



# THE VOICE

Vol 25 Issue 49 2017-12-15

## **AU: Closing the Gap**

Why AU?

## **HUSHED**

A quiet poem

## **Re-Finding Balance**

Hard Work May Not be Enough

Plus:

Dealing with Free Time

All the Music be Happenin' Now

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](mailto: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

### Dealing with Fee Time

Karl Low



AUSU has just announced their proposed fee increase. While this has been expected for some time, what we haven't known is the amount the fees were going up. The first reading of the policy that will increase the fees by \$1.50 per credit has been scheduled for the January 15, 2017. This is an increase of 50% of the current fee, meaning that the fees for a normal three credit course will increase from \$9 to \$13.50. This will be AUSU's first fee increase in almost ten years. Inflation over that same period would have brought the fees close to \$3.50/course, meaning the amount of actual increase (as opposed to just catch up) is about a dollar.

Even with this fee increase, AUSU will remain one of the lowest cost/credit Alberta student associations that exist. On the flip side, they also provide the among the fewest student services of Alberta student association, as they do not provide any lockers, or a building, restaurant, or bring in bands or other entertainment as many student associations do. But that also means, as we flip the coin once again, that they aren't able to charge money for any of those services, some of which serve to

earn the student associations offering them a tidy profit.

And if things aren't already confusing enough, then there's how recently AUSU was voicing concern about whether students outside of Alberta would have to accept a tuition increase. There are no plans for AUSU to only charge these fees to Alberta students, so in some ways this increase during the freeze of tuition and (suggested) freeze of university charged mandatory fees, works against their own messaging.

As a student newspaper, I feel like there is a certain pressure or expectation for me to come out against the fee increase, but, honestly, I'm not sure that I can this time. I'll admit, I'm a little surprised by the amount as, basing it on the current budget, a fee increase of this much would have AUSU bringing in an extra \$320,000 per year, with the organization currently operating on a deficit of about \$250,000 per year. That means they're planning to bring in an extra \$70,000 beyond their current budget. That's nearly a second *Voice Magazine*, but I somehow doubt I'll see my own wage or our rates to writers double any time soon.

That all said, that extra money will give future AUSU councils some expansion room if they have their eyes on some other projects, and will allow them to comfortably expand the number of students on AUSU Council (something that I think is very important to do now that the general student population no longer has the final word on bylaw or fee changes).

In the meantime, this week in *The Voice Magazine* our feature article is a look at what makes AU special. So if someone ever asks you, "Why are you going to a distance school?", you can just give them the link and walk away.

Also, one in a long while we get a poetry submission. Honestly, I rarely take poetry, it's just too subjective as to whether somebody likes it or not. But then someone pointed out to me that maybe it was my own subjectivity that's the problem; somebody else might really want to see some. So for all you poetry lovers out there, here's one for you. Enjoy the read!

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Karl'.



## AU: Closing the Gap

Barbara Lehtiniemi



I was asked to describe what it's like to go to AU. Like many students, I benefit from the uniqueness of AU and I was happy to share my passion for the AU experience.

If I could sum up AU in two words, those words would be "removes barriers". The absence of barriers is the essence of AU. Anyone can go to AU. There is no cumbersome application or approval process. Five minutes and a few clicks is all it takes for anybody, anywhere, to be enrolled in one course or a full program. Not only is it simple to enrol at AU, it is simple to attend.

Anyone with access to the internet can attend, no matter where they are physically located. AU opens up education to students living far from traditional universities, including those in rural and remote areas, and those whose circumstances require relocation.

AU removes more than just physical barriers. The flexibility of AU courses allows students to make their schooling fit around their life, not their life around their schooling. A student working full-time can go to AU without giving up paid employment. A single parent can go to AU without worrying about the expense and inconvenience of finding childcare. A soldier can go to AU without worrying about where they will be deployed next month. Students can further their education without fear of discrimination based on their colour, gender, orientation, faith, or disability.

AU is freedom. Studying at AU allows students to choose when and where they will study. An AU student can study on their lunch break at work, after the kids go to bed, or in the middle of the night when inspiration strikes. AU students can study in coffee shops, on airplanes, or at the beach. AU's flexibility allows students to go to their child's hockey practice, accompany their spouse to a conference, or undergo kidney dialysis—and still keep studying.

AU breaks the "one size fits all" barrier. AU students are complex and unique. One student may be rushing through to gather credits and a degree so they can qualify for that much-desired promotion at work. Another student might be taking one course at a time, extracting every bit of knowledge from each before moving on to the next. A third student could be taking four courses this year, and one the next, depending on what's going on in their life. There is no one way to be a successful student at AU—there are 40,000 ways.

AU facilitates learning. AU students are not hampered by a single way of looking at their studies. The middleman is eliminated—or at least much reduced—enabling each AU student to directly confront the material. AU students grow exponentially by devising their own approach to the material, engaging directly with course content, and forming their own ideas and opinions. By necessity, AU students also develop unparalleled discipline, focus, and determination. AU students experience multi-dimensional growth to an extent unimaginable elsewhere.

For me, the AU experience has been enriching. Although I miss the vibrancy of classroom instruction I believe I've learned much more in my campus of one. Because of AU, I've worked harder, pushed further, and grown in ways I couldn't imagine.

Distance learning through AU served to remove the barrier of distance between me and traditional institutions. AU's campus may be 3600 kilometres away but AU is removing barriers and closing the distance between me and my goals.

