



# THE VOICE

Vol 29 Issue 03 2021-01-22

## **Minds We Meet**

Interviewing Students Like You!

## **How ASMR Affects Your Brain**

The Sciences of Sound

## **Descarte's Mind Demon**

Attention Span as Suffering

*Plus:*

*Books to Start off the New Year  
Course Exam: Comp 200  
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](http://voicemagazine.org),**  
**and please indicate if we may publish your letter!**

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

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

## Editorial

### The Anti-Climactic Climax

Karl Low



After all the worry, the ominous warnings of violence, insurrection, and revolution, the democratic transfer of power in our neighbours to the south was peaceful. Uneventful, even.

I've read that many of those believing the QAnon conspiracy, people who truly expected some grand reveal in the final moments of Trump's presidency that would expose the depths of the conspiracy to the world, are finally being forced to come to grips with the idea that what they were doing was nothing more than an elaborate fiction and role-playing game. A massive dive into apophenia—perceiving meaningful connections between unrelated things—that was happily exploited by those who could benefit from the tale these people built for themselves. A conspiracy that grew itself through positive reinforcement to members who found the next piece of coincidence that matched and forwarded the already developed narrative, while dismissing any evidence and arguments against it as plants of the conspiracy itself.

Thus insulated and feeding on bullshit, the conspiracy grew to become a movement that we saw the expression of at the Capitol Building in Washington, D.C., with a promise of more to come. More that never did come. If only it was as innocent as that. But five people are now dead.

That's something that somehow managed to get lost in the days that followed, with the worry about the possibility of future violence, with the impeachment of Donald Trump, with so many other things that seem terribly important, it seems that the reality that five people died for a ridiculous lie isn't that important right now. It's not something that we want to remember, but, if you ask me, it's the most important take-away from the entire thing.

Because those are five people that could still be living their lives, seeing their families, perhaps helping other people, if we just learned to be a little more open to the idea that maybe we don't know everything ourselves, and maybe there's reason to hold off rushing to judgement, on anything, until we've had a little time to listen to experts, to see if there's a counter view that makes sense, to understand that, sometimes, the world just sucks and there doesn't have to be a reason or an evil cabal behind it.

I think when we start being able to accept that the world is sometimes senselessly, needlessly bad, and that that's okay because it's only sometimes, we can save ourselves a lot of grief and harm looking for and wishing for explanations that don't exist.

And at the end of it all, this too has passed. More to come did not come.

Instead, life proceeds, and with it, the latest issue of *The Voice Magazine*. This week, we're featuring an interview with our own Xine Xu, and we dig into Descarte's view of the brain and how AU students can tell whether they're actually worn out from studying, or just bored of it. We also have a brief intro to ASMR and meditation. What are they and are they right for you? Plus, of course, events, scholarships, advice, and more!

Enjoy the read!

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



# MINDS WE MEET



Who are your fellow students? It can feel like you are all alone in your studies, but across the nation, around the globe, students like you are also pursuing their AU education, and *The Voice Magazine* wants to bring their stories to you. If you would like to be featured next, do not hesitate to get in touch!

*The Voice Magazine* recently had the chance to chat with Xine Xu from Edmonton, Alberta, located on Treaty 6 territory and a traditional meeting ground and home for many Indigenous Peoples, including the Cree, Saulteaux, Niitsitapi (Blackfoot), Métis, and Nakota Sioux Peoples.

Xine is currently in her last year of the Pharmacy program at the University of Alberta, and has been writing for *The Voice Magazine* and taking courses through AU for several years. In addition to her schooling, she is currently attempting to complete some practicums, “which are essentially 40-hour work weeks.” In the future, she hopes to work in a pharmacy, but mentioned, “The learning never really stops for me. I’m one of those workaholics!”

Although several 400-level psychology courses look appealing, she is very interested in one particular course for next semester, namely PSYC 435: Abnormal Psychology. She stated, “AU has been really great for letting me explore

avenues of interest.” She added, “I’ve always had this passion for psychology and sociology,” leading her to take many of these types of courses at AU. “It’s been excellent – the way that courses are organized, with how flexible it is ... I like the science side, but I’m also so curious about learning from these different disciplines. Athabasca [University] has given me that option.”

