

THE VOICE

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Meeting the Minds

Dr. Hugh Notman

Unwrapping A Fresh New Year

What's inside?

Interview Ready

Nail that Job Interview

Plus:

Letter to the Editor
Council Connection
and much more!



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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



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Karl,
Can the Voice help gauge the importance to AU's broad student body of having reliable and accurate information about the dates and timing of the annual convocation ceremonies at an early date? Would knowing with certainty by the beginning of the calendar year make a difference in whether an out-of-province student will decide to attend their own graduation? These are not idle questions. They can impact on AU's public image and the economic benefit to the community.

The diversity and geographic dispersion of AU's student body are without parallel among Canadian universities. It means that many of those who are scheduled to graduate from AU - unlike those who reside in Alberta and can easily drive from their homes to Athabasca - must make plans for long-distance travel from elsewhere in Canada or abroad, and reserve necessary accommodation if they want to attend the convocation ceremonies. In short, the cost burden for out-of-province students is much greater than for Alberta residents. Moreover, given the wide fluctuations in travel prices depending on when bookings are made, the difference between being able to do so months in advance instead of later can be substantial.

With cost and other considerations in mind, I recently contacted AU to confirm the dates of the 2018 convocation ceremonies prior to finalizing arrangements for multi-destination travel that would include a side trip to Athabasca to attend my wife's graduation. The response was not fruitful, and appeared dismissive.

While AU Faculty members are probably cognisant of the unique situation of their student body, those in administration may be handicapped by the absence of appropriate cognitive models and conceptual lexicon for distance education institutions. Traditionally, a "student" has been a young person, usually in full-time physical attendance at a brick and mortar institution, and in an "in loco parentis" relationship. AU is breaking new ground. It students typically "attend" virtually via electronic communication, are older, and have other primary responsibilities in addition to their university studies. In short, many are adults with responsibilities equivalent to if not surpassing those of many AU admin personnel.

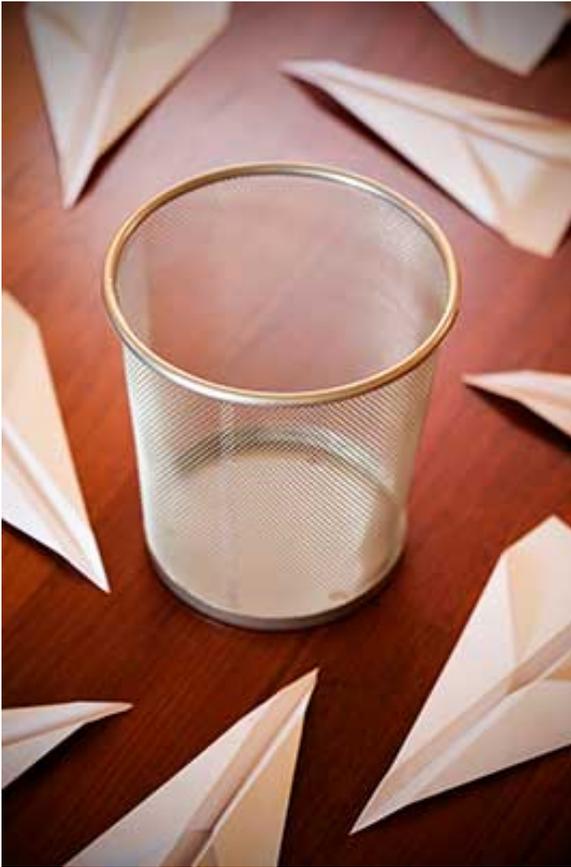
Slowness in deciding and announcing the dates of convocation serves to discourage attendance at that memorable event by AU's very broad spectrum of students, diminishing the university's ability to publicly showcase to best advantage what it has to offer as a leader in distance, post-secondary university education. The convocation decision-makers may wish to contemplate those broader considerations when deciding their priorities and timing.

Leo L.

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 Convocation Consternation

Karl Low



Did you know that AU is changing how they do convocation? I didn't, not until the letter I received earlier this week showed up in my inbox. (See this week's [letter to the editor](#), or just look up a page if you're reading the PDF.)

For those unaware, convocation at AU has, over the last several years, taken place over three days on an early weekend in June. If you're keeping track, that's less than five months away. While most universities have little issue with this, as their students are already on campus, AU is different. Attending convocation is a big deal, and not just for what happens while you're there.

For almost every student, it involves a trip. It might be just a couple hours road-trip if you live in Edmonton, or perhaps a day trip if you live in Calgary. But many, the majority even, of AU students live outside of Alberta's borders, so a trip to convocation becomes a much more major event. Something typically involving air-fare.

Which is why, it came as a surprise to learn that AU President, Neil Fassina, declared in the Board of Governors meeting of December 15th, and the later General Faculty's Council meeting of December 18th,

that Convocation was going to be held over two days, not three, and that there would be a rental fee charged for the academic regalia which students wear to cross the stage.

The reasoning for this change no doubt stems from Advanced Education Minister Marlin Schmidt's directive to universities to find places to cut expenses. As usual, one of the first places that AU looks to to cut expenses is in the (already meager) non-academic services it provides to students. After all, we're not on campus, we're not visible to them in their day to day operations, and our vastly different schedules and places (both in life and in location) makes it difficult to organize any sort of display of mass concern. So it can be extremely easy for people at AU to come to view students as nothing more than line items in a budget. An income source and an expense column. They mouth the words of student importance, but how often have you heard of the university management or the Board of Governors perks being reduced?

In specific, charging a fee for regalia seems a bit petty, considering that students already pay a two dollar "alumni relations fee" with every course. Many years ago, when I was on AUSU Council, I was told that this fee primarily went to defray the costs of convocation each year. Whether this is still the case, I'm not sure, as I've reached out to AU for confirmation, but, by the time of publication, have not yet heard back.

However, the practice isn't unheard of at convocation ceremonies. Such a fee is also charged at the University of Alberta, for instance. But it also isn't a standard, either, as the University of Calgary notes that students will be charged a fee if the graduation clothing is not returned, and does not give any other indications about any kind of rental fee.

More concerning, however, is the possible change in dates. As pointed out above, for many students, going to convocation isn't just something you decide to do with the day. For some, it may be something that brings them from the other side of the world. Anybody with experience in booking flights knows that prices can jump, sometimes dramatically, for a flight with every week that a booking is delayed. If you combine this with what may be a once in a lifetime opportunity to visit another country or even continent, the ability to schedule well in advance is crucial, as that can dictate connecting flights, hotel availability, tour dates, and so-on throughout the entire trip.

Yet, when AUSU President Shawna Wasylyshyn contacted the university about these difficulties (as well as the charges for regalia) she was told that nothing was set in stone and refinements were still possible. I find that almost as concerning as the changes. We are now less than six months away from convocation, less than the length of an AU course, and such basic details of the ceremony are not yet locked down? How does the university expect students, who may live half a world away, to plan to attend? Every additional week of delay means that many students lose the opportunity to attend at all, as seat sales disappear and prices to fly rise.

Of course, AU is unlikely to hear about any of these problems, because the people who wait until everything is finalized before deciding if they want to go are unlikely to think of how their decision might have been different if they could have found a flight for a few hundred dollars cheaper, or could have booked into a tour that's now filled. They're unlikely to think to themselves, if only AU had finalized the plans a few months earlier and I could have taken advantage of that seat sale, because they weren't even looking when the sale was on.

But maybe the answer is that they're just not too concerned about that. After all, from the AU book-keepers' point of view, convocation is a cost with almost no upside. When all you're looking at is the bottom line, for AU, the fewer people that attend convocation, the better it is for them when they report to the government on how much they've managed to save.

Meanwhile, this week in *The Voice Magazine*, our feature article brings back the Meeting The Minds column, as Scott Jacobsen interviews Dr. Hugh Notman, the Associate Dean of Learning Technologies, from AU's Anthropology Department.

We also have a Council Connection, where this week, Carla Knipe reports on Council's debate about the proposed AUSU fee increase. The conclusions were not unanimous, and the resolution passed with two councillors opposed. A consultation meeting was then held last Wednesday but no students took advantage. However, AUSU is still accepting comments on the matter both in their forums and at their regular council meetings during the Q&A session at the end of a meeting.

