



THE VOICE

Vol 28 Issue 31 2020-08-07

Interviewing the Graduands

It is Possible

The Bombs that Ended the War

The 75th Anniversaries of Dropping the Bomb

In Conversation

with Kevin Keller

Plus:
AU's Transition to Digital Textbooks
Beats from the Basement
and much more!



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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



We love to hear from you!
Send your questions and comments to 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

Karl Low

The Explosion that Caused a Spark



You've got just a few more hours to throw your hat into the ring for the AUSU Council by-election. If you've been thinking about it, now's the time. If you're reading this after Friday, the time has passed.

This week, for our feature article we're interviewing another couple of recent graduands from AU. It can be difficult sometimes, especially with everything going on in the world, to be able to see how you'll ever complete the degree you may have chosen to pursue so long ago. These interviews are our way of showing you it can be done. Take inspiration from them.

Along the same lines, we're also featuring the Fly on the Wall this week, as Jason Sullivan looks back on the anniversary of the only atomic bombs dropped in war. You might be wondering exactly how an article about bombs dropped in Nagasaki and Hiroshima over 75 years ago is "along the same lines" as finishing your courses, and it comes down to perspective.

The timing of this article was somewhat prescient, given the recent explosion in Beirut, Lebanon. While that explosion was not a bomb, the entire region remains involved in, not a cold war, per se, but maybe a tepid one. Yet this tragedy seems to have been seized on by many both within the nation of Lebanon and without as a catalyst to a change of government in the region. It is being used to exemplify why it is no longer good enough to have a government that sees its primary purpose as preparing to fight an age-old enemy.

In that respect, natural or accidental tragedies, such as a pandemic or a city-levelling dock explosion, seem to cause people to take stock of what's truly important to them. Being able to spend your energy hating someone or some people who aren't actively attacking you seems like a luxury when placed in the context of actual dangers that are being ignored to do so. Whether that hatred is for a group on the other side of the political spectrum, or the people on the other side of a border or from a different religion is irrelevant. And so, in the larger scheme of things, is that hatred—as is becoming apparent. In that respect, this explosion could be the spark that starts a movement, not of unification (I'm idealistic, not naïve) but at least of indifference to those who are portrayed as enemies.

Being willing to simply stop caring what "the other" is doing will rob a great amount of power from those who thrive on the people being fearful of that other. And that indifference to the supposed enemy means that attention will be brought back to bear on those who've had the power. As the old song goes, "What have you done for me, lately?" Governments and groups that are too concerned with hate will find their answers wanting. And so may find themselves no longer holding power.

All of which is to say that perhaps there's a silver lining to every cloud, even that of your studies. And, hopefully, *The Voice Magazine* this week will help you find it. Enjoy the read!

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Karl". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping tail on the final letter.

Interviews with Graduands

Shara Kirk and Raphael Ugobi: What's Next?

Natalia Iwanek



In this new monthly column, *The Voice Magazine* will be featuring upcoming and recent AU grads, as well as alums. If you would like us to showcase your journey in an upcoming article, feel free to reach out! This month, we were able to catch up with two recent grads from Calgary, Shara Kirk and Raphael Ugobi who both recently completed the Bachelor of Human Resources and Labour Relations (BHRLR) program.

Shara initially chose AU from a recommendation, stating, “My boss at the times’ wife had graduated from the HRLR program and that tipped the scales for me to attend AU. However, I really liked that I could continue to work while earning my degree.”

Her journey to post-secondary studies was like so many AU students, as she revealed, “I didn’t know what I wanted to do after high school. I took some time off, worked full time and bought my first house

at the age of 21. I had the best manager at my job at the time and I knew I wanted to further my education but wasn’t sure what I wanted to do. He spoke to me about the program his wife took for Human Resources at AU. I did some research on my own and on the program and decided I thought that, HR might be the path I wanted to take.”

Shara would definitely recommend the BHRLR program to future students, believing that “AU offers the flexibility to work at your own pace.” She stated, “It allowed me to work full time, take care of a sick father, and be a Mom at different times in my life. There was support when I needed it from AU but other than that it was on my schedule.” Although she did not have a favourite course, she revealed, “I really enjoyed all the Human Resources courses; they were my favorites.”

Her proudest accomplishment “was finishing,” stating, “It took me what felt like a lifetime, but I made it.” She feels that her family kept her motivated during her studies, revealing, “I watched my mom go back to school as a teenager and further her education. I knew if she could do it so could I. She kept me grounded and my husband and kids kept me motivated.”

Advising current students, Shara stated, “You don’t have to do it all at once. That’s the beauty of AU. Work at your own pace; you can work full-time, raise a family, and get a degree. Don’t be so hard on yourself and take it one course at a time if you need to.” As for future students, she counselled, “With everything going on in the world especially now online learning gives you the flexibility to further your education on a time frame that works for you.”

Moving on with her career, Shara is “happy to be done” with “no regrets.” When asked about this year’s online convocation, she stated, “To me finishing the program was the most important part of the journey. Yes, it would be lovely to walk across the stage, but I am more excited to get my degree in the mail.”

Despite graduating, Shara plans to continue learning, stating, “I already work in Human Resources and have for years. I am considering now obtaining my professional designation. I want to keep growing and learning in my field.”

Similarly, Raphael, who graduated from the BHRLR program in April, chose AU for its flexibility, stating that “it allowed me to carry out my daily activities without many hiccups.”

“I attended a traditional university several years ago,” he stated, “but it did not allow me to incorporate my daily activities as much as AU did.”

Raphael revealed that he would recommend the program to other students, especially since it teaches how to establish and maintain working alliances in society.

When asked about his favourite course, he stated, “All the courses I took at AU in this program are relevant. However, one of my favourites is PHIL: 333 Professional Ethics. It opened my unassisted view to the corporate world and taught me how business are operated.”

When asked about his accomplishments during his time at AU, Raphael stated, “I enjoyed learning from the best tutors in the world and cherished the experience I gained as a member of the AUSU Advisory Committee.” He managed to stay focused by keeping his eye on the prize and “gaining invaluable knowledge.”

Although disappointed in not being able to attend an in-person convocation this year, Raphael understands that “it is for the betterment of the society so, no regrets.”

He shared some advice for current AU students struggling to complete their degrees, stating, “Keep plugging away, you will get there through hard work, dedication setting goals, and allowing yourself to learn.” As for future AU students considering online education, he stated, “It is well worth it” as he mentioned how AU “challenges you to read and write properly through their numerous research courses.”