Xine was born in and spent several years in Shanghai, China, where she fell in love “with the food and culture,” before moving to Edmonton in 2001. She loves the area, stating, “I’m a big fan of hiking,” and of “the interesting cuisines here of the immigrant communities. That’s always something I’ve been interested in and reflected in my writing.” (Be sure to check out Xine’s regular column, “The Not-So Starving Student” and other thoughtful articles in *The Voice Magazine*!)

When she is not studying or writing, she mentioned, “I used to do a lot of photography. I haven’t had the chance to get out lately, but whenever I’m in the mountains in Banff or when I’m on a road trip, I always have my camera with me.” She continued, “I also really enjoy listening to podcasts as well.” One of her favourites is “How I Built This,” which describes “how people shape their passion projects to a way of life.” She also loves cooking, and recently purchased an air fryer, stating, “It’s been incredible, everything tastes amazing ... Just trying different things in the kitchen keeps you feeling energetic and alive.”

Xine's father has had the greatest influence on her desire to learn. She stated, "He grew up in a rural community. There was really not much opportunity, initially, for him to learn," yet he found ways to obtain books "and consumed them." She continued, "I'm also of that mindset where it doesn't matter what profession, job, or career you have your sights set on, especially in this type of work environment post-COVID era. There's going to be a lot of pivots that people go through career wise, life wise. It's just about being prepared for different things that you might not see yourself doing initially but could definitely make a big impact on your life later on." She does not see herself "being in healthcare forever, or even being in pharmacy forever." She added, "That's what's so excellent about AU and being able to learn things on the fly."

So far, her experience with online learning has been good overall. It "has its own challenges. People think that it's more convenient. You can definitely sit in the comfort of your bedroom and complete some assignments there. Or be in a Zoom call and be in a very comfortable place, as opposed to commuting to the actual campuses. But at the same time, it takes a lot of grit to stay on top of your coursework and feel really supported ... There's so many things competing for your attention. Learning can be put on a backburner if you're not really passionate about what you want to learn." Her advice? "Not procrastinating and really staying on top of things rather than leaving the studying for last minute."

She found her course tutors to be "pretty responsive, [often] within 48 hours," although she has not taken any courses during the pandemic, so cannot say if this has changed. "Previously, it was excellent; I haven't had any issues. If I wanted, they even offered and provided me with their phone number so I could call them at any time."

Her most memorable course so far has been HADM379: Introduction to Epidemiology. She stated, "I actually took the textbook out during COVID[-19] because I was thinking about how contact tracing works, how the whole health system functions during a crisis state. That course just gave you a lot of insights into ...healthcare."

If she were the new president of AU, Xine would "continue to give people choices because you have students from all types of backgrounds." She stated, "During COVID, I've noticed this huge shift in post-secondary education. There's a lot of challenges ahead ...As more and more universities are becoming an online platform, how does AU distinguish itself from any of the international universities? ...Now you're not confined to taking courses from your local university. The strength of AU has always been offering a ...diversity of courses. It has so many options, and the speed that you can complete certain certificates and degrees is incredible. It's all at your own pace, which I love."

When asked which famous person, past or present, she would like to have lunch with, Xine chose SpaceX founder and entrepreneur Elon Musk. She stated, "I finished reading his book not too long ago. What a powerhouse of work, innovation, [and] always about thinking outside of the box. ... I think that he has these wild ideas, what they call 'moonshot ideas;' I soak up that kind of inspiration!" The lunch would be "a rundown of what the meal is like in a spaceship ... something kind of funky that I've never tried before." She continued, "I've seen these space food museums that have all these dehumidified foods. It probably wouldn't taste very good, but it's a new experience!"

