justify pinching some pennies (though admittedly, quite a lot of pennies). When we accepted the province into Canada, we took on responsibility for what was going on in it, and to essentially hold our hands up and say, "Not our fault" when it came to this overdue apology and settlement strikes me as avoiding the issue.

How much worse must it have been for those victims from Newfoundland and Labrador, seeing Canada acknowledge the problems and brutality of the residential system across the country, with the single exception of them. Their experiences were no less brutal. The knowledge of what was going on there was not hidden from anyone. They should never have been excluded from that first acknowledgement and apology, and that they were is something that, in some ways, makes the entire incident even worse.

Remember, this is not an issue from the days before most of us were around. The bulk of the residential school system was only closed in 1986. The last residential school only closed in 1996. When I first found out about how long they remained open for, I was stunned. I'd always thought it was a problem from before my time. But the fault for these is, at least partially, on me as well, for not being aware enough of what our government was, has been, and is doing. That's something that we should all be sorry about.

So, I say again, this apology shouldn't have been necessary, but it absolutely was. And for anybody reading this who has been affected by the residential school system, I, too, am sorry. In a way, I failed you as well. I can only say I'll try to do better.

Enjoy the read!



Saving the Best for Last

Barbara Lehtiniemi



This month, I began what I hope will be my Best AU Course Ever. Not just because it's the last one to complete my degree—although that's certainly reason enough to love a course. Mainly it's because this final AU course is the one I wanted to take the most.

When I enrolled in the Bachelor of General Studies program at AU five years ago, I created a wish list of courses. The list contained all the courses I might like to take. I reviewed the list every few months and often expanded it. Right from the beginning, though, there were

more courses on the list than I needed for my degree. I prioritized the list, flagging the courses I most wanted to take.

Those priorities changed over time but one course consistently held the top spot: ENGL 384 Writing Creative Non-fiction. I wanted to take this course early on but it had a tangled skein of prerequisites. In addition to its two prerequisite courses, ENGL 211 Prose Forms and ENGL 212 Poetry and Plays, it was recommended to take ENGL 381 Creative Writing in Prose first. That course had, in turn, a further prerequisite, ENG 353 Intermediate Composition. Naturally, two of those courses had a further prerequisite, ENGL 255 Introductory Composition. If you've lost track, that meant I needed to take five courses on my way to Writing Creative Non-fiction.

ENGL 255 Introductory Composition was one of my first courses at AU. Not only did that course launch me on the long path to Writing Creative Non-fiction, the writing skills Introductory Composition taught me helped me through many subsequent AU courses. ENGL 353 Intermediate Composition helped me fine-tune my essay-writing skills while exploring topics of personal interest.

ENGL 211 Prose Forms and ENGL 212 Poetry and Plays serve as the launch pads for English Literature courses but are worthy in their own right—I would have taken them anyway. They are also the prerequisites for the Canadian Lit and World Lit courses I took later.

The tangled journey to Writing Creative Non-fiction mirrors my whole AU journey. Each course selected carefully, much like a mason selects building stones. Each one supporting another and part of a carefully designed whole. I could have taken the courses in a different order or skipped some altogether but then the structure would have lost something—been less stable.

I finished the last of the five courses in September, just in time to enrol in Writing Creative Non-fiction for my final course. I was keen to get started. With the eager anticipation seldom experienced since my first AU course five years ago, I began working on the course before the start date.

Can Writing Creative Non-fiction live up to five years of anticipation? Will it be the shining star of my AU career? So far it's looking that way—and I'm only on unit one. Unlike every other AU

course, for this one I have actually met my tutor, when serendipity brought us to within easy go-for-coffee distance just a few weeks before the course start date. I've also benefited from direct feedback and enthusiasm for this course from another AU student.

I've looked forward to this course for so long, it can't help but being the best course ever. Even if it doesn't prove to live up to five years of anticipation, this course will distinguish itself as being the last one I need to click "submit" on. And that will ensure it is the best—at last!

Barbara Lehtiniemi is a writer, photographer, and AU student. She lives on a windswept rural road in Eastern Ontario.

Celluloid Psychology

Equilibrium and You

Melanie Fuller-Brudersas



Equilibrium is a thriller tech-noir directed by Kurt Wimmer starring Christian Bale, Sean Bean, and Emilie Watson. The film is derived from George Orwell's classic *1984*, with a story that centres on a utopic society ruled by a leader who claims all emotion and feeling as cause for an inevitable third world war to end human civilization; a premise the government head (*Father*) uses to mass prescribe an emotion-numbing drug agent called Prozium. However, a top-rated cleric, John Preston (Christian Bale) defies *Father* by accidentally forgoing his doses of the drug, allowing him to feel forbidden emotions. By becoming a *feeler*, Preston experiences feeling-inducing relics (books, poetry, painting, music) and emotional experiences which carry a death sentence. Through feeling, Preston learns that the suppression of emotions is a major crime committed against humanity. He then seeks revenge by overthrowing the *Father* regime he previously protected.

The film's rich symbolism and irony made me think deeply about society, its rules and how they effect individual human beings.

False Security and Abuse of Power

The drug Prozium, which is prescribed to eliminate threatening emotions (anger, jealousy, sadness, etc.), and emotions in general, induced something more monstrous: disconnectedness with the self and others. In reality, Sethi et al., (2015) claim psychopathy to include antisocial behaviour and emotional detachment/ lack of affect, and apathy (lack of interest, enthusiasm, or concern). Interestingly, emotional detachment is a component of psychopathology, which constitutes roughly 15-20% of the prison population (Sethi et al., 2015).

Emotions are what make people human, and removing them equates to characteristics of psychopathology. The dramatic irony is the mass prescription of a pathological numbing agent by a public leader named *Father*. The word father has deeply rooted meanings that centre on the importance of trust and love (particularly in states of vulnerability). The fearful society believes the *Father* figure's prescription of Prozium is the answer to the scary emotions that can lead to

the end of the world (through world war 3). The *Father* then abuses the vulnerability and trust of the people to gain control and abuse the rights of others. Since art imitates life, we see a real representation of this form of power abuse in modern reality.