Raphael revealed that he will miss the relationship he formed with his tutors and classmates but is excited to “give back” to both society and the world “through work and earning income.” When asked where he sees himself a year from now, he stated, “Only God knows, and I will continue to thank Him for another [year] of excellence.”

Congratulations Shara and Raphael! Students who would like to learn more about AU’s Bachelor of Human Resources and Labour Relations (BHRLR), which examines employment relations in social, legal, political and economic contexts, are encouraged to check out the program website.

Natalia Iwanek is currently completing her Bachelor of Arts in English at Athabasca University and is also a freelance editor and writer. She can be contacted at <https://www.nataliaiwanekediting.com>.

Scholarship of the Week

Digging up scholarship treasure for AU students.

Scholarship name: The FormSwift Scholarship Program

Sponsored by: FormSwift

Deadline: September 15, 2020

Potential payout: \$1000

Eligibility restriction: Applicants must be graduating senior high school students or enrolled in university in a grad or undergrad program. See full [eligibility requirements](#).

What's required: An email with contact and school info, along with a business plan infographic on one of the suggested topics.

Tips: This scholarship is offered quarterly, so bookmark the site for future entry deadlines December 15, March 15, and June 15.

Where to get info: formswift.com/startup-scholarship



Fly on the Wall

The Bombs that Ended the War

Jason Sullivan



August 6th and 9th mark 75th Anniversaries of the nuclear bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. It's sad, but it happened, and the war ended a week later. These attacks, approved by Britain and Canada as per the Quebec Agreement, followed on the heels of not only the Nazi Holocaust but also the Blitz of London by Germany, the Firebombing of Dresden by England, The Rape of Nanking by the Japanese, and of course the "Tora! Tora! Tora!" assault on Pearl Harbour itself. Details on these and countless other atrocities are widely available. War, as the ultimate abomination of our species, reached its nadir during the 1940s. So, if we ever fail a course at AU, God forbid, we can remember that our entire life narrative exists on the basis of the freedoms attained by the blood of so many of our brave predecessors. We literally can't comprehend what life would be like if those war years had ended differently; a flu seems snivelling compared to life under totalitarian despotism. The shattering cultural impact of war is so far removed from the disappointment of a poor mark or the angst of excessive procrastination that the comparison can only remind us to

buck up and, in great Canadian style, *get 'er done*.

Perspective, Perspective.

Perhaps the overall despondence and desolation wrought by so much death and stress was captured best in the final scene of the 1957 film *Bridge on the River Kwai*. After being forced by Japanese captors to build a bridge over a hitherto-impassable river, Allied POW's succeeded, after much subterfuge, in blowing it up. "Madness...madness!" were the final bewildered words uttered by a protagonist.

In the decades after the 1940s, adults who had survived the war were justifiably glad that the insanity was over; many of us young'uns are blessed to have heard our elders' stories before they died. Yet we who embody following generations have a tough time understanding the existential anxiety that our predecessors faced.

The war wasn't about wearing a mask or fearing an invasion; the war was a perpetual sense that our entire civilization was in peril. Nowadays we, by and large, think of our planet's precious condition while maintaining a creepy distance from the consequences. Without random bombs falling or letters home telling of a son's death, calamity seems eerily distant or muffled.

Perhaps, in a small way, this experiential gulf is paralleled by our distance education at AU. We're students in the pressure cooker of academia, but by no means do we inhabit the front lines of the cultural wars and fads of our time. Only echoes reverberate back to us from the front, and this is perhaps the greatest benefit of AU: we can decide for ourselves what we believe about what we are learning.

The Horror, The Emotions

History can seem to elicit one big 'trigger warning', right. A survey of the facts on the ground can only reduce us to further discomfort; there's a reason that statistics are an Eichmanian enterprise. Yes, six Oregonians died from one of the 342 bomb-balloons the Japanese managed to drift across the Pacific. And yes, people were interned in Canada and the States for being "enemy aliens." That'd be horrible, being a legal citizen and then losing your rights. So when a quarter century later the film *Apocalypse Now* brought the spine-tingling catch phrase "horror...horror has a face"

and you must make a friend of horror and moral terror” into some quarters of the cultural vernacular it seemed as natural as a body plunging into a shallow grave. War is hell by choice, no doubt about it. It’s just that most of us aren’t members of the class of people who make the choices that matter.

All that remains from the sordid affair of war is to consider how not to endorse or repeat the same mistakes and, academically, how to put our study struggles in perspective. Another solution to conflict is always possible and sometimes that means accepting a failure to thrive. So, let’s remember that in our studies we are privileged and blessed to have a shot at bettering ourselves; the struggle is real and it’s also really excellent!

Why Attack or Defend, Let’s Learn With Peace in our Hearts!

Why does every moment in the tragic spiral of human history seem to require an opinion? Contrary to vulgar views, our pedagogical purpose as AU students expressing ourselves need not be about making moral judgments. We might want to step back just enough to consider where the meme-ocracy of 2020 has led us in our discursive struggles. Another key line from *Apocalypse Now* seems to provide an answer; treated to a USO show with burlesque dancers the Vietnam draftees are implored by the PT Barnum-esque emcee to remember the mantra of consumer capitalism and enjoy! Meanwhile, the protagonist, Martin Sheen, notes that “Everyone gets everything he wants. I wanted a mission, and for my sins, they gave me one.” Not everything we engage in is for pleasure, and any moment where our schooling feels like suffering we best remember that what’s worth fighting for isn’t always going to be pleasant. Likewise, the urge to judge, particularly when it’s accompanied by a self-flagellating cultural guilt, often circumvents our ordinary cognitive faculties.