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



## Course Exam

### GLST 230/ POEC 230/ INTR 230

According to the syllabus, GLST 230 (Globalization and World Politics) “is a cross-listed course,” meaning that it is listed under three different disciplines, which include GLST 230, POEC 230, and INTR 230. This social science course “introduces students to some of the theoretical tools and practical issues of globalization as they attempt to situate themselves in an ever-changing world of politics.” This course is “designed for social-science and humanities students generally, and particularly those students interested in pursuing more advanced courses in global studies, international relations, development studies, and political economy.”

Globalization and World Politics consists of six units. Unit one “defines globalization and discusses the importance of perspectives.” Unit two explains the “traditional international relations theory and its critique: liberalism, realism, Marxism, and constructivism.” Unit three “explores critical perspectives in international relations, such as feminism, post-colonialism, and indigeneity.” Unit four discusses “globalization and governance, from traditional to critical perspectives.” Unit five explains “global political economy, introducing agents, patterns, and tools of analysis.” Lastly, unit six describes “some future trends in globalization and world politics, including cultures, civilizations, climate change, and civil society.”

GLST 230 is comprised of two assignments weighing thirty percent each and one online final exam weighing forty percent. Assignment one requires students to write an essay on understanding globalization and for the second assignment students have the choice between a critical review or a culture jam. To successfully complete this course, students must complete both assignments and the final exam, obtaining at least 50% on the final and an overall grade of 50% in the course when completed.

We interviewed Dr. Meenal Shrivastava, the course coordinator for GLST 230. Dr. Shrivastava joined Athabasca University in April of 2006 and coordinates the Political Economy program. She is also developing a Global Studies program for AU.

## Brittany Daigle

**Which programs need this course as a prerequisite? Or is it more of an elective course?**

Globalization and World Politics is a prerequisite for the Political Economy Major and the Global Studies Minor. The course is also an elective for the POLI Major and the POEC Minor.

**What kind of learning style is this course? Is it more open-ended, or are there prescribed exercises and assignments?**

The new revision of Globalization and World Politics uses a collection of journal articles, video documentaries, and some book chapters, connected in a comprehensive narrative in the study guide. The study guide uses the readings and the media to discuss the various dimensions and definitions of “globalization,” and to appreciate ways in which this concept and its processes are contested. The multimedia learning resources broaden the learning horizons and make the course more engaging. The course design allows for increased flexibility to include critical and cutting-edge topics and resources in the course content, broadening the student’s own perspective of the ‘global’ and their place in it. So, although there are prescribed exercises and assignments, there is also an element of an open-end approach in the course.

**What kind of assignments are involved in the course, and what are some strategies for students to tackle them?**

The assignments in the course encourage students to use concepts as tools, to read and watch with intent, and thereby learn to critically analyze real world trends, institutions, and perspectives. For instance, apart from a standard essay assignment, the course also has a critical-review assignment (of a book, movie, theatre production, art show, cultural event, or political activity) or to produce a ‘Culture-Jam’ (such as an image, video, or meme) to critically reflect on and innovatively address contemporary issues, and/or to challenge political assumptions and consumer culture. The assignments are practical and creative, and contain detailed instructions and structural guidance to help students. The best strategy to do well in these assignments is to read the course commentaries carefully along with the readings and the media, and consult with your tutor for clarifications and feedback as regularly as possible. Additionally, always use a standard citation style such as APA, MLA, or Chicago consistently and correctly, and always proofread your essay carefully before submitting it. Finally, have some creative fun along the way.

**What is the exam format like? Is it an especially tough exam?**

The invigilated online exam is divided into two parts. Part A contains short definitions of concepts and terms that recur frequently in the course commentary and readings. Part B contains longer

### **AU-thentic Events**

#### **Upcoming AU Related Events**

**Athabasca University**

Closed Saturday, December 23 to Monday, January 1, inclusive

Reopens Tuesday, January 2, 8:30 am MST

More info at:

[news.athabascau.ca/news/announcements/holiday-closures/](https://news.athabascau.ca/news/announcements/holiday-closures/)

**AU Library**

Last day to order materials: Monday, December 18

Closed Saturday, December 23, to Monday, January 1, inclusive

Reopens Tuesday, January 2, 8:30 am MST

More info at: [library.athabascau.ca/page/ann](https://library.athabascau.ca/page/announcement)

**AUSU**

Closed Saturday, December 23 to Monday, January 1, inclusive

Reopens Tuesday, January 2, 9:00 am MST

More info at: [www.ausu.org/event/office-closure-6/](https://www.ausu.org/event/office-closure-6/)

essays based on the main themes discussed within the course. There are plenty of choices in both parts of the exam. The exam is pitched at a second-year level and does not veer from the course materials. If you have worked diligently on your assignments, and followed the feedback of your tutor, the exam is not especially tough.

### What changes would you make in this course, if you could?

This course has recently been rewritten to cover contemporary issues in globalization by employing cutting-edge scholarship and tools of analysis. The older version was reliant on textbooks, which prove to be rather rigid in their treatment of the fast-changing area of globalization and world politics. The new version is thus based on contemporary journal articles, book chapters, and video documentaries, which makes it more engaging and current. The new version is open for registration as of Nov. 1, 2017.

Whether this course is a degree requirement of yours or the topics discussed above interest you, the new version of this course will have you engaged and immersed in interesting, relevant content. If you have any questions regarding the new revision of the course, Dr. Meenal Shrivastava encourages you to contact her at [meenals@athabascau.ca](mailto:meenals@athabascau.ca).