The Father in Modern Society

Winston Churchill once said, "The empires of the future are the empires of the mind." Empires will be run through the mass-mind-washing of prescriptive ideologies. We live in a time with constant bombardment of advertisements and programming everywhere; on television, radio, movies, Youtube, webpages, etc. Similarly, the *Father* displays himself 24/7 on all televisions, radios, and large screens in every scene throughout the film. *Father* understands that social norm prescriptions are learned through the incidental exposure to stimulus objects (Kwan, Suhui, & Chi-Yue, 2015). In other words, the psychological phenomena known as the mere-exposure effect: instances where people develop preferences for things because of their persistent exposure to them (Kwan et al., 2015). Do people always develop preferences for things because of their persistent exposure to them? As previously mentioned, people are often unaware of the control the effects of mere-exposure have on them. This excerpt from the film *My Dinner with Andre* has an interesting narrative on being awake vs being asleep to realities we subconsciously accept.

The awakened state of personal distinctiveness is evident during an artistic scene in *Equilibrium* when white-dressed Preston is running and moving against the slow moving, dark-clothed, uniform crowd. Additionally, animator and writer for *Salad Fingers* (David Firth) describes some of the psychological strain of such exposure; "I cannot believe how bad TV has gotten- and it almost inspires me to react to it somehow..., it should be really my choice of what to see, but if I see 10 posters in a row of Bruno Mars's latest album, by the 9th one I am usually seething. So, I just can't help but write something just to vent my anger, and if it makes its way into a cartoon then, why not (BBC, 2009)." Mr. Firth perfectly captures the mere exposure effect in a in his rebellious short titled, *Music Guess, 2009*.

Mere-Exposure Effect and *Equilibrium*

The mere-exposure effect is most likely to be effective when a person experiences a strong motivation for social connectedness (Kwan et al., 2015). Interestingly, Preston deviated from his familiar and trusting *Father* and sought his own meaning in halting his Prozium doses. This took a lot of courage, as it is insanely difficult to stray from what is seemingly safe and familiar; people have psychological tendencies to stick with what is consistent, and predictable (Schulz, 1976). Nothing could be more predictable than feeling nothing and having a set agenda, however, Preston's need for personal distinctiveness (Kwan et al., 2015) is likely what drove his courage to end his Prozium doses. This means, that personal distinction and emotional life experiences are important for social connectedness. The *Equilibrium* society is uniform and similar, yet, disembodied and disconnected. Interestingly, our minds are hardwired to perceive connection when groups are similar to one another as strong bonds are assumed in this solidarity. The most important message in this film is that a society can appear to be connected, yet be horribly detached. You cannot form real connections with others without a real connection with yourself. Erich Fromm mentions how a pathological society limits human needs; The need for relatedness and unity, transcendence and a sense of effectiveness, rootedness, sense of identity, frame of orientation and an object of devotion, excitation and stimulation. None of these basic needs can be met when your right to experience the world is taken from you (i.e., your emotions). Pathology of normalcy adjusts individuals to the pathological demands of society. "the fact that millions of people share the same forms of mental pathology does not make these people sane"

(Fromm, 2013, p. 15). The prescribed normalcy from *Equilibrium's Father* is socially enforced between people, "you forget its my job to know what you are thinking!"

Emotions, Knowledge, Pathology , Growth and Social Connectedness

Emotions teach us the world is always changing and with change comes with growth. University Psychology Professor, Claude Lamontagne, provides a clear explanation how the roots of psychopathology stem from rigid thinking and inability to appropriately reflect and accept new ideas; "the whole idea is the growth of knowledge where hypotheses are made and conclusions are formed. There is a process of making generalities of what reality is..., then generalities are proposed. If generalities fail, is another generality opened up? A better or greater truth...? Pathology arises when you start creating things that are not open to refutation anymore, or that are so open to refutation, that they get refuted all the time."

The *Father* figure dictates an irrefutable *truth* which denies people the right to draw their own conclusions. Indeed, he projects the philosophies of his damaged (ideal) self onto others and stunts the growth that can be offered by a persons' unique and rich experience provided by emotions (denying real connectedness.) The more extreme the disorder of the personality, the more social predators enjoy harming or humiliating and dominating other people (Hunter,2015). Emotions are central to preventing or allowing conclusions to form and people are naturally attuned to trusting their emotions toward the acquisition of knowledge and growth. Growth is love, "love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite" (Mandela, 1995).

The Pathological Society (*Equilibrium*)

Neurosis begets neurosis. As Fromm states, "the culture provides patterns which enable them to live with a defect without becoming ill. It is as if each culture provided the remedy against the outbreak of manifest neurotic symptoms which would result from defect produced by it. If the opiate against the socially patterned defect were withdrawn, the manifest illness would make its appearance. (Fromm, 2013, p. 17)" Within the *Equilibrium* society, this remedy is the Prozium drug, whereas in our society the remedy is likely technology/social media based. If we removed this remedy, it would be interesting to see what happens and what the manifest illness is. Freedom to do and have versus freedom to be; the importance of *facing* yourself, rather than *fixing* yourself.

The John Preston Challenge

This is a challenge that a professor of mine, Mariusz Zadrag, proposed to his students: Go four weeks without: the internet (except for work/ other important things), Facebook, MySpace, etc. (see the people in person), iPod, cd-player, tv, movies music (go see it live instead), no magazines (read good books instead), no phone (only emergency use.) By doing this, we are forced to face ourselves rather than fix ourselves. Technology (artificial interaction) has become like Prozium in *equilibrium* society. What do you gain in your life when you remove the societal opiate of choice?

If you choose to take the John Preston Challenge, please leave your comments and insights on our website.

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All the Music be Happenin' Now The Importance of Context

Wanda Waterman



"I had an extremely slow dawning insight about creation. That insight is that context largely determines what is written, painted, sculpted, sung, or performed. That doesn't sound like much of an insight, but it's actually the opposite of conventional wisdom, which maintains that creation emerges out of some interior emotion, from an upwelling of passion or feeling."

- David Byrne, in *How Music Works*, 2012

Byrne's realisation doesn't presume that creativity is a dry, mechanical opportunism, but rather that the "interior emotion" comes in response to predesigned forms. As he points out, we wouldn't want to have to reinvent the wheel every day just to get around. Similarly, when the creative spark flies we must contrive to shoot it in the direction of a pre-existing structure: a poem, a painting, a statue, or a trio sonata, and there needs to be a commonality of thought and feeling present in others if they're to attribute any meaning to it.

The raw material of creativity, which does indeed "upwell" from time to time of its own accord, needs our help to be launched in the direction of the most suitable pattern or cultural development. Byrne goes on to provide examples from his own musical career, first showing how

his work with the Talking Heads wouldn't have been made outside the context of 1980's musical and political conditions.