The nuclear bombings of Japan were horrible and so was the rest of the war but to consider history academically, and to extend our critical thinking to our own life and our adult education, requires that we distance ourselves enough from our emotions such that we can appraise the context of our situation. Just consider the anecdote that is your life and compare it to an extraordinary example: in 2011 a Canadian POW who had

AU-thentic Events Upcoming AU Related Events

2020 AUSU By-election

Call for nominations

July 24 to Aug 7, 2020

www.ausu.org/governance/elections/

Visit above link for more information

Bannock and a Movie August Edition - First Nation Stories

Aug 1 to Aug 31

Online, Hosted by AU Nukskahtowin

news.athabascau.ca/events/bannock-and-a-movie-first-nation-stories

Access through above link

Talk to a Librarian Drop-in Session

Tues, Aug 11, 9:00 to 9:30 am MDT

Online via Microsoft Teams

Hosted by AU Library

www.facebook.com/events/516644622396035

No pre-registration necessary; access through above link

General Q&A about AU

Tues, Aug 11, 11:00 am to 12:00 pm MDT

Online via Microsoft Teams

Hosted by AU

www.athabascau.ca/online-learning/how-au-works/open-house/

No pre-registration necessary; access through above link

AUGSA Annual General Meeting

Tues, Aug 11, 6:00 pm MDT

Online via Microsoft Teams

Hosted by AUGSA

www.augsa.com/news/notice-of-augsa-annual-general-meeting/

No pre-registration necessary; access through above link

2020 AUSU By-election

Campaign Period

Aug 12 to 31, 2020

www.ausu.org/governance/elections/

Visit above link for more information

The Grad Lounge

Fri, Aug 14, 1:00 to 2:00 pm MDT

Online via Microsoft Teams

Hosted by AU Faculty of Graduate Studies

news.athabascau.ca/events/the-grad-lounge-aug-14

No pre-registration necessary; access through above link

survived a Japanese concentration camp after being liberated by US Marines a week after the nuclear bombings finally received an official apology and thereafter stated the following: "I'm hoping this apology will open up the Japanese secrecy over their treatment of (POWs) during World War 2 in 14 of their captured nations. "The Japanese have denied this for 70 years and have done everything they can to keep their young people from knowing what happened during this period," said MacDonell. MacDonell, originally from Edmonton, spent four years as a PoW in Japan, subjected to what he described as "slave labour" in a shipyard, and later in Japanese mines deep underground. He and the other PoWs living in a constant state of near-starvation and malnutrition.

About 267 Canadians died in the PoW camps from starvation, malnutrition and abuse"

He added: "I don't think they can go on and be a healthy culture by hiding this terrible past of theirs."

(<https://www.ctvnews.ca/japan-apologizes-to-canadian-prisoners-of-war-1.737574>).

And the Fallout?

This August let's remember the tragedy of war and the ironic way that the ultimate weapon brought the carnal devastation to a close. With that context in mind, let's go kick tail at our coursework with gratitude in our hearts and pixie sticks enlightening our brains. At AU the struggle is real but it's not life or death so let's remember to enjoy our mission to better ourselves through education!

References

CTVnews. (2011). 'Japan Apologizes to Canadian Prisoners of War'. Retrieved from <https://www.ctvnews.ca/japan-apologizes-to-canadian-prisoners-of-war-1.737574>.

Jason Hazel-rah Sullivan is a Masters of Integrated Studies student who loves engaging in discourse while working in the sunny orchards and forests of the Okanagan.



Student Sizzle — AU's Hot Social Media Topics

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



AthaU Facebook Group

Angela seeks help to access journal databases through the AU library; an early response points to a library tutorial. Ana wonders if AU will still allow ProctorU exams after the pandemic; the answer is yes for any exam in an online format. Angelica wants to attempt completing one course each month; lots of tips from students who have done (or tried) the same.

Other posts include exam deadlines, AUSU by-election, the Write Site, the future of paper exams, student funding, and courses EDPY 200, HIST 367, and POLI 277.

reddit

A query about how to withdraw from a course that started August 1 receives a few responses with direct info on the withdrawal process and refunds, plus an "it happened to me" rant.

Twitter

@AthabascaU tweets: "We're celebrating The #AthabascaU Book Club's second title with a giveaway! Here's how to win an electronic copy of The Power, by Naomi Alderman! <https://bit.ly/2Ditqac>."

@austudentsunion tweets: "Did you know that AUSU provides FREE access LinkedIn Learning for all #AthabascaU undergrads? Get access to thousands of video training courses on business, creative, technical, and life skills. Sign up today! <https://ausu.org/services/learn>."

In Conversation... with Kevin Keller

Wanda Waterman



Sounds from the Brink of Mortality

Kevin Keller's ambient neo-classical music, using a mix of real and virtual instrumentation, has often been heard in films and on television, but his music is of such a high calibre that it bears up brilliantly under endless repeats as a soundtrack for life. His latest album, *The Front Porch of Heaven*, is set for release September 18.

Recently Keller took the time to answer our questions about his music, his future plans, and the inspiring quality of remembered bliss.

What kind of a childhood did you have, and what elements in it prepared you for a musical career?

I had a very happy childhood and was an inquisitive kid, keenly

interested in the natural world. I also had a very vivid imagination. My dad played guitar a lot when I was a kid, and this inspired me to take up guitar (and later, piano).

What was your most mesmerizing musical experience (this could be listening, composing, or performing)?

The first one that comes to mind was seeing Tangerine Dream in concert in 1986. That show was truly incredible – the music, the visuals, everything! Ever since then, I've dreamed of putting on a show of that caliber. This is something that I'm working on right now.

Your latest album, *The Front Porch of Heaven*, was partly inspired by your recent heart surgery. Can you tell us about the specific experiences that led to the compositions?

In the weeks just prior to the surgery, I thought back about my whole life, and remembered those few times when I felt a deep sense of "knowing." Like the time I looked up in the sky at age 15 and felt a deep sense of joy and gratitude. Or the time that I stood in a grove of trees, marveling at the golden sun streaming through the leaves. Or the time that I ran up a hill to meet a flock of swifts that darted around my head in the afternoon sun. These moments became the inspiration for the album.

How was this experience different from those that inspired your earlier work?

Good question! I would have to say that it really wasn't that different. My work has always tended to be autobiographical and has often been inspired by memories of past experiences, or by experiences that I was going through at the time. Of course, open

heart surgery is much more intense, so I think that this intensity and depth is woven into the music.

I've had your album on repeat for a while. It defies description, but I experience it as profound, real, healing, calming, reassuring, and uplifting. Does it offend you when listeners listen to your music to make themselves feel better?

Thank you so much! It is my hope that people will experience this music in that way, and that it will inspire them, calm them, and reassure them.

Are there any authors, composers, or filmmakers who've influenced your development as a musical artist?

Early on, I would say that Brian Eno, Harold Budd, Tangerine Dream, and Claude Debussy were the most influential. That's the music that first got me interested in making my own music. Lately I've become a huge fan of the film scores of Thomas Newman (especially his score for *1917*, which is truly awe-inspiring).