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



## Scholarship of the Week

### Digging up scholarship treasure for AU students.

**Scholarship name:** Scribendi Community Leadership Scholarship

**Sponsored by:** Scribendi Inc.

**Deadline:** December 31, 2017

**Potential payout:** \$1000 USD

**Eligibility restriction:** Applicants must be enrolled part-time or full-time at an accredited college or university.

**What's required:** An online application with personal and academic information, along with a 150-word essay on what you're doing to make a difference in your community.

**Tips:** Check out the [past scholarship winners](#) for inspiration.

**Where to get info:** [www.scribendi.com/scholarship](http://www.scribendi.com/scholarship)





## HUSHED

Tara Panrucker

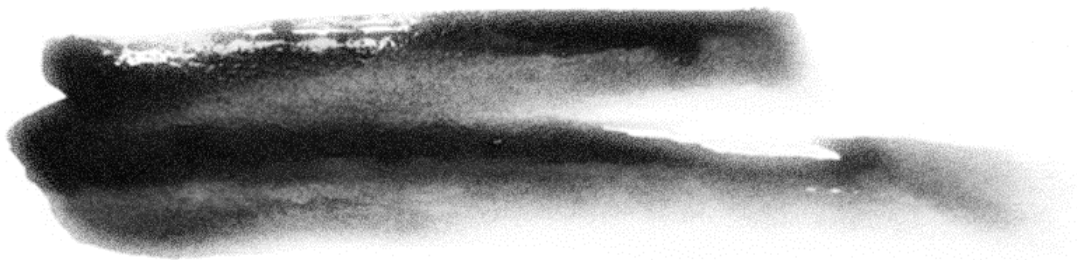
Sshhhhh  
draw the curtains closed  
unplug thoughts and plans  
slip softly, slow-ly  
deeply down  
into a silken silence  
enshrouded in night-time noiselessness

soul sealed in a velvet envelope  
captured in the present moment  
the chaos of life dissolves  
from Ambition! Action! Achievement!  
to a world condensed to taciturnity

luxurious lullaby  
of unspoken words  
lulled to serene dreamlessness  
and a darkness  
seamless and heedless  
of hidden agendas or  
ulterior motives

pacific hideaway of silent security  
no one can touch  
this place  
the soft, safe blankets  
are soundproof  
hushing to sweet decadent sleep.

this peace



## The Fit Student Nuzzling Noses

Marie Well



What if you spend months writing an A paper, but get an F? What if, instead, when you saw your grade, your eyes blinking tears, a dove gently perches on your shoulder, startling you, nuzzling soft feathers against your neck?

I used to crumble with criticisms. They crushed me, kept me small, snatched away my dreams of a math PhD. A week or two ago, one new Voice writer wrote about pain stemming from others' stomping her dreams. I sympathized—deeply.

So, encourage others—always. Weeks ago, I discovered that a barista wants to run a marathon. So, I cheer her on—every chance. I promised a gift, pointed out marathon apps, beg to hear about her gym routine. I relish in her win.

Not only do I celebrate baristas, I befriend bank reps. I phone banks for Christmas credit increases—and other fun stuff. Whenever I hear friendly voices, I pass on praise to supervisors. Even Timothy at dreadful Revenue

Canada—of all places—got kudos for his kindness.

But sometimes I slip. Sadly, we all do.

At my last visit to the optometrist, I bit my tongue. I stopped myself from complaining about an optometry assistant. She seemed off kilter, strange, unsure of herself. I feared her.

Months later, when I returned, the assistant told me her name: Katrina. So, I broke out singing “Walking on Sunshine” by Katrina and the Waves. As we laughed, she turned on Spotify, and “Walking on Sunshine,” to our surprise, played.

I saw it as a sign.

At the end of the session, Katrina shared that I had been her first patient at that clinic. *Oh, first day jitters!* If I had complained, I could have crushed her spirit—at least lingered as a bad memory. I vowed to withhold criticisms. Besides, Katrina tests eyes like a Kimble A-student.

The moral? Do less complaining, more cheerleading. Cheering on others fends off foes. I dreamed last night that FBI agents swarmed me, ready to pounce. I crumpled, cowered, on the ground. But a bunny hopped up and nuzzled my nose, followed by a kitten, and then a chipmunk. Now I was ready for the FBI, a grin widening on my face. We handle life's worst easily with nuzzles and smiles.

Glenn R. Schiraldi helps you build up yourself and others in his book *The Resilience Workbook*:

- Act in ways that bring you and others happiness: “What we regularly think and do accounts for 40 percent of our happiness.... We can actually program the brain for happiness...” (p. 98).
- So, how should you act?

- First, encourage others: “To waitresses ... say, ‘Thanks for your help.’ ... If service is especially good, tell the supervisor. This makes three people feel good: the appreciated worker, the supervisor, and yourself” (p. 103).
- Second, avoid criticizing yourself or others: “Difficult experiences, such as living with constant criticism, can change the way we view ourselves. Restoring ... self-esteem then is an important part of the healing process” (p. 107).
- Third, encourage yourself, build yourself up, heal yourself, with self-talk: “People with self-esteem talk to themselves differently than those who dislike themselves” (p. 114).
- Fourth, “learn to love unconditionally. If you did not learn how to do this from you parents, you can still learn to unconditionally love yourself” (p. 109).
- By doing all the above, you grow: “Growing ... is the process of ... elevating both self and others” (p. 109).

So, build up yourself and others. Why? For anything you say or do, one person can judge you favorably; the other, harshly—and both hold some truth. So, choose the bunnies, kittens, and chipmunks walking on sunshine, nuzzling a nose.