I completely agree, but I'd like to add that to channel the true spirit of the age an art form, or cultural context, should not so much be merged with as reacted against.

Music and Zeitgeist

I've often drawn correlations between political climates and the musical genres that prevail during their lifespans, repeating *ad nauseam* that punk rock continually re-emerges during periods of political conservatism, particularly when the gap widens between the powerful and the powerless. (Now that Trump's in power I console myself with the thought that we're in for some fabulous Arabo-Latino-feminist punk rock. It is written.)

Neo-romantic music (everyone's calling it Neo-classical but I don't think that moniker's entirely appropriate) came as a response to a deep disenchantment with the heartless, money-grubbing onward march of info-technology. Neo-romantic music expresses our widespread longing to return to nature, to truly romantic love, to the ideals of social justice, simplicity, and freedom of emotion and expression.

But let's not stop there. What about the jubilant lightheartedness of early jazz as a desperate bid to transcend myriad shocking displays of racial hatred? What about the rise of 1960's rock music with the world's youth simultaneously losing trust in authority? What about folk music as an affirmation of essential humanity pushing back against class oppression?

Music as raging child

Is it just me, or is music starting to look like an obstinate-defiant child? Because such children desperately need attention and are very sensitive to things being out of whack, the comparison is helpful, but only in part; the tantrums of obstinate-defiant children don't explain the beauty of music, closely tied as it is to the beauty of the world's soul.

Sure, music reacts, refuses, gets its heels down, and rants, and it's certainly a channelling of the universal wounded child begging for release and healing, but music is also a shrieking canary alerting us to the presence of gas in the coal mine, an interpretive dancer showing us the true meanings hidden in the events of our passing days. Music answers our existential hunger, only sometimes railing against the ones who stole our food.

Music's courtroom

This series aims in part to answer the question, *What is so different about the music of the first two decades of the new millennium?* So today we must remark that every genre that has ever existed is now speaking to us at once. Technology has opened the door to voices we'd never have heard before, voices finally united to speak against authority, greed, fundamentalism, sexism, racism, and class oppression, and to provide conditions that promote healing, change, and true progress. These days there's no dominant voice monopolising our attention. We're standing in music's courtroom, and the powers that be are on trial.

But are they even listening?

Wanda also writes the blog The Mindful Bard: The Care and Feeding of the Creative Self.





Course Exam

Psyc 289 – Psychology as a Natural Science

Brittany Daigle

According to the syllabus, PSYC 289, also known as Psychology as a Natural Science, is one of the two first-year introductory psychology courses. This course “introduces the broad areas of biological bases of behaviour, sensation and perception, learning and memory, and variations in consciousness,” and is mandatory for students in AU’s psychology programs. It has no prerequisites.

Psychology as a Natural Science has eight timed quizzes, each covering one of the eight units and one final exam covering the entire course. The eight units exactly correspond to chapters within the physical textbook and the comprehensive study aid that students will receive.

The first unit, “The Evolution of Psychology: From Speculation to Science” covers how psychology developed over the years. This unit covers everything from psychology’s founder, Wilhelm Wundt, to significant influencers, such as John B. Watson, William James, Carl Rogers, B.F. Skinner, and Sigmund Freud. It also covers psychology’s job paths and its different research areas while helping students “develop study habits” and their “critical thinking skills.”

The second unit covers psychology’s research methods and procedures, including basic descriptive statistics (MATH 215 would help), experimental research, the scientific approach, descriptive/correlation research, the common flaws in research, and the “issues with internet-mediated research.”

The third and fourth units cover the body’s biological systems, such as the nervous system and the senses, with the third unit being one of the more information intense units in the course. The last four units in the course look at how our brain works in various states, including asleep, drugged, awake, learning, dealing with memory or language, or solving problems, to name a few.

Dr. Andrew Chiarella, the coordinator for PSYC 289 “joined Athabasca University in 2009 after completing his doctorate in Educational Psychology at McGill University.” He is also the coordinator for two Educational Psychology courses, EDPY 200 and EDPY 310.

Chiarella gives a thorough description of the course, stating “psychology as a natural science (PSYC 289) is one of two introductory courses at AU, with the other being PSYC 290. It provides students with an overview of the history of psychology and the research methods psychologists typically use. As psychology consists of many sub-disciplines that focus on very different phenomena and that use different methods, this course just focuses on those from biological, perceptual, cognitive, and behavioural psychology. For a complete overview of the discipline students are encouraged to also take PSYC 290.”

Chiarella continues, “the course covers a lot of content over eight units; therefore, students should be ready to spend several hours per unit reading the text and preparing notes about the main topics in their own words. The study guide provides additional insight about the key topics.

Study questions, learning activities, and self-tests are also included so students can ensure they understand the material and test themselves before moving on to the next unit.”

When asked who he could recommend this course to, he stated “the course is suitable for students from a variety of majors. Upon completing the course students should have a better understanding of how human behaviour and mental processes can be studied in a scientific way. They will also know about some of the more significant and well-studied phenomena and the theories used to explain them from biopsychology (neuroscience), perception, cognition (memory, language, reasoning), and learning. Students also participate in a research study (but they may opt out) and through that learn about how studies are conducted and the rights they have as research participants.”

When I requested feedback from students, Tina Martin and Kym Edinborough-Capuska gave me their opinions. Tina stated that “it was heavy on reading and memorizing definitions; however, it was not an overly challenging class.” Kym added “this was my first course with AU. I feel it gave me a good sense of what to expect from future courses, as well as a solid foundation for my degree.”

From personally taking this course, I agree with them both. Many nights were spent staying up late reading multiple information-intensive chapters and memorizing what felt like an endless number of definitions; however, I found nothing difficult to understand and the textbook was laid out very well. Within the textbook, students will notice bold text that highlights what is fundamentally important for the quizzes and the final exam, though to get above a passing grade you will have to read beyond those bold sections. Luckily, the course’s workload is small!

For those students interested in taking the other first-year introductory psychology course, PSYC 290, the course continues with the same textbook and study aid as PSYC 289—giving you the opportunity to get ahead on readings before your course contract start date.

Whether PSYC 289 is a requirement for your program or it is just a general interest of yours, it is an interesting course that will have you feeling accomplished when completed.