How do you personally like to listen to music?

Ideally, I like to lie down or sit down in a comfortable place, like a bed or a couch, and listen to music on a really good stereo system through really good speakers. If that's not practical I listen through really good headphones. Eyes closed. No distractions. The best way to listen is through speakers so that the sound can interact with your physical space and with your body, not just your ears.

Do you have a spiritual practice that informs your creativity?

My spiritual practice consists simply of walking in the woods and observing silence. It's basically a walking meditation, and I feel completely alive and at peace in that state.

Did anything weird happen while you were preparing and recording the album?

The one unexpected thing that happened was my decision to put an electric guitar solo in the middle of "The Sky Below." Even though I've been playing guitar since I was six years old, I've never played guitar on any of my albums before this one. It just felt like the right thing to do.

What's next for you?

I've begun putting together all of the elements for a live concert and video special that I've planned for early 2021. The set list will span my entire career, and I'll have as many as five other musicians on stage with me. Right now, I'm working on the music and the set list. Once this is ready, I'll begin working with a producer and a lighting designer to build the show and the visual elements. It's a huge undertaking, and I'm really excited about it.

You can find The Front Porch of Heaven at these and other sites:

Bandcamp <https://kevinkeller.bandcamp.com/album/the-front-porch-of-heaven>

iTunes <https://music.apple.com/us/album/the-front-porch-of-heaven/1521701550>

Amazon <https://www.amazon.com/Front-Porch-Heaven-Kevin-Keller/dp/B08BWFDJMG>

Official Website <https://www.kevinkeller.com/the-front-porch-of-heaven>

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



The Creative Spark

Five Tips for Firing up Stories

Marie Well



What emotions might you feel on the day you graduate? Elated? Worried? Amused? Relieved? Now, take those emotions and put them in a story. What might you see on your graduation degree? Your dying grandmother, peering at you with tears, looking like a frail yet beautiful angel? Or would you see your parents fighting—a tad amusing to you—until you burst into laughter and everyone joins in?

There are no limits and no restrictions to what emotions you might feel. You could feel most anything in the worst or the best of times.

But in stories, there are tricks to make even the most offbeat emotions work.

Let's explore the role of emotions in stories:

Tip #1: Emotional verbs can make a chocolate cake blissful or dreadful, depending on how you feel.

Author Rayne Hall (2017) says, “When you describe something, use words that evoke emotional connotations. Focus especially on verbs” (26%).

In other words, use verbs that smack of emotion.

For instance, you could say “rain caressed her teary cheeks as she trudged over to Grandma's.” (Sounds like Grandma might be full of caresses, doesn't it?)

Or you could say, “the sun slapped at the lost kitten's barren fur.” (This quote hints at abuse the kitten may have suffered. The subtle verb “slapped” may subconsciously alert the reader to the abuse. But, no need to worry because the kitten's new loving owners learn of its past—and take action to heal its wounded soul. Ah, who doesn't love a happy ending?)

Tip #2: Don't be melodramatic.

Rayne Hall (2017) agrees. She says, “Don't use in-your-face metaphors for descriptions. If the [point-of-view] character feels depressed, don't show heavy clouds in the sky. If she's desperate, don't show starving children in ragged clothes, and if she's happy, don't show a field of frolicking lambs. The effect would be melodramatic. Although melodrama has its uses in some kinds of fiction, most novels are better without it” (28%).

In other words, don't say the baby goats at the petting zoo playfully butted heads the day you graduated. Okay, maybe it's okay to say that. It's got some tension. But saying that the sunlight beamed with pride would be a no-no. Despite this, if the sunlight could beam with pride on your grad day, it surely would.

Tip #3: Again, don't be melodramatic. Instead, contrast your emotions with opposite scenarios.

If you're happy, use sad scenarios in an uplifting way. If you're sad, use happy scenarios in a depressing way. This stops melodrama in its tracks.

According to author Rayne Hall (2017), “For a subtler effect without melodrama, choose weather conditions, landscapes and objects which don't reflect the emotion - but evoke the mood through your word choices. Your happy character may see ragged children on a litter-strewn pavement, and you can describe this in a positive way by using words like play, fun, laugh, dance, skip. An unhappy character may see a garden arch covered in roses, and through her filter of experience it's a depressing sight if you use words like smother, cling, snake, droop” (29%).

Anger can make a gorgeous sunrise seething red. Love can make a raging fire pinkish with playful sparkles.

Have you ever watched the hail pound threateningly on your car window? Did you watch it dance on the window, flashing sparkles of light, as the rain painted the car in silky streaks like full bloom willow trees? Or did the hail pound on the window, ready to fist its way into a shattered glass, the glass streaming with water like an endless cry? No two people see an event in the same way, and they might see the same event oppositely. Look for the best in anyone or anything, and the best is what you'll find.

Tip #4: Reveal character with similes.

Rayne Hall (2017) reveals, “A simile is a comparison. You describe something by comparing it with something else. In fiction, you compare something the point-of-view character experiences (sees, hears, smells, touches, feels, senses...) for the first time with something he has experienced previously. Let's say the point-of-view character is John, an elderly man with a chequered past. He visits Mrs. Brown who shows him into her drawing room. You might use a simile like these: “The drawing room looked and smelled like a brothel, overloaded with burgundy velvet and musky perfumes,” or “The drawing room was as stark and sterile as a prison's reception room” (32%).

For another example, your hero might describe a leafless tree as follows: “The barren militant tree stood proud at the stares of curious onlookers.” Might this observation of the tree be from someone who wears her war wounds like badges of honor?

Or your hero might observe a local 7-11 as this: “on the stairwell of the 7-11 hunched a destitute young man who'd glance eagerly from under his ball cap. He looked just like the Mexicans who'd peek up from under their sombreros and holler, ‘Ola, Amigo!’ before requesting a few pesos.”

Guess what country your hero has visited? Yes, Mexico.

Tip #5: Drop story world building hints—and more—through similes.

Rayne Hall suggests, “Well-chosen similes can provide many things at once:

- An impression of the current object or experience
- A clue about the point-of-view character's attitude
- World-building information
- Information about the point-of-view character's background (job, skills, childhood, interests etc.)
- Humour (optional)
- A clue about the point-of-view character's emotions
- Planting an emotion in the reader's subconscious” (32%).