Also this week, I was informed that a student (who wanted to keep their name private) won one of the scholarships we advertise each week in our Scholarship of the Week column. So congratulations to that student, and now the rest of you know it's possible. So check out what scholarship we found this week, and if you ever happen to get one, please tell me, I'd love to hear about it!

Plus the rest of the magazine is full of other goodness, whether it's student looks at just what a new year can mean, to advice on how to nail that interview for the job you've always wanted, to our regular helpings of advice, information, humour, food ideas, events or just things to help give you a break from your studying.

Enjoy the read!



MEETING THE MINDS

INTERVIEWS with AU's EDUCATORS



Dr. Hugh Notman is Associate Dean of Learning Technologies in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences and Associate Professor of Biological Anthropology.

How did you find AU? Why did you choose it?

AU found me if I am honest. It was eleven years ago. I was looking for a faculty position. I had just finished a postdoc at the University of Lethbridge when I came across an advertisement for biological anthropology at a place called Athabasca University

I was fortunate because I live in Alberta and had just had my first child. I was wondering how I am going to feed him when I saw this position. It was in Alberta. It was great. If I am honest, I had not heard of AU before because I am not a native to Canada, I am from Bermuda. So, I didn't grow up here, but I did my PhD here in Calgary for five years. I had not come across AU during that time, so the job was, to me, almost a bit of a risk.

About your research in biological anthropology, what are the main research questions that you pursue?

So my area is primatology. I study primate communication and cognition. I worked with chimpanzees in Uganda During my PhD and masters, and now I study the communication of vervet monkeys in South Africa, as well as spider and howler monkeys in Belize.

I am interested in questions like, "What are the things that animal communicates? Is it language-like? How does animal communication relate to language in humans? Are there any actual parallels in the sense that we can find the roots of human language in non-human primates? If so, where are they qualitatively different?"

So, what are your students interested in?

Most of my AU students are interested in the individual courses. So, I try to make the courses reflect my own interests. We offer a variety of courses in primate behavior and evolution as well as courses in social and cultural anthropology and archeology.

What tasks and responsibilities come with being a professor at AU?

The ones found in most other universities. You have your commitment to teaching and course development, and research, then university service and administration. I do a lot of course development rather than teaching. I also teach at the U of C as a sessional.

A unique challenge at AU is to design a course so that students can effectively learn on their own. So, I will say a unique challenge for professors at AU is getting good at course design.

Where students have an interest in getting their degree in anthropology at AU, what are some tips for them?

So, to do well in all their courses, read, read, read and write, write, write. Those are key to success in social sciences. To do that, you need to be interested and passionate about whatever it is you are learning.

So, yes, you want to do that. If you are interested in pursuing something biological anthropology related, that is a huge sub-field of anthropology as a discipline. Bio-anthropology can include things like forensics, osteology, medical anthropology. These areas have a more practical application for some folks career-wise that is not just academia.

Those are the things that draw a lot of students because you dig up bones and stones. There are things like human genetics and migration patterns and primatology

What are directions of the departmental initiatives for the next five years for AU?

We talk about the growth of the anthropology program. More generally, I am the biological anthropologist. I am responsible for the bio course offerings.

So, we have had myself as the bio-anth person, an archeologist, and a socio-cultural anthropologist.

Both myself and the archaeologist run our own separate field schools in Belize I, of course, have the primatology field school there. So, that's the area where we are excited about drawing more AU students.

What about for graduate school, for students, what should they do in terms of getting involve with research?

If you are interested in doing graduate work, you would first of all decide what it is you are interested in. When you apply to a university, look into the research area and interests of your potential supervisor to do graduate work, don't send an email and say, "Hi, I would like to do graduate work at your school. Can I get a master at your school?"

You need to approach them and say, "I have an interest in doing XYZ, which I see aligns nicely with your research interests." It shows you have done your research about the person and you have a more focused idea for your graduate work.

If you want to do grad work in primatology, you could say, "I see you work with this species on these subjects or on these areas. This is what I would like to do. Here is a draft proposal." It doesn't necessarily mean you are going to do that with your potential supervisor.

They might have his or her own idea, but at least it shows that you have done your homework and that you have similar interests to your potential supervisor. So, s/he is much more likely to consider that application or that request more seriously than a cold call out of the blue.

So, I would say, do your homework and make sure you have an area or topic that you are interested in. It should align at least somewhat with what the potential supervisor does. That's the main consideration.

Any final thoughts?

People think, “If I do a degree in this (primatology), does it mean I have to end up working with monkeys?” No, of course not. It doesn't matter what degree you do, or what it's in. You can do whatever you want.

You learn crucial skills in any of the social sciences: like how to research, how to communicate, and how to write (which is a vanishing skill). These are things that are important skills to have in any profession.

Scott Douglas Jacobsen works with various organizations, and runs In-Sight: Independent Interview-Based Journal, and In-Sight Publishing.



New Year, New Start

Deanna Roney



2018 is just around the corner, and when this article is out it will already be here. I am not one to make New Year's resolutions but I do like the idea of a fresh start. The bookkeeping year is over (almost) and the final exam for that is looming in April. While, it is not an exam, per-se, I have more anxiety about it than I ever did about a final exam in my undergrad. 2017 was the first year I moved from the old-school bookkeeping of a paper synoptic and calculator to a computer program, and though it caused me some headaches when, about six months in, I thought I had lost it all, it has, overall, been more productive and much easier to manage.

I was stubborn about moving from something I was comfortable with to something that I wasn't. I am thrilled I decided to give it a chance and it has made me wonder about my stance on e-texts. I have always been against them, and as I got access to my first Grad course, Current Issues in Literary Studies, LTST 605, the first thing I did was print out my study guide and course guide. I still prefer to learn from paper because I can make notes in the text and connect with the words more fully. However, I have discovered that e-texts do have a certain benefit.

Since I started to intern with Literary Agents I have discovered the immense benefit of being able to read and comment on manuscripts digitally. Beyond being more efficient it makes it easier to go back and find specific notes or sentences.

This searchability is something that I am most interested in moving forward. During my undergrad, I spent countless hours searching for quotes I knew were somewhere within an article or book: a sentence that would perfectly frame my argument. While I don't think I could ever move to a fully-digital learning experience I take comfort in the ability to combine both the digital and paper versions.

Just like with my bookkeeping that I moved to a digital format, I kept some of the paper practices. It made the transition easier for me. To anyone else, I would be adding an extra step to the process but it is one that makes it easier for me to stay organized. With the paper synoptic, I

would take each receipt and write it out into a column, following down the bank statement and making sure everything was accounted for, before adding each column and making sure everything balanced (it rarely did the first time). With the digital version I take the receipts, the statement and I tick each one off, write out the gst, file them all away and then from that statement I punch it into the program, and then check and make sure everything balances (it mostly does).

This marrying of the pencil and paper version to the digital version has given me comfort moving forward and into my studies that I know are going to be a combination of reading from paper and reading online. Where once I was anxious about trying to study from a computer screen or tablet I have found the efficiency in it, the benefit to it.

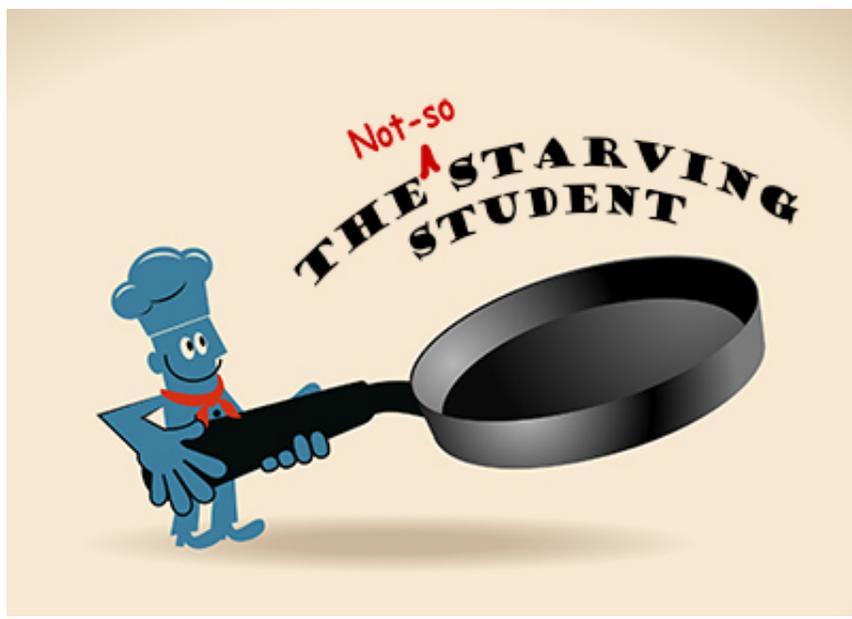
The stance does not always need to be solidly one or the other: digital or paper; e-text or not. There is an opportunity to appreciate both, to work with both and to have the best experience because of it.