Brittany Daigle is 22 years old and completing her BSc in Computing Science & Information Systems with AU from Toronto, Ontario.

AU-thentic Events

Upcoming AU Related Events

Writing a Proposal for a Thesis

Tues, November 28, 12:00 to 1:00 pm MST
Online

Hosted by AU Faculty of Graduate Studies

fgs.athabasca.ca/news/presentations/

e-mail fgs@athabasca.ca with your student number to register

Ottawa Meet & Greet

Tues, November 28, 7:00 to 8:00 pm EST

Bier Mrkt, 156 Sparks St, Ottawa ON

In-person

Hosted by AUSU

www.ausu.org/event/ottawa-meet-greet-2

e-mail services@ausu.org to RSVP

Google Scholar Webinar

Thurs, November 30, 5:00 to 6:00 pm MST

Online

Hosted by AU Library

library.athabasca.ca/orientations.html

no pre-registration required

AU Toronto Seasonal Cheer

Thurs, November 30, 5:00 to 7:30 pm EST

The University Club of Toronto, 380

University Ave, Toronto ON

In-person

Hosted by AU Faculty of Business

[business.athabasca.ca/event-](https://business.athabasca.ca/event-details/athabasca-university-toronto-seasonal-cheer/)

[details/athabasca-university-toronto-seasonal-cheer/](https://business.athabasca.ca/event-details/athabasca-university-toronto-seasonal-cheer/)

Limited capacity; RSVP online at above link



Mentors

Tara Panrucker



Surrounding yourself with people who are doing what you aspire to do is a worthwhile endeavour on the path towards success. I didn't give much thought about why I admired certain individuals and felt negatively toward others until I came across a book that suggested writing down all the people you looked up to—whether famous, dead, or alive. After completing the exercise it brought to light the kind of person I wanted to be, and mimicking the values (or lack thereof) of a character on reality TV was not on my list.

Self-help author and motivational speaker,

Tony Robbins, studied and read about all the people he most admired; then he began to fashion his actions and belief systems after them. Today he is an international success. He discovered value in mentorship and went on to be a world-renowned mentor. Most of us could use a little guidance and mentorship to achieve our personal best. Fear, being overwhelmed, and the demands of life may hold us back from taking necessary steps to finding the help we need. However, if we take the time to look, the wisdom we seek may not be as out of reach as we think.

Mentorship need not be gleaned from a close relationship with people you know. It can be your favorite Olympic athlete who inspires you to train harder. Perhaps you want to discover a way to serve your community because of how a charitable group close to your heart does. Who makes you feel impassioned? Why? Who do you wish you could be for a day? Once you know, read books about them, watch interviews, contact them and ask how they went about accomplishing their goals.

After I finished a book by writer Natalie Goldberg, I felt I had discovered a kindred soul. Mentors make us feel connected and inspired. Focus more of your energy on those you admire, and less on what social media grinds out. Be brave and ask questions—most people love to be asked about their lives and love to help.

Imitating someone you admire is the greatest form of flattery when you aspire to be better than you were yesterday. It's revealing when you pinpoint who you admire and discover the reasons why. My list includes my parents, Malala Yousafzai, Eckhart Tolle, and others. Each person I admire for different reasons, whether their generosity, crazy sense of humor, or ability to remain true to themselves under difficult circumstances. When you realize why you admire someone, it enriches your relationships and makes you appreciate everyone's unique gifts.

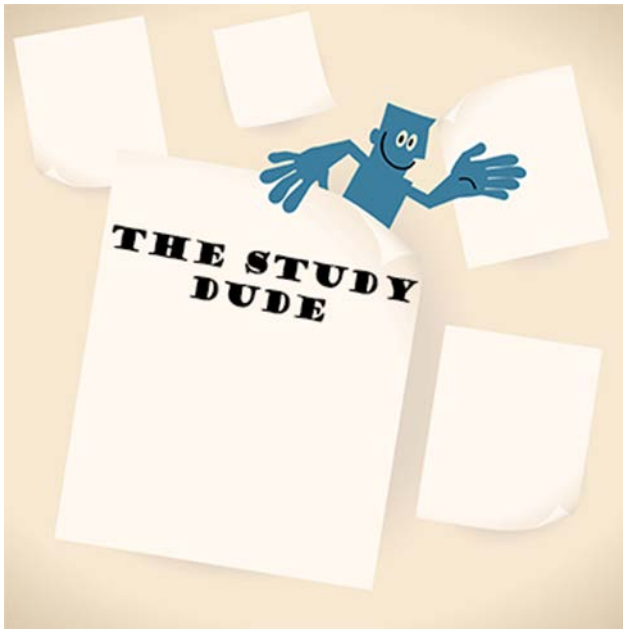
If you're feeling down or low on motivation, remember the saying "Fake it 'til you make it" has worked for millions of successful people, just like you. Keep your list of values and mentors close at hand. Reach out to your tutor, a fellow student, or a trained counselor for further guidance. Within these connections is a wealth of wisdom of knowledge. Before you know it, you could be the one others seek out for advice, stories about your own life experiences, and support.

Tara Panrucker is currently enrolled in an AU online English course to help hone her writing skills and eventually achieve a General Arts Degree. She is a freelance writer and avid enjoyer of the outdoors, currently residing on Vancouver Island.



The Study Dude One Last Breath

Marie Well



Hope Can you make words dance—like letters gyrating, Elvis-style? Growing up, I wrote songs, danced, and stage acted. These tasks demanded a sense of rhythm, or at least of timing, for mastery. But no fine art compares, not at all, to tying rhythm into writing.

Today, I sprinkle less rhythm, more rhyme, into writing. Author Barbara Baig (2015) says nothing of rhyme, not in her chapter on rhythm. Nor does she speak of alliteration. She just suggests that rhythm is like rhyme in writing—where rhyme is repetition not in sound, but in structure.

Beefing up my prose with repetition jars me. Why? Playwriting shaped my style: short, brief, skinny sentences. Leap from playwriting into screenwriting and—chop, chop, chop—you fork fillet mignon, the leanest of genres. Lean tastes good to me.

Aside from brevity, I gush over alliteration. A prof of mine, as he handed back papers, patted one student's arm, praising him as "the master of alliteration." The prof then bent down, whispering to the glowing student the kiss of death: "Come see me during office hours." One blogger said never, never, use alliteration. But figures of speech make fine art, don't they?