Here are four examples of similes:

Example 1--point-of-view character's history: The chocolate cake oozed cherry cream. It looked like his pierced wound did on the day he saved the puppies' lives.

Example 2--point-of-view character's historical emotions: The lightning lit up the sky like the sparks flew the day he wed his bride.

Example 3--point-of-view character's childhood: The butter chicken weighed heavy in his stomach like the dread he felt asking Marylou for his first kiss.

Example 4—world building: The white rays fluttered around him like Queen Shelby's gown in the great hurricane that took down the monarchy. (That's a subtle way of revealing backstory.)

Now you know tricks to infusing your stories with emotions—and with even new worlds. So, what will you feel and see the day you graduate? Whatever you feel, I bet it would make a great story.

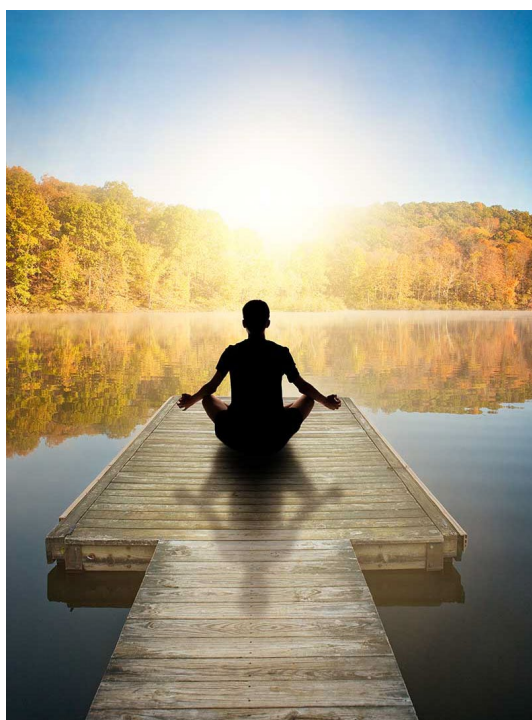
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The Swami Way Voluntary Control of Involuntary States

Alek Golijanin



The word Swami is a title that is awarded to masters and spiritual teachers, and the Sanskrit meaning of the word is “he who is one with his self.” In the early 1970’s a famous Yogi by the name of Swami Rama left a group of American scientists speechless as he proceeded to do the impossible. By controlling his breathing and entering a relaxed state, Swami Rama caused a temperature change of his skin on one palm. He also managed to raise heart rate, at will, from 70 to 300 beats per minute, and he managed to stop his heartbeat for 17 seconds (Elmer, 1977). What Swami Rama had managed to do was thought impossible, and it revolutionized scientific thinking between the relationship between body and mind.

Who Was Swami Rama?

Swami Rama was born in 1925, to a northern Indian Brahmin family in a small village called Toli in the Garhwal Himalayas. Brahmin is a class in Hinduism specialising as priests, teachers, and protectors of sacred learning across generations. As a young boy, he began travelling temple to temple and learning from Himalayan saints and sages. At the age of 28 Swami Rama was formally granted the role of leading monastic tradition.

During one of Swami Rama’s self-isolations in the forest, a group of big-game hunters came across him sitting in the sand and meditating in the midst of many crocodiles. The hunters took a photograph and it was later published in the newspaper. That was the start of his international

fame, and from that point on he became the focus of the research community. By the end of his life, Swami Rama had become an accomplished teacher, writer, and humanitarian, being the founder of the Himalayan Institute.

How Yogic Techniques Work and The Impact of Breathing Techniques

Yoga is an ancient spiritual teaching that serves to help one to master their mind and control their emotions, and this is done through breathing methods and mental focus. The stretching aspects of Yoga have never appealed to me personally, but I do find that breathing techniques help get me in the “zone”. My philosophy with stretching is, “Have you ever seen a lion stretch before it goes hunting? I know I haven’t.” However, after 20 minutes of deep breathing my mind feels focused and sharp, and a sharp mind is the sharpest blade.

Deep breathing is one of the best and easiest ways to lower stress and tension throughout the body. The best way to describe deep breathing is as an exaggerated type of breathing. Through a prolonged focus on breathing, your mind begins to gradually slow and you start to gain control over your involuntary system. This process sends a message to your brain to calm down, and the brain then shares this message with your body. Under stress, your heart rate increases, you breathe faster, and your blood pressure rises, but they all decrease with deep breathing. The great thing about breathing exercises is that they are easy to learn, you can do them at your convenience, and they will help you relax, reduce tension, and relieve stress.

Plenty of studies that have been carried out on yoga and meditation including studies about countering cognitive decline, acting on genetic factors that predispose individuals to stress, improving body aches, easing depression. Psychosomatic illnesses are ones that arise from or are influenced by the mind and emotions rather than specific organic cause in the body. Much of it has to do with stress, but unmanaged stress negatively affects a person’s mental and physical health and can lead to chronic conditions. Yogic techniques are an all-natural way of improving your well-being and they do work.

How That Applies to Us

In today’s world we are bombarded with unnatural stimulants the brain is not built to handle, such as cell phones, music, and a fast-paced lifestyle. If we combine that with a lack of sleep and other unhealthy lifestyle decisions, then over the long run our body will begin to shutdown and our well-being will suffer. Whether you are a student preparing for an exam or a professional with daily work responsibilities, both would benefit by practicing breathing techniques and mental focus. Allocating a small portion of your day to get in mindful cleanse will pay off, but like anything worthwhile it takes time.

Extras

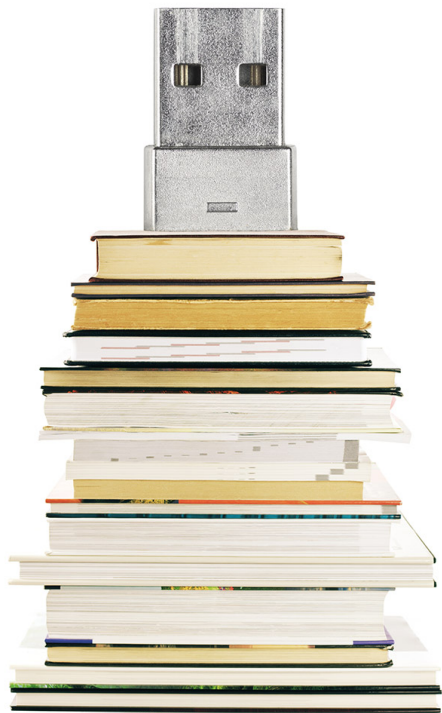
If this topic is of interest to you and you want to further explore it, I recommend visiting Youtube pages [Medit-o-rama](#), [Take a deep breath](#), and [Wim Hof](#). Here is the first [Swami Rama article](#) that appeared in America, in the NY Times back in 1971.