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 Not-So Starving Student Fresh Start to a New, Energized You

Xin Xu



For a caffeine degenerate like me, I always wished there was a natural substitute for caffeine. Although there isn't any perfect substitute, over the years I've found some ways to help me beat the afternoon slump without resorting to Starbucks. As a busy AU student, my philosophy is that caffeine should be a last resort than the first choice, and should be utilized effectively to meet those harsh deadlines or last-minute exam cramming. So for those of you who are addicts, degenerates, or dependents, the new year is a time for self-reflection and a time to potentially add some positive tweaks

to your daily routine. Rather than upheave your entire dieting routine, as many new year resolutions involve, try taking baby steps that are realistic and achievable. If one of your goals is to stay energized naturally then we've compiled the perfect list for substituting that espresso with some quality snacking.

Peppermint tea

Without the threat of upcoming deadlines, I can safely sip on my peppermint tea and feel awakened with the cool, minty sensation. Peppermint tea has been proven to improve alertness, long term memory, and speed of memory (Moss, 2016). Of course, the best peppermint tea uses fresh, crushed peppermint leaves, but you can always substitute with dried store-bought tea.





Whole grain crackers

Complex carbohydrates help sustain your blood sugar level without allowing it to spike. In the afternoon following a large meal, your natural energy level plummets, especially after a carbohydrate-heavy meal, which makes the afternoon extra difficult to survive. For me, a ten minute nap typically turns into a three hour snooze. To fight the energy drop, try adding some whole grain snacks into your afternoon and help keep your facial muscles moving.

Dark chocolate

Flavonoids found in dark chocolate are a potent anti-inflammatory agent, helping boost your immune system and improve cardiovascular health. Could it help your energy level as well? Studies show that absorbed flavonoids accumulate in brain regions responsible for learning and memory (Berk, 2017). Specifically, they enhance sensory awareness that could be the secret to staying awake longer in those sluggish afternoons. Choose low-sugar dark chocolate for optimal results.



Raw veggies and hummus

Staying hydrated plays a large role in your natural ability to fight sleepiness, and raw veggies not only offers hydration but also sustainable, beneficial carbohydrates that will last you until dinner. Hummus offers an excellent dose of protein without being excessive. One of the most important tips I've learned is asking yourself if you're truly hungry or simply bored. Many times, it could be the latter and controlling the sizes of your snacks could be difficult.

Trail mix

I love mixing my own trail mixes since I can gauge the nutrients without feeling guilty about excess sugar content. Raw walnuts are my personal favorite since they offer the much needed omega-3 oils for a well-oiled engine that is your brain. Before you consider chocolate chips or simple carbohydrates, try adding coconut shreds or dried cranberries to add a touch of sweetness without spiking your blood sugar.

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



Unwrapping a Fresh New Year

Barbara Lehtiniemi



A fresh new year is intoxicating. In the last days of the old year, the new year sits there, like an unwrapped present. You don't know what the package holds, but you know it's full of promise.

Last year started full of promise, too, but we're ready to discard it. We eagerly await the new year like it's the latest version of our favourite game. Last year is outdated and embarrassing. The new year will be better. Version 2018, new and improved.

Last year, whether it was good or bad or a mixture of both, is ready

to be packed up and placed on the shelf, full of memories and mistakes and trials and triumphs. Not one thing can be added, taken away, or changed. Fine. We are so done with 2017.

A new year, before it begins, is perfect. It is rich with possibility. A whole year lays before us, with not one black mark in it. No mistakes, no misunderstandings, no losses. A clean sheet onto which we'll write a fresh story. Another chance.

A new year brings optimism. This is the year we'll finally accomplish something. This is the year things will turn a corner. This is the year that will make a difference. With 365 days stretched out before us, there is abundant opportunity to get things done—and done right. We're limited only by our imagination.

After the chaos of the holidays, the new year signals a return to routine. Our plans for December started sliding off the rails by mid-month and never got back on track. Seasonal gatherings, shopping, and snow days ate up more time than we anticipated.

Now it's a new year. Now we are free to plan, to schedule, to set priorities that matter to *us*. With a whole year stretching out before us, we know that any setbacks can be overcome. If something doesn't go to plan this month, it's no problem. There are many more months to catch up.

A new year is a state of mind. We've trained ourselves to view the year as a inviolable unit of time. Yet a year contains other units of time: twelve months, fifty-two weeks, 365 days, and countless hours. Each one of those is another blank slate. With a mental nudge, those units of time could hold the same promise, the same opportunity.

Can we train ourselves to see the promise of each new month or week, the same way we see the promise in a new year? How would our lives look if we recreated the intoxication of a new year each new month and new week? What about each new day?

How refreshing it could be to wake up each morning to unwrap a gift of a perfect day stretching before us. Happy New Year, everyone! Happy New Day!

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



The Fit Student

Danica Patrick's Abs

Marie Well



Have New Year's has just passed. Now imagine your next ten years. Will you sport an Indie 500 pinup body or a Papa John's Pizza belly?

I'm a fan of Danica Patrick. Her abs, that is. Okay, and her racing.

Papa loves races. He buys sports cars, tweaking mufflers so they rev with "bite." He even took me to the Indie 500 when I was a tot. As for Danica Patrick, Papa won't comment on her abs, but he might collect her calendars—the ones with red corvettes, not dung-powered eco cars.

Besides Danica's abs, I admire her diet—the one she suggests in her fitness book titled *Pretty Intense*. Diet like Danica to rev a sleek internal engine.

Unlike Danica, I dined out nightly, snacking like Rosie O'Donnell and Michael Moore on bottomless plate-dates. My former colleague, a Rosie lookalike, warned me that dining out bulges butts and bellies. She slipped

me lists of superfoods. Heeding her advice, I sipped carrot juice instead of cola. I also stocked Kmart sweaters—for men—that fit me twenty pounds both ways. And crossed my fingers.

Within a year, I got skinny—unhealthy skinny. I drank sugary teas and nibbles of fats, failing to get fit. My staples? Sausage, cheese, cheerios. Steadily, I grew tired and nauseous. I felt so sick I couldn't read. I couldn't eat. I couldn't keep my eyes open. Instead, I whimpered while peering into the potty.

My doctor warned, "Change your diet and get fit." Everyone respects doctor's orders, right? Surprisingly, the doctor's orders didn't dullen life. No. The doctor thumbed-up playtime: I finessed my fitness routine with twice-a-day training and Brazilian butt cooldowns. Plus, I plan to rekindle my passion for cycling starting springtime.

And I now devour super-foods. Breakfasts of bran, banana, and soy taste better than DQ. Dinners of spinach, yam, and kidney beans—with dabs of hot sauce—taste better than Papa John's Pizza pie.

Thanks to fitness and raw foods, I halted my hurls and sleep-a-thons. Oodles of medical tests revealed only healthy organs. My self-diagnosis? Prediabetes. Or chronic fatigue syndrome. Or, worse, hypochondria. All reversed.

But back to Danica's abs. My two favorite tricks to gaining a Danica bod? First, download the Cronometer app—to chart calories and nutrients. Second, download the Fitify apps—to sculpt Danica abs, Brazilian butts, and more.

Oh and third, get a gym membership—renewed every year until you die.

Or better yet, diet like Danica. Danica Patrick and Stephen Perrins show how to get Danica's diet in their book titled *Pretty Intense*:

- Healthy home cooking dwindles flab: “Learn to cook at home. You can lay the foundation for the body you want in the gym, but no amount of intensity is going to overcome a poor diet” (p. 170).
- Don’t dine out; restaurants make your belly like butter: “Restaurant food all tastes the same because most restaurants use the exact same tricks: fat, salt, and sugar” (p. 170).
- Cooking at home fosters fit abs; dining out fattens guts: “Here’s the difference between cooking at home versus eating out at one of these popular restaurants ... [First, homemade] grilled chicken breast with green salad [has] ... 465 calories ... 9 g fat ... 100 mg sodium. [Second, restaurant-made] boneless buffalo chicken salad [has] ... 1020 calories ... 72 g fat ... 3480 mg sodium” (p. 171). Eat at home! If you dine out on chicken salad coupled with a whipped cream latte, then one bit more turns midribs into muffins.
- Smarten up in the kitchen: instead of dining out, “use cookbooks watch cooking shows take cooking classes” (p. 172-173).
- Slather your food with spices—spices tease taste buds, cutting down the need for salt: “Spices improve your health by making real food taste better, but they also have specific benefits of their own ... [such as the ability to] cut ... sodium use by an average of almost 1000 milligrams a day” (p. 179).