Classics use figures of speech—and lots of breaths. Sprinkle in short, quick, "breathing" spaces, says Barbara Baig (2015). To do so, punctuate—or slip in clauses and phrases. When you sing, you take breaths. When you read, you take breaths. When you write, you plan, like beats in music, breaths. Breaths—a simple way to sweeten your prose.

And focus on good grammar, too. I wrote songs with bad grammar, long ago, before I was educated. Later, I wrote songs with a musician, correcting every bit of his bad grammar. We bickered. We butt heads. And then I won. "The pros get grammar right," I said. But world-class poets let grammar slide. Now, I pervert my grammar, almost every second sentence.

Author Barbara Baig maps out tools to make words musical, to make words sing. She tells how in her book titled *Spellbinding Sentences: A Writer's Guide to Achieving Excellence & Captivating Readers*:

- When looking at your writing's rhythm, sense the music, not the imagery.
- In poetry, words use stressed and unstressed syllables. These syllables give off beat, like a drum.
- But in prose, syllables seem less important. Instead, words, clauses, phrases, and sentences mush together to make rhythm.
- To make rhythm, use repetition and variation.
- To make repetition with words, repeat the same word (like "chop, chop, chop" above), repeat the same phrase, or repeat a word combo.

- To make variation, use similar phrase or sentence structures, but vary the words. For instance, you can “repeat a ... phrase structure or phrase type ... while varying the words” (p. 234).
- In paragraphs, combine short with long sentences. Repeat and vary sentence lengths for effect.
- Add pauses to your writing. Set off pauses with commas, other punctuations, subordinate clauses, and so forth.
- When we sing, we take breaths rather than squeeze out two hundred words, wheezing all the way. Sprinkle in breaths to let your writing sing, too.
- Many pros, lawyers, and bureaucrats stuff their writing with words, few of their sentences breathing. Don’t model your writing after these guys and gals. They’ve been duped.
- With phrases or sentences, slap your best words at the start and finale. Final words in phrases or sentences especially act as zingers.
- To hear the music in your writing, slow down as you read—and truly listen.

Baig suggests repetition marks rhythm. But I don’t shy from rhyme. My brother wrote rhyming poetry, inspired by Edgar Allen Poe. I too fell for rhyme, for Poe, for poetry. So, at school, I critiqued my brother’s poem, verses that rhymed, that called forth images of death, of decay. My teacher scrawled on my paper, “Gross!”

So much for macabre. But in writing, there’s always room for one last—breath.



Unearthing classic articles from previous issues of *The Voice Magazine*.

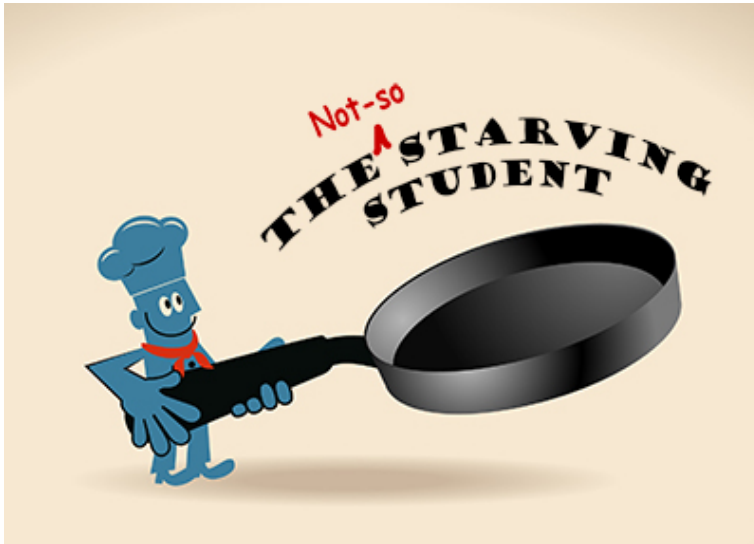
While Americans celebrate Thanksgiving this week, we look at more differences between us and them.

Searching for sense in American politics. In advance of the 2012 U.S. election, dual-citizen Wander Waterman reflects on some fundamental differences between Canadian and American attitudes toward politics and voting. Americans are “a little more drawn to confrontation; they don’t mind hurting feelings and calling each other idiots, but for Canadians that just doesn’t seem right.” *Canadian Voter, American Election*, November 16, 2012.

Language lessons. Professional editor Christina M. Frey delves into use of language north and south of the border. “...few outside Canada know what Timbits are. Their loss.” *The Writer’s Toolbox: Uniquely Canadian*, June 27, 2014.

The Not-So Starving Student Best Vegas Buffets Review 2017

Xin Xu



Last week, I landed in the sun-kissed 22 degrees climate of Las Vegas. Among other things that are jaw-dropping in the entertainment capital of the world, the buffet was a mouth-watering highlight of my trip. As AU students looking for a budget vacation, Vegas can provide an affordable vacation while offering an unforgettable dining experience. Particularly for foodies, Vegas is a one stop shop for buffets that are sure to suit your palates. After scouting out the most popular buffets on the Las Vegas strip, I decided upon two infamous buffets that have brought food bloggers to the city

from all over the world. Both buffets were ranked among the top buffets in the city, with each featuring its uniquely curated international fares.

The Buffet at Aria

Overall Impression: The Buffet is ultimately one of my all time favorite places to overindulge, The Buffet at Aria has never ceased to impress me with its wide selection of entrees, outstanding seafood, and an arrangement of made to order items that enrich the dining experience. Some new additions to the buffet since 2016 include a delectable, made-to-order omelette station, a custom seafood grill station, and a naan station that mimics a Michelin-star restaurant and makes you forget you're inside a grand buffet.



Ambience: The open, well-lit space of the buffet is a prime location for snapping impressive foodie photos. The clean, modern design gives an open cafeteria feel to the buffet without being extravagant. The place is inviting and faces the hotel pool which buffet goers can soak in after gorging their meal.

Price: \$28.99 USD or \$37.14 CAD

Wicked Spoon Buffet at Cosmopolitan

Overall Impression: Having read multiple food bloggers raving about the quality of this buffet, I was keen to experience first-hand the dining milieu at the Cosmopolitan. At first glance, the buffet offers some unique dishes that I haven't seen elsewhere. Wicked Frog Legs and Kimchi Bone Marrow stood out to me the most on my first pass through the dining area.