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AU's Transition to Digital Textbooks

Natalia Iwanek



In recent years, AU has slowly begun implementing the use of digital e-textbooks for many courses. Although many students welcome this change, the move has also proved controversial.

Initially, AU began a concerted effort to move online in 2002, of which Athabasca University's eText Initiative is a continued strategy. Over the years, other initiatives included EduSource, the Digital Reading Room, E-Learning Accelerator, as well as projects under the Community Adjustment Fund (CAF) and the Knowledge Infrastructure Program (KIP).

AU's eText Initiative's website statement reveals that they "will proceed with the provision of eTexts, where such media form exists, for all textbooks that are required in its courses. This initiative will assist the university in attaining its commitment to being a fully online university and offering enhanced access and flexibility to quality learning."

While a physical text will not be provided in courses that e-texts are adopted, these e-texts are fully printable, as well as linking students with the publisher to order a physical copy. For more information,

including how to create a VitalSource Bookshelf account, students are encouraged to visit the AU eText website. In addition, ASD students may visit the Learner Support Services website for information about alternative course format materials. Questions to AU for comments to *The Voice Magazine* were not returned.

AU student views have been mixed. In a recent AUSU Council meeting, it was revealed that many students in the MBA program have been displeased with this option. In addition, many students are upset that course rates have not been reduced simultaneously, while others find it difficult to study from an online text. At times, physical textbooks can offer a reprieve from the hours spent in front of a computer screen. In contrast, students who support the change believe that it reduces waste and fits into the approach of a fully online institution.

AU student Amy Mayer stated, "I personally love my eText. I utilize features like search and read speech, which are not available with a physical text. These features allow me to vary and enhance my studying ... all I need to carry is my iPad." Similarly, Chris Marshall echoed this statement, "I like the E-books. My only concern is how long they will be available to us," while Veronica Evtushvski revealed, "I've always purchased eTexts when they weren't provided in courses so this change has benefitted me. I agree with Amy, they are just more functional for my purposes."

In contrast, Shayla Livingston, "dislike[s] not having a choice between an etext and physical book." She stated, "I always end up buying the physical copy because I struggle and use time less efficiently when I'm reading on a computer screen. It's frustrating knowing that I've spent money on the same book essentially."

According to Alice, a first year BA of Psychology, “I truly don’t like that they don’t send us a physical textbook. Just look at the buy and sell feed. Everyone is reaching out looking for textbooks that would otherwise be automatically provided.” Similarly, Amanda Rollison echoed, “Call me old school but I’d much rather have a book in hand as opposed to an eText. That way, I can write my thoughts on the pages and/or highlight texts efficiently. Athabasca should give their students the option to choose their preference on text material.”

Ashly revealed, “I prefer textbooks because I highlight and write notes right in my textbook to save time. Plus, my eyes can’t handle much screen time. A PDF version would be better because then I could at least print it way easier for less than buying the textbook.” Additionally, Jessie stated, “I’d prefer it if they would provide a PDF to use as I have some good note taking software on my iPad and I would rather just import the textbook to it and go from there.” Courtney revealed, “A PDF would definitely be nice! But, I do have to say that I thoroughly enjoy the texts being in an online form. It gives me more opportunities to study as I always have my phone with me. So, if I have a free minute, I can open up my text and do some reading while I’m waiting in line for example.”

Other students, such as Carissa Ward like both options, “I like having the option to look something from your textbook up on your phone just in case, however I prefer a physical copy to mark up and colour-coordinate and leave notes!” Similarly, Chantelle stated, “I think there should be an option for which you want, and a cost difference. I don’t understand how they took physical textbooks away but we’re paying the same amount!”

Mariah Zinnash stated, “I’m all for the use of eBooks so long as we get a slight discount considering this is soon to be our only option due to COVID-19. However. The inclusion of lessons exclusively designed for use with e-texts makes the course material more mobile and ultimately more marketable on the eLearning market. It will allow more people to learn remotely and will ease Canada Post shipping services, freeing the postal system up for the shipping of essentials during the pandemic. The positives out-weigh the temporary negatives and will allow students more flexibility, during a time when adaptability is the only strategy for national survival.”

This move to digital reading has not simply been solely an AU initiative, as other schools worldwide have slowly been switching to e-texts for a variety of reasons, including environmentally conscious ones. Proponents also believe that another benefit of e-texts is their variety of features, including interactive tools, including hyperlinks and additional sources.

However, there have also been increasing debates whether e-texts are beneficial to student learning, in particular, the absorption of material through e-text. Many are also concerned about additional strain in eyesight. In addition, often, online versions are cheaper than physical textbooks, when costs associated with physical textbooks, such as warehousing, selling, and shipping are eliminated. Ultimately, whichever one’s stance, it appears that at online institutions, such as AU, e-texts are here to stay.

Natalia Iwanek is currently completing her Bachelor of Arts in English at Athabasca University and is also a freelance editor and writer. She can be contacted at <https://www.nataliaiwanekediting.com>.

Homemade is Better Falafel Burgers

Chef Corey



I was much older when I first tried hummus and found that I really enjoyed it. So, one day I was at home with my then three-year-old, and I thought we should try falafel.

We looked up a few recipes to give it a try. We immediately loved it! It was crunchy on the outside, soft on the inside, and had great flavour! Then, while visiting my brother-in-law, this bombshell idea comes at me. I couldn't resist, I had to make falafel into burgers. Even though I enjoy meat, I feel it's important to expand your palate. This recipe could also be turned into regular falafel, although, this just seems much more satisfying for some reason.

I hope you enjoy.