## All the Music be Happenin’ Now Into the Mystic

**Wanda Waterman**



Late in the summer of 2016 my husband and I were strolling past Station Parc in Montreal when we happened on an open-air performance by Indian songstress Kiran Ahluwalia. It was a welcome bit of serendipity.

Obviously formally trained in the Indian classical tradition, Ahluwalia's voice soared with beauty and pulsated with meaning. Her entire discipline seemed an effort to get herself out of the way so the music could have its say. Her husband, Rez Abbasi, played electric guitar in a style richly influenced by Tuareg music. There was also a brilliant *tabla* player and a thrilling, polyrhythmic accordionist.

Ahluwalia had managed to wed Indian music to North African desert blues. Both desert blues and Indian classical music point to the root of music's mystery, so mixing them was an idea whose time had come. I later found out that she called her music, quite appropriately, "Indo-Saharan." The blend was seamless.

Ahluwalia sang in Urdu, introducing each song with a brief synopsis of its translation. One song was about that evil inner voice that keeps trying to sabotage your growth, and another was about necessity being the mother of enlightenment.

It was clear that this woman had a finely honed spiritual consciousness. And so when I interviewed her by phone a week later I wasn't surprised to learn she was Sikh. I was, however, a bit surprised to find that she wasn't all that religious.

"I find peace when I go to the Sikh temple," she admitted, but— "I have a love-hate relationship with God, a maybe-you-exist, maybe-you-don't kind of a relationship. I believe that we're connected. We can't ignore something horrible that's happening to a group of people without having it come back to affect us negatively."

### **A Secular Holiness**

I shouldn't have been so baffled by the contrast between the intense spirituality of her music and the relative agnosticism she espoused. My own on-again, off-again religious life, prompted by spiritual epiphanies and inevitably doused by encounters with religion in action, had occasionally lead me to consider a concept I'd called "secular holiness," that is, a life infused with spiritual meaning, perhaps even full of religious ritual, yet whose allegiance extended beyond religion, surrendering itself to the source of all life.

In this context musical expression makes perfect sense; although it can be done explicitly in the name of a religion or ideology, the music's message transcends all that.

Even music created to promote a particular sacred path or set of ideas can appeal to those who don't share those beliefs—atheists who love sacred music, for example, or racists who enjoy listening to civil rights anthems. Music lends itself to sacred practice without necessarily being religious, so for spiritual beings who reject religion, music can be the perfect means of expressing the sacredness they feel.

### **Translating the soul**

In the hundreds of interviews I've done with musical people I've seen music functioning in their lives as a means of channelling ancestral voices (Ben Jaffe), of experiencing healing (Sam Baker), of coming to terms with horrific events (Jake Smith), of expressing profound ideas (KyAzMa), of simply wanting to participate in an art form they adored (Dinuk Wijeratne), of bringing together a hodgepodge of disparate elements (Rashid Taha), or of simply revelling in the glory of roots sounds (Conrad Praetzel). But not one of my interview subjects seemed to have considered what it was about music that gave it the power to so effectively grant us what we ask of it.

The exception was Kurdish oud-player Mallabozan, who got closer than anyone to really explaining music to me:

"Music is just translating the soul's feeling to notes. So I ask myself, *How great is this soul to have such beauty?*

As for it being a translation, we know translation is not always correct and it's much better to hear in your mother tongue. Imagine if we could feel each other and discover each other's souls' beauty directly; in that case we wouldn't need a translator between us. We would understand the soul language.

Music is just the nearest sound of the soul; we're using music as a vehicle, but if there were even one person who could understand our soul language, we wouldn't need music."

-Mustapha Mallabozan, 2017, in an email to Wanda Waterman

Wanda also writes the blog *The Mindful Bard: [The Care and Feeding of the Creative Self](#)*.





## Don't Worry, Try Relaxing

**Tara Panrucker**



The work week seemed like it was never going to end. Walking in the door at home, your heart sinks because the dishwasher, which you had turned on before you left in the morning, decided to flood all over the kitchen floor. Not one person (other than your mom) liked your last post on Facebook. The cat sounds like it might be coming down with some kind of intestinal issue. What's more, you have a major assignment due by the end of the week that you are clear as mud on. What in the world is a stressed university student trembling on the edge to do?

Due to decades of anxiety and low self-esteem, I have been moved to develop a long list of coping skills that don't involve screaming at my spouse or running to the nearest pharmacy. Close friends have praised me for teaching them the art of Zen (okay, the importance of napping and massage). Prone to panic attacks and blindingly overwhelmed whenever my work load went into overload, I had no choice but to create effective relaxation techniques. It was either that or surrender to misery and gloom, and that's no fun for anyone. I am also a firm believer in sharing the knowledge I have gleaned with others who have forgotten the importance of soul salvation whilst glued to their electronic devices. The truth is difficult times test our mettle; pushing through them with healthy survival strategies develops confidence and a sense of humour. But first, phone a plumber before the flood spreads out from the kitchen and read on.

Detaching from electronics and reacquainting ourselves with all five senses is the ideal way to prepare for rest. Achieving a state of bliss requires preparation, but need not cost an arm and a leg (remember the goal is inner peace, not maxed out credit cards—unless you find bills you can't afford to pay relaxing). Essentials begin with soothing music playing softly in the background, preferably with the sweet sounds of nature that bring back happy memories of last summer's carefree camping trips. Tuck away your electronic device that is playing the music so as not to be tempted to tap on all those other icons. Exotic scented candles, essential oils or incense wafting in your atmosphere have also been known to transform a state of deep despair into a state of calm (Eau de Flooded Kitchen Floor does not). Remember to stock up on sea salt and bath bombs to warm and relax angry, tense muscles in the tub. Feel like crying? Let the tears flow. Pent up emotions only result in yelling at some poor sucker who will look on at you in horror at the evil creature you have become. Bad karma! Moreover, crying has been scientifically proven to release chemicals from the body that can otherwise cause disease—Google it later.