The New Year’s here. Now hide your salt shakers, stick to home-cooked, and seek out Danica vintage calendars.

Danica’s Christmas calendars won’t sport her in curlers, puffing Player’s Light, whimpering while peering into a potty. Not unless Papa John’s Pizza sponsors her Christmas campaigns.



Council Connection December 12, 2017 Meeting

Carla Knipe



**Athabasca University
Students' Union**

The AUSU monthly meeting, held on December 12, 2017, was the last council meeting of the year and the marathon meeting—almost three hours long—dealt with some weighty topics that affected AU students. All councillors were present except Amanda Lipinski, who was absent due to a scheduled vacation.

Council unanimously approved November’s minutes, and the action and agenda items of that meeting were briefly reviewed. One point for discussion was to move the deadline to rescind policy 9.22 (E-Text Choice and Cost Savings Sharing position policy) to June 2018. It was noted that AU will not be implementing the change in the course materials fee that was expected, so this topic needs to be looked into further. The agenda moved into new business, which prompted some lengthy discussions among the councillors.

First, a warm welcome was extended to Emmanuel Barker, the new Governance and Advocacy Co-ordinator for his first AUSU monthly meeting. He comes to AUSU via the University of Saskatchewan where he was

an International development major and also worked for its student council. He is eager to work with AUSU and, as of December's meeting, had read AUSU's policies, bylaws and procedures from a governing standpoint, and with the intention to understand its advocacy goals to learn how best to support council.

The agenda moved to its next motion, which was to "approve the AUSU awards committee recommendation to close the single parent bursary, due to a lack of qualified applicants over three awards cycles, and move the remaining \$2000 to the #Igo2AU award fund for the 2018 May award intake." Council has tried to maintain interest in the single parent bursary, including lowering the criteria, but there were still no qualified applicants. Many single parents applied for other AUSU awards, but not the single parent bursary. The committee felt the funds should be redistributed to the #Igo2AU award to recognize some of the other very qualified applicants.

Discussion of the #Igo2AU award highlighted the amount of work and detail that goes into creating AUSU awards and bursaries and the need to evaluate their effectiveness. The biggest point of contention, which affected the scope of this award, was the issue of the waiver form. It was suggested that the award criteria be changed to state that if a student is making a video, that they are providing consent for AUSU to post their video on social media. The waiver form provides a level of legal transparency for releasing the videos, which was a key part of how students applied and qualified for the award. Even if a video is uploaded publicly, there can still be risks when re-sharing it if any issues arise. It was noted that the award criteria was not created to be a social media award – the #Igo2AU title was simply used as a play off the previous #Igo2AU contest. However, requiring that the video be made public may result in less applications due to concerns over confidentiality. The award is not merit or needs based, but made to recognize the diversity of the AU membership.

It was pointed out that the Awards Committee already revisited the criteria following this past award cycle, and the council initially agreed to the proposal for the award which did not include mention of making the videos public or requiring use of the hashtag. A new action item was created to review the criteria of this award, including a possible change that the application require only videos.

AUSU then moved onto the next major topic of the meeting, which was to approve the initiation of the process to implement a fee increase in the amount of \$1.50 per credit, to take effect on January 1, 2019. Councillors Newsome and Simmons opposed this motion. This topic was discussed previously by Council but it decided that it would like to obtain more data before making a decision on this.

The background regarding this fee increase is complex and relates to the financial sustainability of AUSU both for the present and future councils. AUSU planned for a deficit budget for three years. But the organization has had tremendous growth over the past two years. An Executive Director report to outline and assess AUSU's current financial position as well as a projection of future budgets was provided. The report identified any additional costs and savings expected, revealing some gains as well as losses in the overall picture of AUSU's finances. As a result, the projected deficit for 2017/18 is lower than the original budget indicated. However, the variables included an increase in council members, an additional staff member, increased awards and services, increased executive salaries, and a new student mail out initiative. AU students also want to see value in the services AUSU provides. AUSU has not had an increase in fees in over seven years, but has greatly increased its services. This affects its reserve fund. However, there is a debate about how much money should be held in the fund, and what the money should be used for.

Some suggestions are that some of the reserve money be used to provide more services to students or other activities such as increased communications, that would achieve more growth for AUSU. The current council put forth a three-year strategic plan to increase spending, relevance, and reach. If the revenue stays relatively the same, there will be a significant deficit in the budget the following year. However, it was argued that having a healthy reserve fund is important to keep in case an issue was to arise that reduced AUSU's income, so it is important for AUSU to get back in the black and be able to plan for a balanced budget in the future, and that this should be the responsibility of the current council. If the dates to implement a fee increase are postponed until 2018, then the decision would be up to the new council.

It was suggested AUSU set what the reserve threshold will be after doing more research before deciding on a fee increase.

It was noted that if the motion passed with an implementation date after the following fiscal year, the new AUSU council can still choose to revoke that decision. The vote in this meeting was just to decide if AUSU will move forward to the next stage, which must be passed by special resolution, including 2 public readings, consultations with the membership, and a 2/3 majority vote of council. The vote was held and Council decided to move forward with the fee increase process with Councillors Kim Newsome and Brandon Simmons voting against.

The next section of the meeting continued the process of policy revisions. Regarding Policy 2.6, Council Governance: Student Representatives on AU Committees, A question was raised about whether the first line of policy 2.06 "For all committee positions, council will attempt to find a representative within AUSU council or staff" should fall under policy 2.06, since the policy is about members at large on AUSU committees. Historically, only AUSU executives sat on AU committees, however, there could be options for regular councillors to sit on AU committees. The policy does not include instruction on how to implement the process. The executive is to review policy 2.06 again to incorporate opportunities for councillors to represent AUSU on AU committees, and resubmit the policy at the January meeting.

Council also discussed the revision to Policy 2.14, Council Governance: Councillor Responsibilities and Honoraria. There was a lot of discussion regarding committee compensation, as some AUSU committees are a lot more work than others, and some meet more often than others. The revised policy suggests making the honorarium for committees per

AU-thentic Events

Upcoming AU Related Events

AUSU Council Meeting

Mon, January 15, 5:30 to 7:30 MST
Online

Hosted by AUSU

www.ausu.org/event/january-council-meeting-2/

No pre-registration required; e-mail
admin@ausu.org for meeting package

Online MBA Info Session

Tues, January 16, 10:00 to 11:00 am MST
Online

Hosted by AU Faculty of Business

business.athabascau.ca/event-details/online-mba-executives-information-session-5/

Register online at above link

The Research Itinerary Series - Session 5: Identifying a Research Problem

Wed, January 17, 12:00 to 1:00 pm MST
Online

Hosted by AU Faculty of Graduate Studies

fgs.athabascau.ca/news/presentations/

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

BComm/CPA Info Session

Thurs, January 18, 5:00 to 6:00 pm MST
Online

Hosted by AU Faculty of Business

business.athabascau.ca/event-details/bcomm-cpa-information-session-5/

Register online at above link

meeting instead of per month. The other changes were primarily made to reflect the new bylaws. It was noted that there seems to be a by-election every month due to resignations, which may be due to the demand of being on council. It was suggested that the compensation be increased but if the suggested changes were implemented, the finance committee would make the most amount of money for the least amount of work, and the awards committee would make the least amount of money for the most amount of work. It was agreed that the executives should review policy 2.14 again as well as the committee terms of reference to ensure fair compensation. This motion was postponed until the January council meeting.

The next section of the meeting discussed the monthly reports by councillors. The reports that were most important and notable this are the President's report, and the Vice President External and Student Affairs Report.