Falafel Burgers

Ingredients

2 cans of chickpeas – drained and rinsed
½ cup fresh parsley
½ cup fresh cilantro
4 cloves of garlic – rough chopped
1 red onion – roughly chopped
½ cup oatmeal or flour
2 tsp cumin
1 tbsp lemon juice
1 tbsp Kosher Salt
½ tsp black Pepper
1 tbsp olive oil



Directions

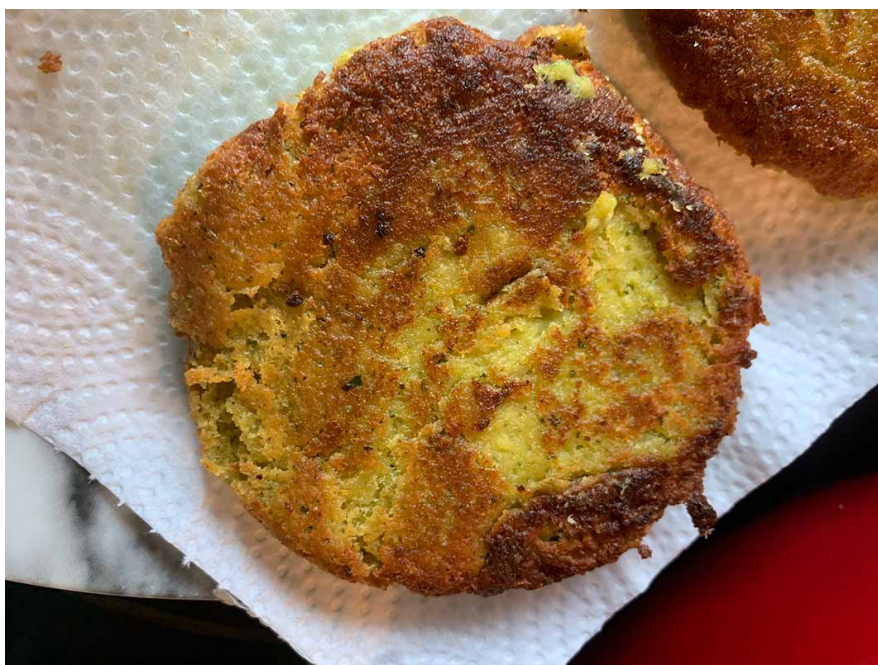
- 1) If using oatmeal put it in a food processor and pulse into a powder, remove and set aside.
- 2) Add garlic and onion to the food processor and pulse until well chopped.
- 3) Add in the cilantro and parsley, cumin, black pepper and 2 tsp of kosher salt, pulse again until everything is well chopped
- 4) Add the chickpeas and pulse again and everything is incorporated.
- 5) Add 1 tsp of lemon juice and pulse again to bind everything.



- 6) If the mixture is still dry add the rest of the lemon juice and a bit of water to make it semi-wet. Taste it and add the remaining salt if needed.
- 7) Add in the flour or oatmeal to bind everything together.
- 8) Remove to a dry surface and form into 4-6 patties.
- 9) Refrigerate, covered, for at least 1 hour or up to overnight.
- 10) Heat a skillet over medium high with 1 tbsp of olive oil. Add the patties a few at a time, be sure not to overcrowd the pan. Let them cook for about 1-2 minutes per side.



- 11) Add to a bun and enjoy with your favorite toppings.



Chef Corey is a student in business management who first graduated from NAIT's Culinary Arts Program in 2007

Beats from the Basement Hooverphonic

Milica Markovic



Album: *A New Stereophonic Sound Spectacular*

Artist: Hooverphonic

I first learned about the trip hop group Hooverphonic when I looked up the soundtrack to the 1996 drama *Stealing Beauty*, only to coincidentally discover their tongue-twister album, *A New Stereophonic Sound Spectacular*, in the comfort of my own basement.

With a title like that, I had to know if the last part rings true. Having heard the album now, I'd say it's *almost* spectacular.

Of Hooverphonic's entire discography, this is the only album to feature lead vocalist Liesje Sadonius, who I feel was a fitting choice for the electronic, dream pop direction they took with it. Her performance has an airy, unworldly

quality that seems to escalate with every song.

Compared to Delerium's *Karma*, there are very few worldbeat elements and no other principle vocalists to interpret each track in their own way. Hooverphonic nevertheless created some variety by fusing an industrial, though tender cacophony and soulful, organic tinges like heavy breath loops to serve as an instrument. As with most electronica genres, the pronounced music makes up for any downplayed lyrics.

Spectacular's songs are mostly relaxed, occasionally interrupted by a quickened pace. The introduction to a track can be surprisingly dynamic, containing multiple styles before, more or less, settling into a main beat. The lyrics themselves are largely ambiguous, allowing listeners to create their own meanings.

One particularly spellbinding song is "Inhaler," which I believe encourages us to embrace nature's wonders. It has a funky downtempo and wistful guitar—odd, yet sensual—for an easy listen.

Even more hypnotic still is "2Wicky", a presumed metaphor for an attempted defense pact, with its surreal take on what we may normally understand to be smooth and groovy blues. The gloomy implications give the song much depth.

The album starts sounding human with tracks like the explicitly romantic "Wardrobe". The flute gives it a mysterious and exotic vibe, as if you're exploring a moonlit sea cave for the first time.

"Barabas", meanwhile, is where we witness a departure to chants and progressive chords. Musically, I don't find it as engaging as the others, but I commend the experimentation. Lyrically,

on the other hand, I appreciate it a great deal as it offers a powerful message about the choice between making a change for the better or regretting not taking that chance later in life.

My only real gripe with the album is the recurring voice that reiterates the album's title. I don't need anyone telling me how spectacular it is; unless it's meant to be comedic, I prefer to be the judge of that myself.

Despite a few reservations, a polished production overall has allowed *Spectacular* to age remarkably well. If you enjoy groups like Massive Attack, you should have no issues getting into Hooverphonic.

Milica Markovic is a Toronto AU student enrolled in the MA-IS program with a BA in criminology and political science.

Marketing Research Better than a Bestie's Birthday

Marie Well



If you love surprises, like your bestie's birthday, you'll love market research. A new pattern will pop out at you, crying, "Look at me. Act on me. Make lots of money." Who doesn't like these eye-openers? But market research is even better than your bestie's birthday. Why? Let's see.

You'll gain not one, but hundreds, even thousands of besties to gift.

Steve Mariotti (2019) says, "Market research ... will help you figure out who your potential customers are, what they want, and how to reach them and get them excited about your business" (19%). Market research sounds just like buying a gift for your bestie: what gift would she love so much that she's excited every time you call? Oh, who doesn't love making a bestie happy. So, meet your new besties: your customers. Yes, not just one bestie, but many.

You can give the best gift—your product or service—to your besties.