Presence in the moment is integral to a blue state of mind, something Buddhists refer to when in the meditative state. Listening to what your body is telling you (please let me sleep), and believing you need relaxation is the first step to taking action toward achieving your goal. Drop into a local yoga class or download a meditation video on YouTube. Tune in to the comedy channel or watch

funny movies. The characters should remind you we're all imperfect and to lighten up. Choose movies that make you laugh out loud and do not induce nightmares or deep thoughts that will keep you thinking long into the night. Additionally, you can bring meditation into any activity you enjoy and forget about the time, whether cooking, floating in the tub, or tinkering on your car. Focusing on the here and now works wonders on a frazzled brain.

Do whatever works for you to keep the blood pressure down. Lifting gargantuan weights, jogging near traffic, or joining a kick boxing class are not relaxation techniques, and, in my mind, akin to torture. Think gentle, soothing, low key, peaceful. The aim is to rejuvenate and restore your state of mind to a place where you can focus and think clearly again to deal with the stresses that inevitably pop up in day to day life. Soft sounds, fresh water to drink, low lighting, pleasant scents, and no distractions for your mind (squirrel!) are the ingredients of a tranquil atmosphere.

Now that you are on your way to emanating serenity and positive thoughts, think of one good deed and take action. Call your Mom and Dad. Take kitty to the vet before it develops into something serious. Brew your roommate a nice strong latte because they deserve a break too. Now dive into that assignment with the cool confidence of the superstar student you know you are. Keep that chill Christmas spirit all through the year ahead.

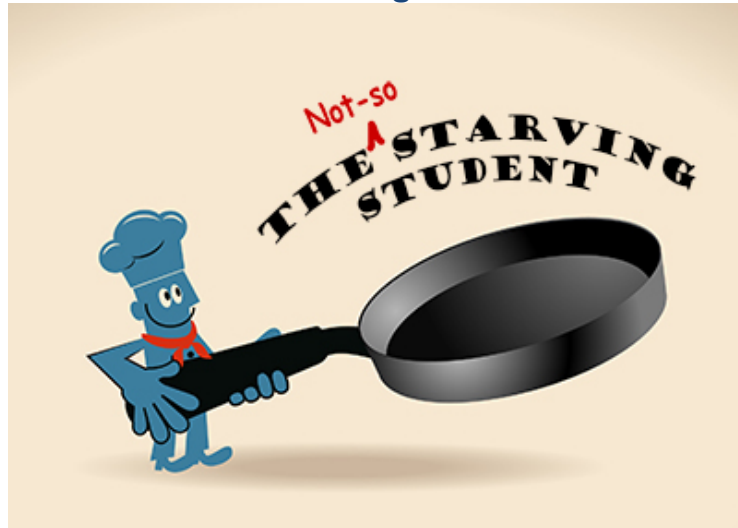
*Tara Panrucker is currently enrolled in an AU online English course to help hone her writing skills and eventually achieve a General Arts Degree. She is a freelance writer and avid enjoyer of the outdoors, currently residing on Vancouver Island.*



## The Not-So Starving Student

### Food Secrets to Surviving Final Exam Season

Xin Xu



The holidays are just around the corner, but before we get there some AU students might be wrapping up their fall semesters with a round of old-fashioned finals. This week we're here to help you take care of yourself and power through the last stretch with delicious and nutritious superfoods. The brain will need the extra fuel to ace those finals! Alternatively, if you have a friend or family member about to enter focused-examination mode, surprise them by adding these nutritious ingredients into their meals.

#### Grains:

**Beans:** small but mighty, beans provide some of the most complex starches you can find in a plant. Paired with valuable proteins that offer sustained energy for those long hours spent at the library. While stress is shown to lower your immune system and allowing your body to succumb to the flu, a diet rich in beans can protect you against various diseases (Messina, 2014). Dried, canned and frozen forms can be a great addition to your meal prep during this busy time!





### Protein

**Eggs:** In a previous issue of the magazine, I covered five different ways to consume this versatile protein option. Whether it's before a final exam or competing in the local run for the cure, I start my days off with simple scrambled or boiled eggs. My personal tip to students who have less than five minutes to consume their breakfast (myself included) or need the breakfast on the go, prepare some hard boiled eggs the weekend prior to the start of a new week. That way you can peel and bring your breakfast with you whenever and wherever.

### Dairy:

**Cheese:** When you're in the library cramming or staying up late, the last thing on your mind is eating healthy. In fact, your priority might be to have a satisfying order of poutine or chow mein, either of which helps your body to physically fight the mental battle. To make thing easier on your brain. While we've added cheese to the list as a simple, on-the-go form of dairy product, any dairy product was shown to have a boost in short term memory which could go a long way during your studying (Ogata et al., 2016).



### Fruits & Veggies:

**Frozen fruits and veggies:** the theme to this week's issue is fast, simple nutrients on the go. While you might not be restocking your fridge during this busy season, an accessible form of vegetable or fruits is a must! Frozen fruits and veggies are my personal favorite as I power through the day with a yogurt parfait or take two minutes to create a fruit smoothie.

**Bonus:** To make the most of your nutritious meals, pair them up with light workouts for only 7 minutes a day. Recently I discovered a fantastic AU student must-have app in the app store called 7 minute workout. I am not endorsing or financially affiliated with the app in any way, but found it useful while powering through stressful bout of finals. While this column isn't geared towards physical exercise, we know that exercising and grubbing come hand in hand. Make sure to nourish your body and your mind! Stay super!