President Shawna Wasylyshyn mentioned in a Business Faculty council that there were issues with them closing tickets too quickly which stops students from asking follow-up questions. Consequently, they have made a change to require that their AE's keep their tickets open for three days. AUSU will raise the topic with the Provost office to implement a policy regarding this.

A more pressing issue was concerning that in July, the AU Board of Governors approved a course materials fee reduction from \$180 to \$130, and students would then pay for their own course materials starting January 1, 2018. During an early December meeting with AU, Associate VP Student and Academic Services, Alain May, told AUSU that the university administration would be going to the Board of Governors to ask for an extension on rolling out the fee reduction, and to not implement the choice between e-texts and textbooks. However, the university has already gone ahead with an increase to out of province student fees. Under the original proposed course materials fee reduction, there would have been an overall fee reduction. However, now that the university is taking back the course material fee decrease they are forcing students to pay for something they do not want. The motion was carried unanimously at the AU Finance and Property Committee minus the AUSU president's vote, and will be brought forward to the Board of Governors in December.

President Wasylyshyn also discussed the recent news that Alberta's Minister of Advanced Education gave institutions in Alberta two weeks to come up with a plan to cut discretionary spending for not only this year. but in the future. However, AU does not have discretionary spending, and she raised the question that "How can you take spending away from the lowest funded university in Alberta?" This goes back to the question about the funding model that is used for Alberta universities that puts AU at a disadvantage compared to other institutions. AU formed a resource planning meeting to engage stakeholders in the budgeting process. She notes that AU will no longer have a budget but is rather moving to a "resource plan".

The VP External also highlighted the news that Alberta is planning to provide some back funding to make up for the tuition freeze in effect for the 2018/2019 academic year. During the last week of November, the VPEX was in Ottawa for the CASA advocacy Week, during which there were over 150 meetings with MPs and senators to discuss student priorities. The AUSU Executive decided they should submit a press release regarding their position regarding the tuition freeze. AUSU has decided it is not in favour of the freeze – while it is a good thing for Alberta students, the 60% out of province students are at risk of having their tuition raised to offset the freeze.

The VPEX then noted in his report that he was involved in an extensive course review process at AU and recommendations were sent to the General Faculty Council.

A question was raised about whether there was anything else that happened as there was nothing listed about AUSU work and there were no meetings of the regular AU committees that the VPEX sits on. It was noted that the VPEX was heavily involved in AU committee work during November as well as CASA work.

The meeting was finally adjourned at 8:16 PM. The next two public meetings of Council will be on Monday January 15 at 5:30 PM, MST and Tuesday, February 13 at 5:30 PM MST.

AUSU's Press release regarding the proposed fee increase can be found at: <https://www.ausu.org/2017/12/proposed-fee-increase/> and an elaboration about the tuition fee freeze can be found at <https://www.ausu.org/2018/01/january-2018-executive-blog/>

Carla is an AU student who lives and writes in Calgary, Alberta. Say "hi" to her on Twitter @LunchBuster.



In Conversation ...with The Racer

Wanda Waterman



The Racer is an indie band from Monroe, New York, renowned for intelligent lyrics, an inimitable post-rock sound, and hugely entertaining live performances. In 2017, after producing three LPs, the group decided to stop creating albums for now to focus on singles and videos. In the last few months they've managed to produce four songs, two videos, go on an acoustic mini-tour, and work on a podcast series (listen to the moving track "Isolation/Apogee"). Recently the band's lead vocalist, Pete Marotta, and bassist/keyboardist Eric Sosler took the time to talk with us about their unique approach to music-making, sharing their insights into music and creativity. (The band also

includes Mike Esserman on guitar and keyboards, Steve Kondracki on guitar and keyboards, and Mike Perri on percussion.)

Tell me something about the role music played in your early lives.

ERIC SOSLER: I pretty much listened to whatever my dad played. So it was mainly oldies, country type stuff. I was never in tune with pop culture. I always thought that although it was good, my dad's music was corny. It wasn't until my late teens, early college years that I started exploring new music—more emotional, deep, weird music that didn't always make sense. I just started connecting to it emotionally, as you can imagine a confused, unconfident teenager would.

PETE MAROTTA: Similar to Eric, I grew up listening to a lot of the music my parents were listening to, like Bruce Springsteen, The Who, and Neil Young. I have a great appreciation for

that music now, but at the time I didn't really connect with it. In fact, I really didn't like rock music at all; I was more into hip-hop. I think it was the energy and attitude of the music that I loved. It wasn't until my aunt played *Under a Blood Red Sky* by U2 that I got into guitar music for the first time. It had that post-punk energy and attitude I was looking for, but I was also drawn to the icy tones of the music. It just sounded like nothing I'd heard before. That album opened the floodgates.

How did you develop an interest in post-rock?

ERIC SOSLER: I started getting interested in post-rock stuff when I discovered how sounds in music can reflect your emotions. Taking away those distorted guitar sounds in grunge rock and adding in those melodic, clean, ambient guitars just started to feel more inspirational to me. A lot of times when I found myself down in the dumps for whatever reason, listening to these atmospheric, inspiring sounds got me through them. Death Cab for Cutie really introduced me to this type of mood. That's the type of band I wanted to be in and be a part of.

PETE MAROTTA: My first interest in post-rock was actually when I first heard Sigur Rós "Untitled 4 (The Nothing Song)" in the final scene of the movie *Vanilla Sky* in 2001. I think it was the first time I'd ever heard a song in a movie and then had to go and find out what it was. I instantly started listening to Sigur Rós, and, like the first time I heard U2, it was unlike anything I'd ever heard. It sounded like a soundtrack to my life, and the way they sing in a made-up language had a super impact on me as a writer. Whenever we write a song I always scat sing at first to get the melody and vibe and then go back to write the lyrics. For me, the melody and the feeling of the music is so important to the song and this made-up language was brilliant because it ensured that the vibe would always come through. And anyone who speaks any language can sing it and interpret it any way they want.

How did the band members meet? What made you decide to make music together? And how did you settle on your band name?

PETE MAROTTA: Eric Sosler, Mike Esserman, and I are childhood friends who played basketball together growing up. In college, Mike and I were watching a band play on TV and, at the same moment, we both expressed how amazing it would be to be in a band together. Somehow we believed it would work, even though none of us played any instruments at the time. We just wanted to be a part of something special together.

As far as the band name, we initially went by another band name called "Stuedabakerbrown," which was just a friend's nickname from high school, but we wanted to change the name because we didn't think it fit the music we were making. Over the course of six months and probably 1000 emails we still couldn't get all five people to agree on a name. After all of these failed attempts I mentioned "The Racer" as an option to just have a placeholder until we came up with something else. The name stuck ever since because I think we were just so mentally exhausted by that point.

How do those clever lyrics get written?

PETE MAROTTA: In the past I would write the majority of the lyrics, but for the last album and the current singles I opened up the opportunity for everyone in the band. Usually I'll scat sing the vocal, then go back and either write lyrics that I think reflect the feeling of the song, or, if I have anything specifically I'd like to say, I'll attempt to do so. If I'm unsure of where to go in terms of the subject of the song, I'll actually try to translate the scat vocal into lyrics. Sometimes

they make sense and it's a really liberating and creative process, and other times they need to be worked on a bit more.

Recently, myself or anyone else in the band bring their own drafts and we sit in a room and go through the song line by line with the expectation that anything is up for debate, which has been really interesting for me. It's allowed me to grow as a writer because we're trying new things lyrically and having really honest and hard conversations about what my tendencies may have been in the past. Thanks to these guys, I think we've written some of our best lyrics as of late.

Why are you concentrating on just releasing tracks as opposed to albums?

PETE MAROTTA: We've released three full-length albums in the past, and we love the album concept. We grew up buying albums and listening to them in full while looking at the artwork and lyrics. I even have nostalgic feelings about the smell of CD packaging! As writers though, we were growing really frustrated with how long it takes to write, record, and set up the release for an entire album. Sometimes it can be a process years in the making, and by the time it comes out you're already on to the next batch of songs and may barely like the music you're releasing.

We wanted to take advantage of the fact that we now have the ability to record anytime and to release it to the world instantly. This way we're constantly staying fresh, and the listener is hearing the kind of music we're into creating at that exact moment. Plus, the way people are listening to music is changing. We still believe in albums and are even exploring the idea of packaging certain singles together in an LP or EP if a listener would like to enjoy them in that format, because some of the songs were written with that in mind.