The well-thought-out benefits behind your product are like birthday gifts. Every great gift takes some thought, right?

Maybe your gift (your product) is perfume. The benefit might be your bestie attracts true love. Or maybe your gift is editorial services. The benefit might be your bestie looks like a talented writer.

Go right to the heart of your bestie. You want to make her happy, don't you?

You can learn so much about all your compatible besties.

But you don't just want any bestie. You want a compatible friend—lots of them. “The goal of market research is to identify your unique target market—the group of customers most likely to want to buy your product or service—and learn about them” (Mariotti, 2019, 19%).

So, what all can you learn about your new gang of besties? Steve Mariotti (2019) says you can learn the following: “(1) Demographics: Demographics are social and economic facts about customers such as age, gender, marital status, family size (number of children), education, occupation, annual income, and whether they own a home or rent (2) Geographics: Basing market segments on where consumers live or where businesses are located is called geographics (3) Psychographics: Psychological characteristics of customers, such as their attitudes, opinions, beliefs, interests, personalities, lifestyles, political affiliations, and personal preferences, are called psychographics” (20%).

With market research, you can even learn whether your bestie dressed up as Kung Fu Panda on her tenth birthday. And you can buy her the Kung Fu Panda DVDs for her twentieth. But wait! She's too old for Kung Fu Panda flicks, right? Market research will let you know.

You can ensure you remain the bestie by finding your competitive advantage.

You never--ever—want your bestie to find a better friend. You've got to be her number one. So, what makes you amazing? Dig in and name it. Maybe you're loyal, or generous, or kind, or friendly, or nurturing. These traits are your competitive advantage: “Your competitive advantage is the one benefit you can deliver better than the competition Not sure what your competitive advantage is? Investigate the competition, and it will come to you. Get out there and gather some competitive intelligence—information that will help you compare your competitors' strengths and weaknesses with your own” (Mariotti, 2019, 20%).

How do you perform market research on your besties? Try surveys or focus groups. You can conduct “a simple survey of friends and neighbors, which can be completed in one day, to detailed statistical studies of a large population over a long period of time” (Mariotti, 2019, 20%).

You can also arrange a focus group to test your competitive advantage: “Before launching your business, try using a focus group to test your product or service. A focus group is a small group of people from a target market who give feedback about products so changes can be made before the products are launched” (Mariotti, 2019, 21%).

So, why is market research better than your bestie's birthday? Because market research helps you gain hundreds, even thousands, of besties in the form of customers. You can give them the best gifts—your product—through market research. You can learn the good stuff about your besties' lives and passions. And market research can draw out your finest traits—your competitive advantage. Combine your finest traits with thousands of besties, and you've got a business more fun than your besties birthday.

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Dear
Barb

Barbara Godin

Distance Not Easy

Dear Barb:

I am in my early forties and work away from home. My two sons are eight and ten and I have been working away from home for the last four years. I usually manage to make it home for one weekend each month. My wife has been great, but I can see she is getting tired of having to take on all the responsibilities at home. My boys are at an age where they need a full-time father. They are both in hockey and are constantly asking me to come to their games. My wife videotapes most of the games, but it's just not the same.

I am working on my degree at AU and I am hoping to be finished in two years, so I can begin a career in online education. I just don't know if my family will be able to survive another two years of this distance. I don't want to lose my family in this pursuit. I feel like I'm between a rock and a hard place. I'm looking for some advice on which is the best option, continue to reassure my family that the end is near, or give up my dream and look for a job near home. Looking forward to your reply.

Thanks, Jeff.

Hi Jeff:

Thanks for your letter. I have no doubt it is rough having to be away from family, especially when you have growing children. You and your family have an important decision to make and it needs to be made

together as a family unit. Your children need to understand what it means for you to give up your present job and your dream to be home full time.

My question is why can't you do both? Look for work nearby and continue your courses at AU. The advantage to pursuing an online degree is that you can do it all and you do not have to give up your dream. It may take some time to find a compatible job as far as pay and other considerations, so everyone will have to be patient. In the meantime, make the best of the situation you are in. For example, when you are home make it a special time, go to your kids games, watch movies together, go on hikes or camping. Cook dinner with your wife or enjoy dinner out. Make your weekends together free of electronic devices, except maybe for an hour a day to check emails and catch up on correspondence; that goes for your children as well.

Best of luck in the future Jeff.

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.



Poet Maeve
Give up the Poems

Wanda Waterman



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IMPORTANT DATES

- **Aug 10:** [Deadline to register in a course starting Sep 1](#)
- **Aug 12:** [AUSU By-election Candidates Announced](#)
- **Aug 15:** [Sept degree requirements deadline](#)
- **Aug 19:** [AUSU Public Council Meeting](#)
- **Aug 25:** [AUSU By-election](#)
- **Aug 31:** [Deadline to apply for course extension for Sep](#)

AUSU Open Mic – Episode 30!

The Impact of COVID-19 on AU Students

In our latest AUSU Open Mic Podcast, AUSU chats with VP External & Student Affairs Stacey Hutchings on what the impact of the global health pandemic has been on Athabasca University students, and the steps AUSU is taking to advocate on students' behalf during these unprecedented times.

[Click to Listen to this Episode](#)

Starring: AUSU VP External and Student Affairs Stacey Hutchings, AUSU Executive Director Jodi Campbell, and AUSU Governance and Advocacy Coordinator Duncan Wojtaszek.

Check out all AUSU Open Mic episodes online [here](#).

AUSU Open Mic is also available for free on [Spotify](#), [Apple Podcasts](#), [Google Podcasts](#), and [Pocket Casts](#) (search "AUSU Podcast"), and featured on [VoicEd](#).



Win \$100 for Filling out Review!

AUSU has launched new online [Peer Course Reviews](#) for Athabasca University undergraduate courses! The Peer Course Reviews were developed to provide students with a confidential way to rate their course experience at AU, and to provide feedback for fellow students!

Fill out a [Peer Course Review](#) by August 31 to enter to win a \$100 Amazon Gift card!



Prize recipients will be chosen randomly from all peer course reviews filled out by August 31, 2020. Three gift cards worth \$100 each will be given out after August 31. New prizes will be given out quarterly (by random selection) to students who fill out peer course reviews for their AU courses.

[Fill out a Peer Course Review](#)

Find out more on the AUSU website [here](#).



CLASSIFIEDS

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

THE VOICE

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