Messina, V. (2014). Nutritional and health benefits of dried beans. *The American journal of clinical nutrition*, 100(Supplement 1), 437S-442S.

Ogata, S., Tanaka, H., Omura, K., Honda, C., Hayakawa, K., & Osaka Twin Research Group. (2016). Association between intake of dairy products and short-term memory with and without adjustment for genetic and family environmental factors: A twin study. *Clinical Nutrition*, 35(2), 507-513.

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

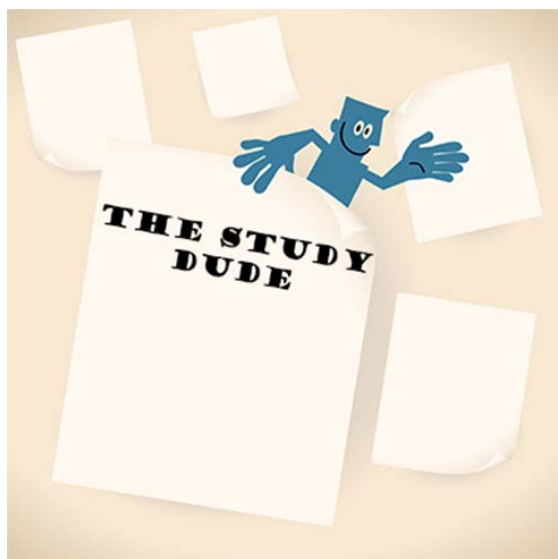




## The Study Dude

### The Toothless Grin of Critical Thinkers

Marie Well



Are universities puppets for the powerful and wealthy? Well, ask yourself, *Who funds the theory?* And *Who says what counts as critical thinking?*

Today's universities seem more political, less practical, even less economical than ever before. I saw an AU business thesis, not on economic matters, not on shareholder dividends, but on postcolonial feminism in management. Doesn't that belong in the soft sciences—like sociology? Or better yet, in Venezuela?

It seems Harvard, once the king of Ivy Leagues, has toppled into the pits of soft science. Where will this line of teaching head over the next ten years? I don't think toward free markets, freedom of speech, freedom of religion—or simply freedom.

Have Universities dumbed down curriculum to Marxism and its offshoots? The book I cite below (by Klassen and Dwyer) touts Marxism as a theory of choice. But haven't we figured out better theory since 1848? With that in mind, departments should list key theoretical models on their websites. That way, we can flee to trade school at the starting line.

But you might argue that Marxism hallmarks critical thinking. I've learned that critical thinking hinges on agendas—with funders given the biggest sway. George Soros, for instance, who is inspired by Karl Popper's work on open societies and is, in my view, pushing mass migration, recently had meetings with Justin Trudeau, and has put 18 billion into his Open Society Foundations. So how much of Soros's coffers have clunked into Canadian classrooms, and what does that mean?"?

But, what trumps both theory and critical thinking? In my mind, problem solving.

Thomas R. Klassen and John A. Dwyer list steps to problem solving in their book *How to Succeed at University (And Get a Great Job!): Mastering the Critical skills You Need for School, Work, and Life*.

- On one hand, theory and practicality don't dance in time together. So, many students fail to mingle between theory and the real world.
- On the other hand, complex problem-solving tackles real world concerns.
- But when you problem solve, don't jump to solutions. We often wing solutions, pulling them out of the dark, without fully sifting through the issue.
- And don't rush to the first solution. Don't cling to what strikes as right either. Explore, let unfold, reassess.
- First step to problem-solving? Identify the issue, clearly, measurably, and truthfully.
- Second step? Brainstorm. List all potential causes, no holding back. Lay them out with fishbone diagrams or mind maps.
- Third step? Identify solutions. Tear them apart. But know that even so-called impossible solutions can turn out winners.
- Fourth step? Pick the optimal solution. Apply a point system to measure the value of each solution.



- Fifth step? Apply the solution through planning, scheduling, and action. Have a contingency plan in case things go wrong.
- Sixth step? Measure success with milestones. Collect data to measure whether solution succeeded.
- Seventh step? Ensure the problem doesn't recur. Stay on guard.

To universities' credit, hard sciences lead to practical outcomes—consider engineering, computer science, and economics. And education and medicine stand most practical—teachers and doctors don't disappear from demand.

But the day dentists focus on post-colonial feminism, I'm donning the toothless grin.



### Vintage Voice

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

This week, two different Christmas shopping strategies from *Voices* past.

**Getting her jingle on.** Student Rebecca Brewer learns that December exams and Christmas shopping are not all that compatible. "Malls are mean and nasty places in December. 'Tis the season for stealing parking spots and being a big hurry." Christmas Clichés, November 18, 2005.

**If last-minute shopping is a disease, I don't want to be cured.** Christina M. Frey tried to cure herself of her perennial last-minute shopping habit, but then discovers she enjoys it too much. "I suddenly realized that last-minute shopping had become a Christmas tradition for me, as familiar and necessary to that Christmas feeling as lighting the Advent wreath, hearing carols on the radio, decorating the tree, or eating tourtière..." 'Tis the Season to be Shopping, December 21, 2007.

## Student Sizzle — AU's Hot Social Media Topics

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

#### AthaU Facebook Group

Shawna follows up on an old thread about ProctorU: AU students can now take washroom breaks during ProctorU-supervised exams. Whew! Ricky is looking for who to contact at AU to discuss transfer credits and help plan his Bachelor of Management program; suggestions include the Faculty of Business. Leslie wonders if she can do a double major with a commerce degree, and she follows up later with the answer she got from the Faculty of Biz.