Ambience: The theme of the Cosmopolitan revolves around the modern, sophisticated feel of large metropolitans in North America. Similarly, its buffet is elegantly furnished and intricately designed. Unlike The Buffet at Aria, Wicked Spoon creates a warmer, cozier feel, suitable for a romantic night out.

Price: \$28 USD or \$35.88 CAD

Final thoughts on vegas buffets:

Overall the experience of fine dining in Las Vegas is incomparable to anywhere else in the world. Having stayed at similar casino-resorts in Macau, China, the dining overseas simply isn't the same. Given the time constraint of my current trip, I wasn't able to try some other top-notch buffets. But other notable buffets for consideration on your future travels to the area should include Bacchanal Buffet at Caesar's Palace and Bally's Sterling Brunch at Bally's Las Vegas

Have you had a dining experience Las Vegas? What was your favorite? Throw us a [comment on our website!](#)

Xin Xu is a post-graduate health-science AU student, aspiring clinician, globe-trotter, parrot-breeder and tea-connoisseur.



Scholarship of the Week

Digging up scholarship treasure for AU students.

Scholarship name: VelvetJobs Scholarship 2017

Sponsored by: VelvetJobs

Deadline: December 16, 2017

Potential payout: \$1000

Eligibility restriction: Applicants must be at least 18 years old, and currently enrolled or accepted and planning to be enrolled as a full-time student.

What's required: An e-mail with contact and school information, along with a minimum 500-word essay on your unique idea to boost and maintain employee morale in the workplace.

Tips: Read the instructions carefully for details and tips on essay structure.

Where to get info: www.velvetjobs.com/scholarship/velvetjobs-scholarship-2017



The Giller Prize, 2017

Deanna Roney



This will be coming out after the winner of the 2017 Scotia Giller Prize has been announced. For the record, I am hoping for *I am a Truck* by Michelle Winters. I am rooting for her for many reasons, including it being a wonderful read. But also because it stands for a lot—it is an unconventional book. Its length is shorter than most, even shorter than the prescribed acceptable novel length. It was published by a small independent publishing house (Invisible Publishing), and the plot takes twists and turns that are utterly unpredictable.

Will Winters win the prize? I really don't know. I confess I didn't read all the books that made the shortlist. I only read Winters and Rachel Cusk's *Transit*, which was also a wonderful read, as I am sure they all are. I wish I had been able to get through them all, but time and other responsibilities prevented it. While having read the books enhances the enjoyment of watching the presentation of the award, not having read them doesn't hinder, at least for me, the enjoyment.

I find it incredible that this literary award is being presented on live TV. I have always thought that it would be great if manuscript acquisitions were presented more like the NHL, NFL, or various other "L's", how exciting would that be? For everyone to be in the stands, all the hype that permeates the air? Instead, writers and agents alike sit anxiously in front of their computer waiting for an email. If it is a "yes" there is a lot of excitement, but it's celebrated in the confines and seclusion of a home (likely) and leaves everyone else a bit in the dark about the process. So, when they announce this award on CBC it will be the closest I can get to feeling the excitement and nerves of that moment for those writers. It will be a moment when they have achieved something great. And I get to, in a way, be a part of it.

In all honesty, watching this prize since plunging myself into the publishing world has made me realize a few things: one, I now kind of understand why my husband likes to watch sports drafts; two, there is so much going on behind the scenes that we just don't know; three, anyone can win if their writing is up to the standard. Before really sinking into this world the process behind literary prizes was a bit of a mystery to me. I still enjoyed watching them, reading them, and picking a winner, but I never understood the process behind the nominations, selections, or that many of these were debut authors like Winters, who had a box full of books at the end of her bed (according to one interview I read) wondering what she would do with them all.

The literary prizes are great for getting a writer's name out there. Before the longlist came out I hadn't heard of *I am a Truck* or Michelle Winters. I am so thankful that I have, because this book has inspired me to choose my own path and shown me that it is possible to do things your way, unconventionally. And tonight, I'll be tuning in to watch the presentation of this award.

Deanna is an AU graduate who loves adventure in life and literature. Follow her path on the writing journey at <https://deannaroney.wordpress.com/>





The Real Question

Regular readers of this column know I very seldom name names. I've always felt my immediate family is fair game but anyone else is off limits. This time that changes.

A bit of backstory. From Where I Sit first appeared in a local weekly newspaper in April 2002. A few months later when it became clear I was the only one holding up the handshake agreement, I withdrew. It also meant the column needed a new home.

I approached the editor of another area paper and a new relationship was born in January 2003. About the same time, an Andrew guy suggested I should submit my writing to the Athabasca University student publication, The Voice. Both of us were enrolled in university courses at the time. Four editors later, I continue to write for this weekly. In January 2014 the column began appearing in another local weekly.

Through it all, my MO has been the same. Write what I want and let it go. Other than one piece of hate (snail) mail in the early days, the to-my-face response has been pleasant, affirming, humbling. And surprising. Because I've already let it go, I'm always taken aback when people reference the content and say how much they enjoy it.

Incidentally, advice to writers is mixed. Some experts say write for yourself. And maybe that's why you often see recurring themes/issues/neuroses running through a lifetime of work. Other experts say write for your 'ideal reader.' That sounds a bit calculated, but makes sense when marketing a manuscript to a particular demographic or genre publisher.

Several months ago I got a heart-warming voice mail from Dennis Maschmeyer. During a longer, follow-up call I learned he loves my work and was especially touched by a particular column. He also praised my parenting. He shared that he's a widower and has chosen 'Live' as his *one perfect word*. He told me about a recent Alberta Health Services Digital Storytelling project he was involved in. He took copies of that column

to this tiny group of people and shared it with them.

In the spine-tingling, serendipitous way of the world, Karen Klak was also in that AHS patient advisory group. She met Hilary during the heartbreaking journey of her daughter's Haley health struggles and death. Hilary was working at the Stollery at the time and the family was grateful for her efforts to create some wonderful family memories for Haley. Karen and Hilary stay in occasional touch eight years later.

So, I wrote about something important to me that touched Dennis who then shared it with a few strangers, one of whom recognized my surname and made the connection to my daughter. A few group emails between Karen, Hilary, and I were full of gratitude for the small, small world we live in and how our lives have intersected.

The reality is that what we say, what we do, who we are, is always being noticed by someone. But are those words and actions making someone's life better or worse? That's the real question, from where I sit.

Hazel Anaka's first novel is *Lucky Dog*. Visit her [website](#) for more information or follow her on Twitter @anakawrites.