What thoughts and experiences are behind "Apogee?" And who came up with that brilliant idea for the video?

ERIC SOSLER: Some thoughts behind Apogee are the idea of those moments when you're feeling great and know exactly what you want, but then realizing that what you want isn't happening.

The goal for the video was to just try to capture the emotions of the song while showing a distorted time loop. "Life is being helplessly trapped on a roller coaster ride, and all the while capturing those emotions as they keep recycling themselves, over and over again, trying to figure it all out."

Although it may look like a simple video, there's a lot of symbolism going on. Not sure if everyone's able to grasp it, but the intentions are there from the expressions on the model's face, to going backwards, the rest of life going forwards, etc.

The model is Noel McGrath, from our home area, who is a photographer as well. We knew her look and style would be perfect for the video.

To make that smooth gliding effect of going backwards, we placed Noel in a Dutch bicycle known as a Bakfeit (we had to rent one from a place in Brooklyn). So she was crammed in the basket along with Mike, our guitar player, who was doing the filming on his iPhone, while Eric, our bass player, was pedaling the bike, and while Steve Kondracki controlled the music. It was quite the scene for passing vehicles to see in this part of the black dirt region of the Hudson Valley. You can imagine we got a few honks of the horn!

Has anything funny or bizarre ever happened to you while recording, performing, or touring?

PETE MAROTTA: During the course of a two-week tour we were in an earthquake and a hurricane, and our drummer quit.

If you had an artist's mission statement, what would it be?

ERIC SOSLER: Create only what you want to create.

PETE MAROTTA: Be the band you want to hear.

What's your next step?

ERIC SOSLER: Just to keep creating. As long as we enjoy that as a band, then that's all we can do. Clear away any expectations of financial success and just make the art we want to make.

PETE MAROTTA: Keep creating and growing, and enjoy it as much as we can.

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



Brittany Daigle

Course Exam

PSYC 290—General Psychology

According to the syllabus, PSYC 290 (General Psychology) is a three-credit introductory psychology course that follows PSYC 289 (Psychology as a Natural Science). PSYC 290 “provides an introduction to behavioural areas of study” and shares the same textbook as PSYC 289, covering the entire second half.

General Psychology is comprised of ten units, five graded quizzes covering two units each and worth six percent each, two journal article critiques worth five percent each, one research paper worth twenty percent, and one final exam worth forty percent. The ten units discussed within this course cover topics such as motivation, emotion, human development across the life span, treatment of psychological disorders, stress, coping mechanisms, intelligence, and personality. For those who are concerned about the journal article critiques and the research paper, the course supplies a journal article critique template, a journal article critique sample, and two sample research papers that will guide you through the entire writing process.

Dr. Adam Howorko is a tutor for multiple psychology courses, including PSYC 290, PSYC 333, PSYC 402, and PSYC 450, and has been tutoring at Athabasca University for over twelve years. Howorko states “PSYC 290 evaluates students on a variety of measures. The five quizzes have multiple choice questions that are a mixture of factual and conceptual short-answer questions based on the course text. Also, there are three papers to be written. Two of these papers are one to two-page critiques whereby a student chooses one article from a wide selection and follows a set of prescribed questions from a template to interpret the article by. The third paper is

Course Exam

AU courses, up close

Brittany Daigle

approximately four to five pages in length and has similar approach as the critiques, but four articles are integrated through synthesis and critique. The final evaluation is one hundred multiple choice questions covering the complete second half of the text.” The final exam is done online and nothing can be taken to the examination room.

Howorko continues, “when most people think of psychology they usually think of it in clinical terms and PSYC 290 does not disappoint in that. Diagnosis and treatment is taught for human psychological problems. Though for those interested in family dynamics or nursing, PSYC 290 also addresses the developmental stages of human development. This course is not as science oriented with biology as PSYC 289 but nonetheless, PSYC 290 remains science driven by its discoveries and research. Students who take this course will have a window into the discipline of psychology and from that will get a greater appreciation for understanding human relationships.”

Lastly, he states “this type of course is recommended for students interested in understanding human personality and a variety of aspects of the discipline of psychology that many students are surprised the discipline covers. Many students upgrading from nurse assistants to registered nurses take this course. Also, other paramedical field interests would make this a good course choice as further understanding of human behaviour is explored.”

When asking students their thoughts and opinions on PSYC 290 the replies were all positive. Katy Lowe stated “I am currently in it and I wish I had taken PSYC 289 first as it looks like it covers some of the same things. I really do enjoy the course though and find the quizzes easy since they are open book and often verbatim of the textbook or the psychtrek online resources. It’s heavy content and reading but the course does a good job of being interesting and engaging. I find my tutor very knowledgeable, helpful, and he responds quickly when I have questions. I would absolutely recommend this course to those interested.” Moreover, Isabelle Stehle had similar feelings, stating “I am writing the final tomorrow and I have really enjoyed the course. It is a challenging course, though extremely rewarding. There is a lot of reading and loads of theories and concepts to be learned. I am very glad that I took PSYC 289 beforehand as it made the course easier. My tutor was amazing and very efficient as assignments were grades within three days and she replied very quickly, even during this busy time of year.”

Katy and Isabelle had similar opinions to the nine students who answered the PSYC 290 survey question “I would recommend this course to other Athabasca University students.” Eight of the nine students said they would recommend PSYC 290 to other Athabasca University Students and one person said they would not recommend this course to other students. When you are close to completing PSYC 290, you will be prompted and encouraged to complete this survey as it gives other students and faculty insight to what students thought of the course.

From personally taking this course, I can tell you that it is very definition and content heavy, similar to PSYC 289. It is a course that will require you to read many chapters repeatedly to understand and retain the content. Fortunately, the quizzes and final exam are also definition heavy so if you spend enough time studying it should pay off. My strongest advice would be to not procrastinate and to read more than just the pre-highlighted text within the textbook as it will give you a stronger understanding of the content.

Whether PSYC 290 is a required course for your chosen program or if it is just a general interest of yours, it is almost guaranteed that you will enjoy it and learn a lot interesting content surrounding human behaviour.

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



The Study Dude Yesterday's Insanity

Marie Well



Today's critical thinking once sounded crazy. Would Elvis have considered today's options for gender? That he could become a woman who loves women but identifies as a man? A product of critical thought, stemming from feminist theory on gender.

So, what's wrong with critical thinking? In my view, critical thought has a victim mindset. A feminist prof once snarled when I asked, "What's critical thinking?" She replied, "If you need to ask, you don't belong here." That year, I didn't give her a Christmas socking—I mean stalking—oops—stocking. No victim here.

"What makes you mad?" goaded my supervisor, crunching her face into a growl, fixed on finding a spark in me for critical theory. *Gifts of secondhand undies*, I thought. *And my feminist prof*. Nothing more.

So, what's right with critical thinking? Some profs thumb-up adding personal tales into your thesis. Your peeves, your struggles, the chatter in your brain. One way to put yourself into your paper? Jot (and circle) your thoughts in book margins as you read. Then weave your thoughts into your paper. Just don't, by mistake of course, cite your ideas with the book author's name.

Yes, critical thinking begins with your thoughts on others' ideas. And your personal life ebbs into your thoughts. Sadly, many academic writers seem gagged from using "I" in papers. Instead, academics do workarounds. They weave one author's ideas with the next—just to say something *slightly* different.

But workarounds fare better than personal tales. Why? Our self-talk seems irrational. Our emotional responses, more irrational. But this world seems riddled with irrationality, doesn't it? Yes! The weird that goes mainstream marks the norm.

Thomas R. Klassen and John A. Dwyer dumb down critical thinking for newbies in their book *How to Succeed at University (And Get a Great Job!): Mastering the Critical Skills You Need for School, Work, and Life*:

- One reason to get a graduate degree? Critical thinking lessens your risk of Alzheimer's.
- What do critical thinkers do? They compare, analyze, and synthesize ideas. They sometimes form theories.
- "There's nothing intrinsically mysterious about theories. They are just useful abstractions that combine, organize, and distinguish related concepts for explanatory purposes" (p. 87).
- Critical thinkers pick out key concepts from data.
- Also, they link those concepts into a theory.
- Concepts make-up theories.
- Critical thinkers often use bias in the concepts they choose. Often hidden bias.