Other posts include easy electives, Spanish, and AU student e-mails.

#### Twitter

@AthabascaU tweets: "We had a chance to chat with #AthaU's new Writer in Residence, @richardvancamp, about his new role, the energy he'll be bringing and how he plans to help students: <http://ow.ly/SbRq30h6uwo>."

@AU\_Press tweets: "Forthcoming in spring 2018: "Writing the Body in Motion" edited by @angie\_abdou and Jamie Dopp. <http://ow.ly/nfbN30h53Ur> cc: @UVicEnglish @AthabascaU."



## Re-Finding Balance

Deanna Roney



Finding that balance point between studies, work, and life is challenging, but important to prevent burning out. I tend to want to get things done now. I feel like I should always be working on something or toward something. What is pleasure reading when there is reading for work or school to be done? In terms of a “bookish” life, it is important to read for pleasure to keep on top of what is happening in publishing: what is selling, what is a big seller, and seeing what works in writing style (or what doesn’t). There are so many things you can learn from reading, even more so when your desired profession is in publishing. But it can be hard to carve that time out in a day, or week, when there are other things that I could be working on. Why read this book when I have a manuscript sitting there I could get through instead?

It can be hard to keep everything in perspective. Even beyond reading, it is okay—important—to take some days off just to do nothing, to get out into the bush, or to bake some cookies and turn your mind off everything else. I have been working steadily on my internship and enjoying every moment of it; I have my course start date looming and I am excited to get started on it and trying to prepare for it, but

this Sunday I took the day off. I finished up a manuscript I was reading on Saturday, I scheduled out my next week and I put everything away. On Sunday I had some coffee and baked cookies. It was relaxing. And I have wondered if it isn’t something I should try to carve out every Sunday: to just take that day off and do something completely unrelated, be it baking or getting out into the bush.

Finding balance is hard, especially when you are completing your studies, or work, from home. Because there is always something else you could be doing. School is a little different as, even at a bricks and mortar school, there is always something you could be doing, but having it laid out the way it is creates some structure and you can find your time away within it. Whereas with the self-paced (or self-employed) it can be hard to turn that side off.

A person can only push so hard before they are either no longer productive or just barely pushing through. I feel myself already getting excited to start my course, my foot twitching over the clutch waiting to jump off that start line, and I am practicing now, telling myself to take it easy. To include in my plan a scheduled catch up day for those days that just don’t go my way, because otherwise I will go full speed ahead with everything I have going on and I know it is a pace that will not be sustainable.

I have always found that the holidays were the perfect reset. Schedules take a backseat to functions and everything slows down a bit. Then, when January hits everyone is feeling ready to get back on track to fall into a routine and refocus. So, I am going to take this holiday season to work on some scheduling to determine a pace that is going to be sustainable come the new year, and I’ll attack everything with a calculated pace rather than running full speed ahead with only the plan of completion in my sights.

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





Dear  
Barb

Barbara Godin

## The Christmas Hat

*Dear Barb:*

*It's two weeks before Christmas and we still haven't decided who is hosting Christmas dinner. I come from a family of five girls. We all have partners and a couple of us have young kids. My parents are getting older and my mom has developed health issues so she is not able to prepare a big dinner. My sisters don't really want to do the dinner, and I'm a little hesitant, since I've never prepared a dinner for so many people. We would like to hold the dinner at my parent's home because they have the most room, but I think that might be too much for my mom because she will want to help. I really need some suggestions on how to manage what will become a new tradition in our family.*

*Thanks so much, Amanda.*

Hey Amanda:

Eventually this responsibility falls to all of us. Our parents get older or move to smaller places and the kids have to take over. I can understand your hesitancy, as it is a big responsibility and can be quite expensive. Fortunately, since you have a big family, you can all share in the work and the expense. Have you talked to your parents about how they feel about having the dinner at their home, with you and your siblings doing all the work? If you feel it will be too much for your mother and she will find it difficult

to sit back and allow the rest of you to do the work, then I wouldn't plan to have dinner there. My favorite, and the fairest way, to choose who will host dinner is to put each family's name into a hat/bag and choose one. That person will be responsible for preparing the turkey and stuffing and hosting the dinner at their home. There is a lot of information on the internet about how to prepare a turkey and stuffing. As well I'm sure your mom will gladly share her recipes with you girls. The other issue is who will prepare the side dishes and desserts. From the four names that are left choose two side dishes, a salad and dessert. Each person brings their choice, whether their dish is homemade or store bought, it is up to them. This way the work is distributed among everyone. Undoubtedly the person who has to prepare the turkey and stuffing will have the most expensive part, but the other four of you could contribute to the cost of the turkey. It will be fun and you never know what dishes you will end up with. Give it a try this year and see how it works out.