The Fit Student Beat the Holiday Blues

Marie Well



Are you spending Christmas alone? Well, you may spend the season alone, but not lonely and heartbroken, aching for a Christmas kitten. Instead, ward off weekend and holiday blues—with a plan.

But first, let's study the blues.

My elderly landlady felt stricken with loneliness. She huddled over her garden and trimmed her apple trees, but did little else outside of church. She could have gone to a gym or taken a class—even night classes: Computers for Seniors. Anything but cry alone, lonely. Crying, that is, until I'd tap on her door.

During holidays, she'd get a gift from me and a visit with her in-law. But one holiday, her in-law and I both let it slide. When I came home, I overheard sobs, tears shed the whole day. So, I rushed to buy a belated bouquet.

A work friend from Newfoundland feared holidays. She spent two weeks at Christmas cooped up alone. She called it the worst time of her life. And someone else told

me she spent Christmas alone. Not a call. Not a gift. Broke my heart.

I wonder what life would feel like alone—if Cuddles and Papa left my world. With a plan, I could commit to gym and take classes, go to church and tend to hobbies. Without a plan, I'd likely stay in bed, stricken, depressed. And the more I sleep, the sleepier and sicker I get.

As a teen, I romanticized life on my own. Surely, I'd saunter—proud—into restaurants, ordering meals for one. I'd go—confidently—to shows, sitting alone dead-center aisle. I'd live—blissfully—alone, chasing whatever dreams I fancied. Now, as an adult, I've changed my mind. Cuddles gives me more love, self-esteem, and belonging than the world did combined. Love trumps all.

Yet, one woman worsened when she found a boyfriend. Her smile and spark disappeared. She bottled-up, acted strange, wallowed in secretive shame, overblown. She seemed hog-tied, banned from chasing her dreams. In short, she met the blues.

Dr. David D. Burns helps you kick the blues in his book *Feeling Good*:

- Why fight feeling bad? Because “depression ... paralyzes your will power. ... Because you accomplish very little, you feel worse and worse” (p. 81).
- The worst thing you can do for the blues? “DO-NOTHINGNESS: lying around in bed all day long, staring at the ceiling and counting negative thoughts” (p. 83).
- To ward off sorrow, make a Daily Activity Schedule: “Write out an hour-by-hour plan for what you would like to accomplish each day ... At the end of the day ... record in each time slot what you actually did during the day” (p. 94).
- Make columns in your Daily Activity Schedule: “Label each activity with the letter M for mastery or the letter P for pleasure ... Estimate the actual amount of pleasure [or mastery] ... by using a zero to five rating” (p. 96).

- Schedule in more of the feel-goods: “You will see that some [activities] have given you a greater sense of mastery and pleasure, as indicated by higher scores Schedule more of those activities and avoid [the] others ...” (p. 97).
- Record even slack: “Even if it was just staring at the wall, write it down” (p. 96).
- So, schedule to combat sadness: “The Daily Activity Schedule can be especially helpful for a common syndrome ... [called] the ‘weekend / holiday blues.’ This is a pattern of depression most often reflected in people who are single and have their greatest emotional difficulties when alone” (p. 97).

As one motivational speaker says, schedule your dream days—live them out—but don’t neglect duties.

And if stricken with sadness, then trim apple trees, dine alone—or cuddle Christmas kittens. Whether lonely or hog-tied, get busy beating holiday blues.



Student Sizzle — AU's Hot Social Media Topics

Following What's Hot around AU's Social Media Sites.



AthaU Facebook Group

Nicole asks if it's possible to re-enrol in a class previously withdrawn from, and students reply with the answer (yes) as well as things to consider when doing so. Sabeen seeks and finds an APA manual, fortunately from a student in the same city.

Other posts include accessing e-texts before the course start date, running for AUSU council, and courses INST 301 and HIST 224.

Twitter

@AthabascaU tweets: "Please note this Sunday's #AthaU Banner Service Outage, which may impact your ability to retrieve or input some key services: <http://ow.ly/ysUI30gJdcy>."

@AthabascaUSU (AUSU) tweets: "Show your school spirit or pick out a great holiday gift! Shop online for @AthabascaU rings or pendants! <http://bit.ly/1SvytVg>."

@AthabascaUBiz tweets: "Fa-la-la-la-laa-la-la-laaaa! Too soon? Not to us! Join #AthaUBiz for some seasonal cheer! First stop is Toronto on Nov. 30 - we hope to see our students and alumni there. Details and registration: <https://goo.gl/DsBTJK> Oh, and did we mention, it's free :)"



Ten Minutes and Ten Pins

Dear Barb:

I have three young boys in public school. We live in a rural community in Ontario. Yesterday morning I received a phone call from the principal at my children's school because my son had arrived at school at 8:50 am rather than 9:00 am. Ten minutes! I was enraged! I have had several clashes with this principal, and at first I thought he had it out for me because I don't fit the conventional mold of a typical mom: I am a tattoo artist and understandably I have many tattoos. I don't have a problem with people looking at me, but I do have a problem with people judging me. But when I talked to other mothers I learned they also had received a call. I find this ridiculous. How are we supposed to be sure that our children arrive at school at exactly at 9:00 am? My sons are like all boys and dawdle on the way to school, so I send them a little early so they won't be late. Also, my kids play in the school yard when it is not school time, as I believe the school yard is considered public use area, as is a park, so why can't they be in the yard at 8:50. The school is not explaining why this is their policy. We are not sure what to do or who to speak to about this. Do you have any suggestions? Thanks, Melinda.

Hi Melinda:

Good question. This seems to be an overreaction, unless it's an insurance issue. I think the key to this whole dilemma is for you to find out more about this policy and who implemented it and what their justification is. Have you attempted to discuss this with the teacher, vice principal, or principal? If you have and nothing was resolved, then you may want to contact your school board and speak to a board official or the school superintendent. If you have still not been able to receive a satisfactory understanding or resolution, then you may want to contact the Ontario Ombudsman at 1-800-263-1830 or email at info@ombudsman.on.ca. The office of the Ombudsman is used as a last resort. As well you can [access their online complaint form](#). Good luck Melinda.

Dear Barb:

Hi! Every year around this time me and a couple of girlfriends take our children for a bowling day. Last week I put a post on Facebook about the date and time and tagged my other two girlfriends. Another friend noticed the post and replied that she will be joining us. No one really wants her to come, but we don't want to hurt her feelings either. What is the best way to handle this situation? Thanks Tamara.