- So, to think critically, discover the hidden assumptions.
- To find hidden assumptions, look at the authors' background and other context.
- Look at yourself, too. Critical thinking demands we talk to ourselves.
- The problem with self-talk? Our thoughts overflow with "misleading or contradictory meanings" (p. 78).
- Plus, our stories (narratives) don't yield the best knowledge. So, for truly critical thought, seek out meaning instead of personal tales.
- And connect what you already know with what you learn.
- But only make claims supported by your data.
- Best of all, you don't have to accept everything inside a theory. Instead, mix tidbits from many theories into your claim.
- Most of all, "If you're not part of the solution, you're part of the problem" (p. 76). Let your critical skills solve problems, not merely criticize.

A prof once said the world doesn't steadily improve. Sometimes, he said, the world regresses into the dark ages. But doesn't critical thinking better tomorrow? No—because today is yesterday's insanity.



Interview Ready

Tara Panrucker



When I'm preparing for countless interviews, I know to be interview ready because one interview varies greatly from the other. Heading to a meeting with someone you've never met before is both intimidating and stressful. Despite your fears however, an upcoming job interview need not send you into a sweaty panic. Planning and organization are vital. Think about the type of job you're interviewing for, the style that may be used, and your past work experiences. Equipping yourself with interview skills ahead of time will help you be more natural and relaxed during the meeting.

Once your interview is scheduled, be sure to confirm the time, date, and place you are meeting and plan on being early. You never know when you may run into traffic congestion or unexpected delays in your commute. In addition, respond to any email confirmations your potential employer sends promptly to alleviate any anxiety they may have. It is just common courtesy. Writing down a page of possible questions and answers will give you a leg up for the position over your competitors. Additionally, arriving early gives you time to check yourself in the mirror so you're looking your best, take some deep breaths, and practice what you'd like to say about yourself during the interview. People ask questions to get to know you better and will be impressed when you answer clearly and enthusiastically.

One interview may be very casual compared to another more formal approach. I've attended interviews where we mostly talked about current events, what we enjoyed in our spare time, and

about our leisure pursuits. I've also been to interviews where I sat before three different people in a boardroom, which can be very intimidating. The formal interview can involve a detailed analysis of your past work history, why you left each job, and what your main accomplishments were. I can't stress enough how important it is to be prepared for all scenarios. There is nothing more unpleasant than stumbling to come up with an answer to an unexpected question, or worse, blanking out. But if you do, simply admit you are nervous and most people will appreciate your honesty and try to put you more at ease.

A popular interview pattern uses CAR: "What was the Circumstance", "What were your Actions", and "What were your Results". Go over each previous job and recall one or two experiences. Write out a specific circumstance that occurred, action you took in that situation, and the results. Preferably, recall a positive experience, such as how you dealt calmly with a difficult customer or how you closed a challenging sale. Memorize and practice your answers. Be clear, concise, and specific. Communicate your experience effortlessly and you will impress your interviewer.

Additionally, focus on your past achievements and accomplishments and highlight them in your resume. These can include points such as the percentage you increased the company's sales over one year or how you completed a task ahead of schedule. Many people also ask how you dealt with difficult customers to see how you react under tricky circumstances. Be sure to illustrate how you remain calm and professional in various situations. Indeed, mentioning your successes needn't sound like bragging – it's sharing how you strive to do the best job you can in any given situation.

Next, make sure your appearance is professional and clean. Keep accessories low key so as not to distract from the substance of what you are communicating. You don't have to run out and charge up a brand-new outfit either. You can spend a few dollars on a nice business outfit from your local Value Village or thrift store. Avoid dousing yourself with heavy perfume or aftershave – lighter is better, and you don't want to cause your interviewer a sneezing attack (awkward). Practice a strong, confident handshake—weak ones subliminally communicate a weak character. Maintaining eye contact as well conveys sincerity and confidence.

Equally important, come prepared with meaningful questions about the company. I have asked the person interviewing me how long they have been with the company and what they most enjoy about it. Not only does it show your interest in them, but it may open up further information about the position, whether or not the company is a good fit for you, and what their expectations are of their employees. Following up your interview with a short, pleasant thank you for the interview along with any questions you forgot to ask is a courtesy often overlooked by other candidates and one sure to win points for your thoughtfulness.

Last, remind yourself not to take anything personally. Sometimes you don't get the position you have your heart set on because the person interviewing already decided they were hiring their friend's relative ahead of time and is just following company procedure. I have been there. In any case, an interview is never a waste of time—you gain valuable insight from each one, and practice for the interview where you are offered the job of your dreams. With calm confidence and a little bit of preparation, your interview skills will prove invaluable to your future career development.

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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.



Scholarship of the Week

Digging up scholarship treasure for AU students.

Scholarship name: Terry Fox Humanitarian Award
Sponsored by: Terry Fox Humanitarian Award Program
Deadline: February 1, 2018
Potential payout: up to \$28,000

Eligibility restriction: Applicants must be Canadian citizens or landed immigrants, planning to or studying toward their first university degree or diploma in September 2018, and have been involved in volunteer humanitarian activities. See full [eligibility requirements](#).

What's required: An intensive online application form, along with three references and an (un)official transcript.

Tips: The full application form is only available once you start the process, so start right early. Like, right now.

Where to get info: apply.terryfoxawards.ca/



Student Sizzle — AU's Hot Social Media Topics

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

AthaU Facebook Group

Chris sparks off a lively discussion about students who complete a course each month rather than taking multiple courses over several months. Allison seeks to connect with other Political Science majors, while Megan is looking for others taking a degree in Human Services.

Other posts include APA style, favourite courses, contacting ProctorU, and the format for supplementary exams.

reddit

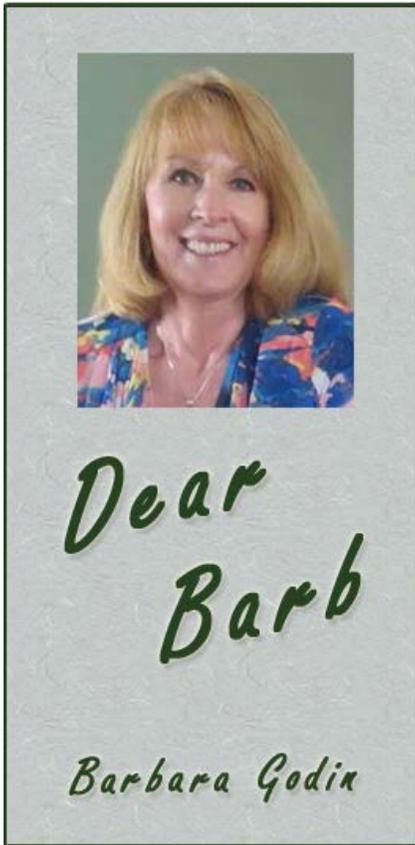
User JoeSully15 seeks feedback on AU's Political Economy degree. If this is your area, help him out with a response.

Twitter

[@AthabascaU](#) tweets: "#AthaU students rejoice! Exams can now be taken from any suitable, private location with a webcam and a high-speed Internet connection. Learn more about the online exam revolution thanks to [@ProctorU](#): <http://ow.ly/y5aI30hFXDb>."

[@AthabascaUSU](#) (AUSU) tweets: "AUSU's January Executive Blog is now posted. Find out more about what is happening with your tuition and fees and how AUSU is getting involved! <http://bit.ly/2CIMF7o>."





Another, Years Older

Dear Barb:

I'm in my mid-twenties and a few months ago I began seeing a man who is twenty years older than me. He is divorced and has a daughter a couple of years younger than me. I have not met her, but I hope to soon. I haven't introduced John to my parents yet, as I think they will freak. My friends really like him though. Do you have any suggestions on what would be the best way to introduce him to my parents? Should I tell them about him first, or just spring him on them. I have hinted that I am dating someone who is older, but I am sure they don't realize how much older. John and I are not at the point of talking about a future; we're just having a good time. I was thinking of not introducing him to my parents until we are sure about the relationship, what do you think? Liz

Hey Liz:

Thanks for writing. Dating an older man has its perks and drawbacks. Usually he will be already set in his career and making a good income. He is likely emotionally secure with himself and has more life experience than you. But, when you are out together, people may mistake him for your father. He may have an ex-wife or children, who may not approve. He also may feel, because he's older, that he will make most of the decisions in the relationship. These things can all be overcome if you are aware and discuss them together as a couple. I don't think you have to tell your parents right now, as it's only a few months into the relationship. Wait until there is a good possibility you are in this for the long haul. You are an adult and it's up to you who you date, so if your parents are reasonable people, they will come around, as I'm sure they only want the best for you. Happy New Year Liz.