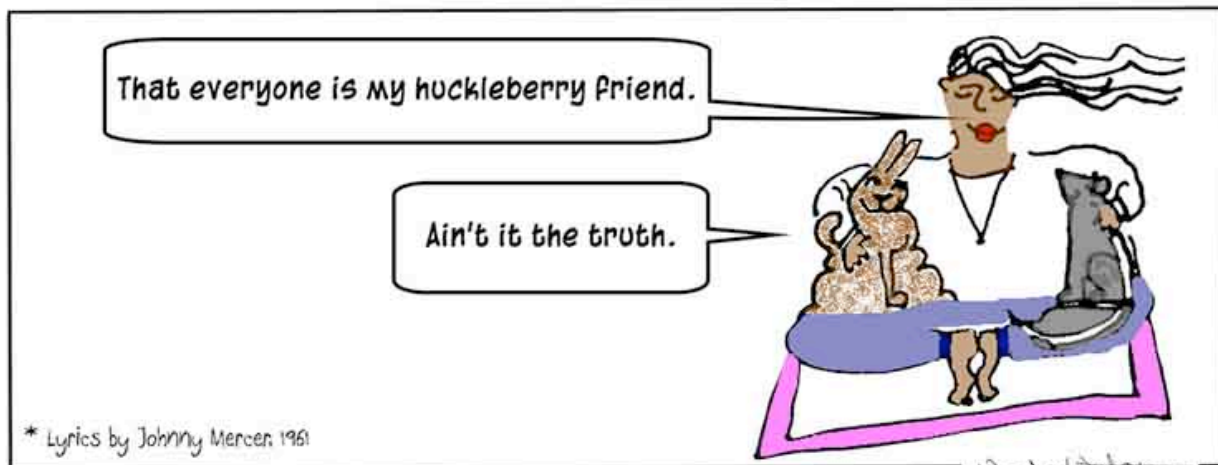
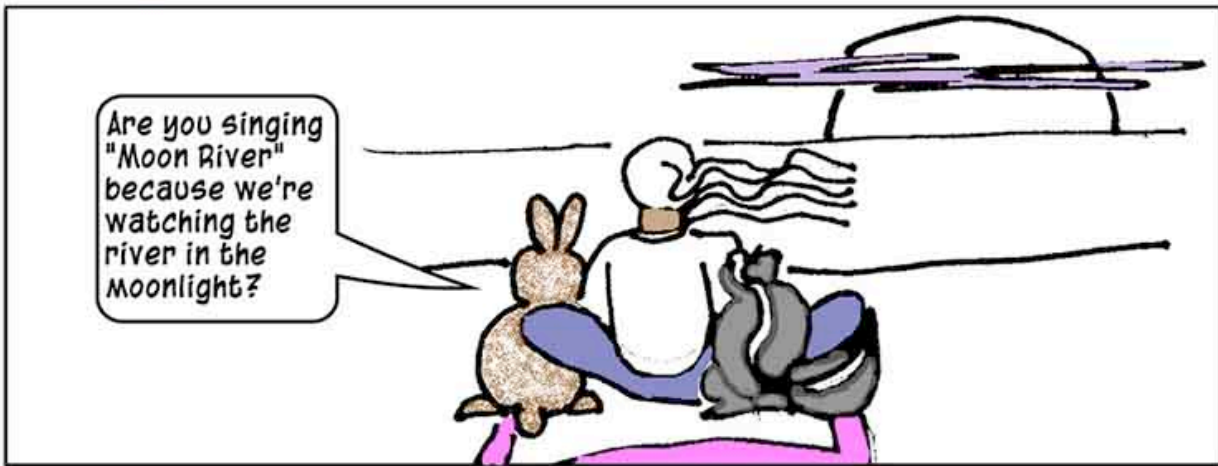
Thanks for your letter and Merry Christmas to your family.

Follow Barb on twitter @BarbGod

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\* Lyrics by Johnny Mercer 1961



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## IMPORTANT DATES

- **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
- **Jan 10:** [Deadline to register in a course starting Feb 1](#)
- **Jan 15:** [February degree requirements deadline](#)
- **Jan 15:** [AUSU Council Meeting](#)
- **Jan 21:** [Deadline to apply for course extension for Mar](#)

## Now Hiring CRO

AUSU is now accepting applications to fill the role of Chief Returning Officer (CRO) for our upcoming 2018 General Election.

**Application Deadline: Monday, January 1, 2018**

The CRO, working with AUSU staff, is responsible for monitoring all aspects of the election process.

The CRO duties will span from January 26, 2018 to approximately March 15, 2018. In the event of an appeal, the position may extend 1-2 weeks longer to conduct the appeal. The anticipated time commitment is approximately 35 – 55 hours within the 7- to 9- week period.

The CRO position can be performed from any location, but requires telephone, email, and internet capability. The CRO must be available to respond to inquiries within 1 business day. Proficiency in Word and Excel is required.

The successful candidate will receive a \$1000 honorarium on completion of the role.

**Visit our website [here](#) to find out more about the role, including instructions to apply.**



## Holiday Help from Lynda.com

Got holiday challenges? Lynda.com can help with these great playlists!

### [Holiday Dinners with the Family Playlist:](#)

Features Managing Conflict, Conflict Resolution Foundations, Improving Your Conflict Confidence

### [Meeting New Relatives Playlist:](#)

Featured Interpersonal Communication, Communication, Communicating with Empathy, Communicating in Times of Change, Delivering Bad News Effectively, Communicating with Confidence, Communication Tips Weekly, Communicating Across Cultures

### [Visiting Multiple Homes in One Day Playlist](#)

Features 5 Ways to Control Your Time, Teamwork Foundations, Time Management Tips Weekly, Time Management Fundamentals, Efficient Time Management, Managing Your Time, Managing Your Calendar for Peak Productivity, Coaching for Results

### [Managing your Holiday Shopping Playlist:](#)

Features Project Management for Creative Projects, Project Management Foundations, Project Management Simplified, Insights from a Project Manager

**Access your **FREE** lynda.com subscription courtesy of AUSU online [here](#).**



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Contact [voice@voicemagazine.org](mailto:voice@voicemagazine.org) for more information.

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## THE VOICE

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