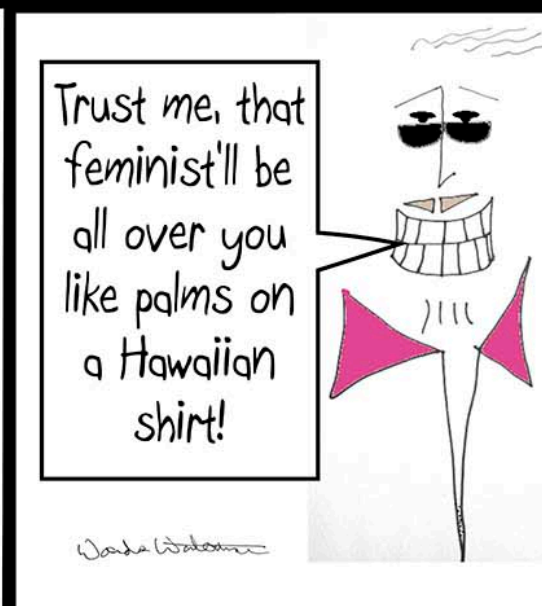
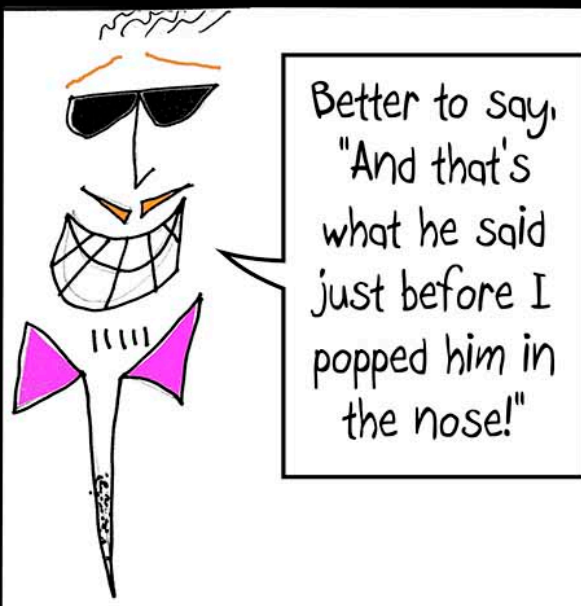
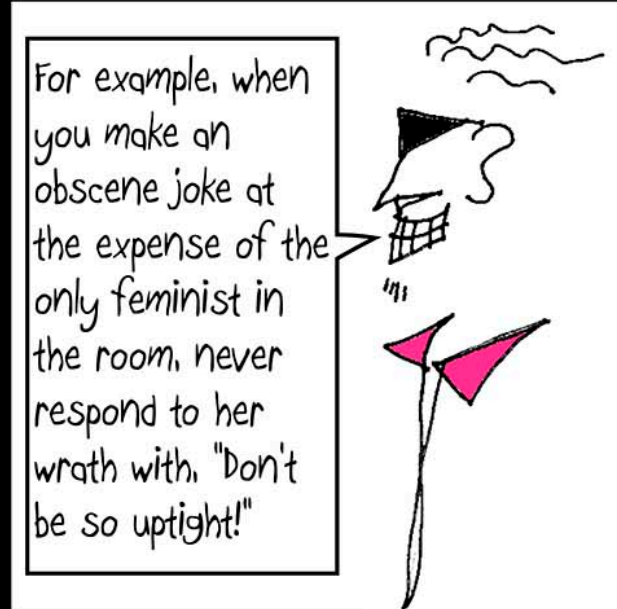
Hey Tamara:

There really is only one thing you can do. Be honest with your friend. Tell her this is a yearly event that you and these other friends do together with your children and that you hope she is not offended, and then leave it at that. Thanks Tamara, hope I was helpful.

Follow Barb on twitter @BarbGod

Email your questions to voice@voicemagazine.org. Some submissions may be edited for length or to protect confidentiality; your real name and location will never be printed. This column is for entertainment only. The author is not a professional counsellor and this column is not intended to take the place of professional advice.







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IMPORTANT DATES

- **Nov 28:** [Ottawa Student Meet & Greet](#)
- **Nov 30:** [Deadline to apply for course extension for Jan](#)
- **Dec 8:** [Deadline to register in a course starting Jan 1](#)
- **Dec 12:** [AUSU Council Meeting](#)
- **Dec 15:** [January degree requirements deadline](#)
- **Dec 22:** [Deadline to apply for course extension for Feb](#)
- **Dec 23-Jan 2:** AU & AUSU holiday closure, inclusive

Advocacy

One of AUSU's most important roles is to provide Advocacy for AU undergraduate students. AUSU advocates on behalf of all students at the provincial and national level, but we also provide advocacy at the University level, both on an individual basis and on behalf of all students.

If you are experiencing issues at AU that you would like assistance with, please feel free to contact us at admin@ausu.org and we will do our best to assist you!

In addition, AUSU council and executives sit on **over 30 different AU committees** to ensure the student voice is heard, including:

- Board of Governors
- General Faculties Council
- Faculty Council for each Faculty
- Student Experience Team
- Student Academic Appeals Committee
- Academic Excellence Awards Committee
- .. and many more!

AUSU executives also regularly meet with various AU VP's, including the President, Faculty Deans, and various other department heads.

Want to know more? Check out AUSU's advocacy efforts on our website [here](#)!



Bryon Paege Memorial Award

CUPE Local 3911 is currently accepting nominations for the 2017 **Bryon Paege Memorial Award** - worth \$850 this year.

The nomination deadline is 11 pm MT, November 26th.

What is CUPE Local 3911? It is the union for the tutors, markers, academic experts, and lab instructors employed by Athabasca University.

Any AU tutor, AU counselor or advisor, or AU student may make a nomination for this award. Self-nominations are also acceptable.

Nominees must:

- be currently enrolled in an AU course, or have successfully completed one within the six months prior to the nomination deadline;
- have, in the opinion of the nominator, demonstrated courage and/or resourcefulness worthy of commendation in the overcoming of, or currently coping with, some particular challenge or adversity in order to pursue distance education studies.

Find out how to apply or nominate [here](#).



CLASSIFIEDS

Classifieds are free for AU students!
Contact voice@voicemagazine.org for more information.

THE VOICE

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