Dear Barb:

Happy New Year! I made my New Year's resolution and I've already broke it! Every year I do this, I begin the year with the best of intentions and I can never follow through. I feel like such a failure. A lot of my friends do the same thing. Why is it that people can't stick to their New Year's resolution? Thanks Chris.

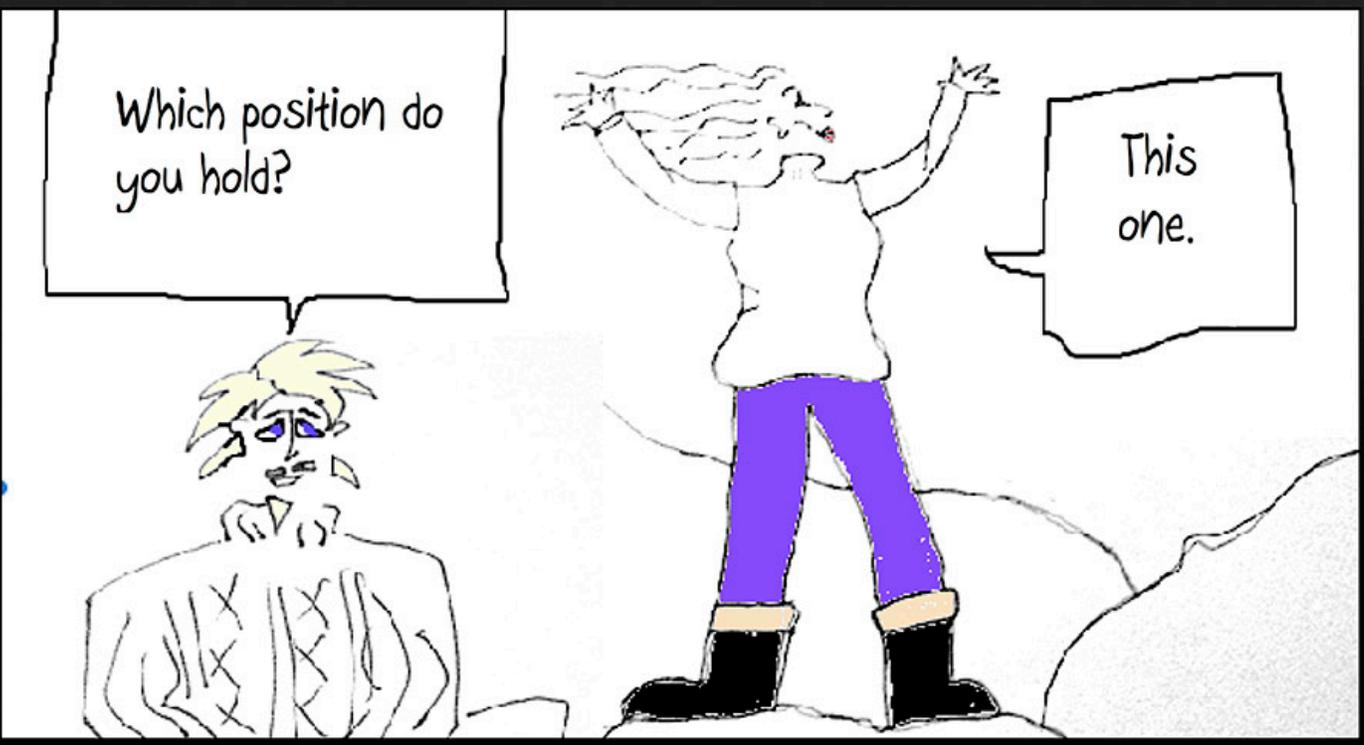
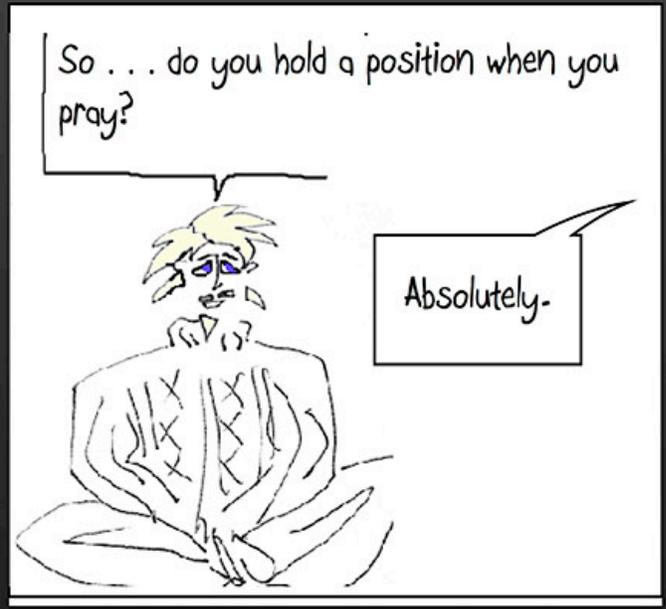
Happy New Year Chris:

I think one of the reasons people cannot stick to their New Year's Resolution is because they are not realistic. Choose one thing that you want to change or accomplish and stick to it. Do not expect miracles, you are going to have failures, but as soon as you can, pick yourself up, and get back on track. Remember your intent is to accomplish your resolution during this year, so if you reach the end of the year and have accomplished your goal, you have been successful.

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.





Short-circuiting Social Machines: Poetics, Aesthetics & Power

Friday, January 26, 2018
2:00pm to 4:00pm

FEATURED SPEAKERS:

Rochelle Sato

A discussion of *Letter to Cody*:
The longest journey by Mitchell Moise

Michael Lithgow & Karen Wall

Embedded Aesthetics:
Artist-in-Residencies as Sites of Discursive
Struggle and Social Innovation

Angie Abdou

Navigating these Rutted Roads:
In Case I Go and Cross-Cultural Collaboration

- + Rooms have been reserved in Edmonton (AUE 1112) and Calgary (BVC S6024).
- + The talks will be live-streamed on Adobe Connect:

Conference Number(s): 1-855-228-6652 | Participant Code: 7503945
Adobe Connect link: <https://athabascau.adobeconnect.com/fhss-research/>



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STUDENTS' UNION

IMPORTANT DATES

- **Jan 15:** [February degree requirements deadline](#)
- **Jan 15:** [AUSU Council Meeting](#)
- **Jan 26:** [Call for Nominations Opens for AUSU Election](#)
- **Jan 31:** [Deadline to apply for course extension for Mar](#)
- **Feb 9:** [Deadline to register in a course starting Mar 1](#)
- **Feb 12:** [AUSU Election Candidates Announced](#)
- **Feb 13:** [AUSU Council Meeting](#)

This space is provided by AUSU. The Voice does not create this content. Contact services@ausu.org with any questions.

Health & Wellness

Feeling your best, physically and emotionally, is the hallmark of well-being. This month, **Student Lifeline** will be featuring resources to promote health and wellness, personal health habits, and mind-body tools, including mindfulness to help boost engagement, productivity, and well-being.

Contact **Student LifeLine** any time, 24/7 at **1-800-567-2255 (TTY:1-877-371-9978)** to speak to a caring, professional consultant for free expert advice or help!

You can also log in to <https://login.lifeworks.com/> (username: **AUSU**, password: **wellness**) to access a wealth of helpful articles and resources, such as:

- [Health & Wellbeing feature](#) on homepage
- [Health & Wellbeing toolkit](#)
- ...and much more

Student LifeLine offers tools and personalized support to help you feel your best. Contact a consultant today for free, confidential advice.

This is a FREE service for all AUSU members!

Student Lifeline provides help and support 24/7 for any issues, from health, wellness, work, life, money, school, community referrals, and more!



Executive Blog

Check out AUSU's January Executive blog written by our AUSU President! Find out more about what is happening with your tuition and fees and how AUSU is getting involved!

View the executive blog online [here](#).



Mobile App – Year in Review

The AU Student Mobile App had a great year in 2017! Look what happened over the course of the year:

- 27,225 posts, comments, and likes
- 2,002 new students signed up
- 1,127 friendships made

Get involved in your campus community – download the app today! <http://athabasca.campusapp.com/>



CLASSIFIEDS

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

THE VOICE

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