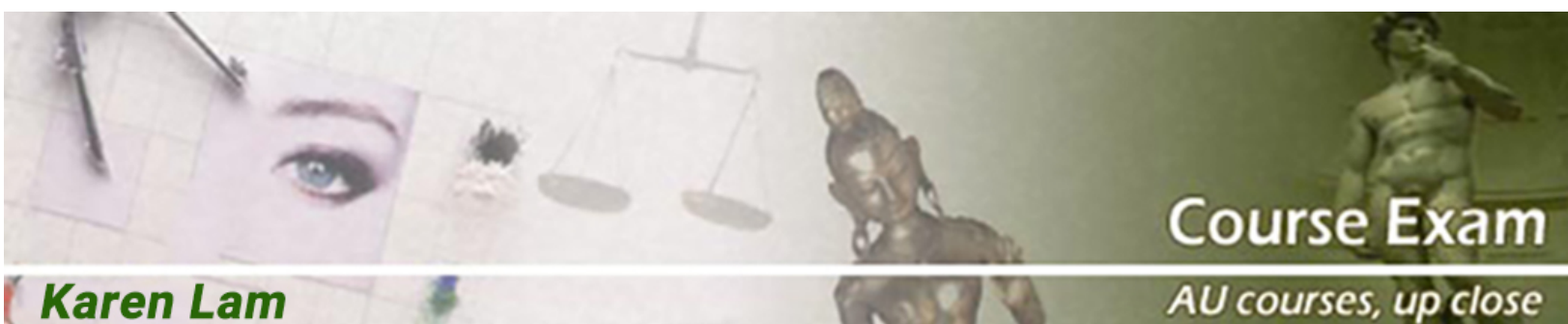
She is currently reading Michelle Obama's *Becoming*, which she called "very inspiring," and mentioned that she is looking forward to reading Barak Obama's new book as well, and is watching "Stephen King adaptations" and thrillers on Netflix, including *The Mist*.

Her most valuable lesson in life came in the form of a quote. As mentioned by Steve Jobs to a graduating university class in the United States, “You can’t connect the dots looking forward; you can only connect the dots looking backward.” She stated, “I think that’s a good way to sum up my experiences with AU. A lot of the courses I take, sometimes at the time don’t make any sense, like Epidemiology. I was just interested in how Ebola was handled, but now I see the relevance of learning about this information and how it applies to the current situation. You never know where that knowledge, where that information will lead you, but you just have to believe that if it’s something you’re interested in, in the current time ... I would just say go ahead and take that class. If it looks interesting to you, don’t ...[ask] ‘How is this going to be applicable to my future?’ Don’t ask those questions because you never know.”

Xine’s proudest moment took place last year during her study abroad program. She stated, “I don’t know if it’s my proudest moment, but I’m glad that I took the step to be part of this study abroad trip ...at one of the universities in Shanghai. I was there for a month. The amount of people that you meet, the networks that you make, the amazing cultural experience ... I don’t think that I will have another experience like that again.” She is proud to have taken “that risk even though at time it may have made more sense to work full time.” She stated, “But I did it anyway, and it worked out because this year I can’t go anywhere.” Her favourite food in Shanghai was *Xiaolongbao*, a “famous Shanghainese street food ... little soup dumplings.” She explained, “How you eat it is you poke a little hole with your chopsticks, and you’ll see some of the soup come out. Then with your spoon, you drink some of the broth while you’re eating the little buns. It’s a lot of fun! There’s a process but it’s a lot of fun!”

When asked what distinguishes her from other people, she stated, “I’m very curious. I like to learn how things work ... I’ll be a student for as long as I live ... I watch all these different documentaries about ... anything and everything you can think of ... I’m just fascinated with how things work.” Best of luck Xine!

*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>.*



**Karen Lam**

**Course Exam**

*AU courses, up close*

**Course Exam**

**Karen Lam**

**COMP 200—Introduction to Computing and Information Systems**

If you have a course that you would like to see a Course Exam article written for, please feel free to email us at [voice@voicemagazine.org](mailto:voice@voicemagazine.org) with the course name and number, and any questions you may have about it, and we will do our best to answer the questions for you!

COMP 200 is a three-credit course designed for Computer Science majors and professionals. For anyone interested in pursuing a Computer Science beginner course but who is not a Computer Science major, it is not recommended for you to take this course. Instead, you should try COMP





210 or COMP 214. The course has no pre-requisites, but if students are concerned about the course, they are encouraged to contact the course coordinator before enrolling.

### **Who and Why You Should Take This Course**

For anyone who is interested in computer science, potentially looking to change careers, or simply looking to gain more knowledge about computing and information systems, this is the course for you! This course offers the basic and important computer science and information systems knowledge suitable for everyone. It is also the perfect course to help you determine if you wish to major in Computer Science. Upon taking the course, I fell in love with Computer Science, and knew that this would be the field I would specialize in. I also learned so much about computers and programming that I found extremely helpful at work. This course not only helped me discover my interest in computer science, but also helped me determine what Computer Science field I would like to specialize in.

Given the increasing demand for programmers, software developers/engineers and the increasingly important role that tech plays in our daily lives, if you are wondering whether to pursue a certificate, diploma, degree or simply take a few courses in Computer Science, I highly recommend you doing so! You will find that having knowledge about computing/information systems is helpful regardless of what work you are doing and even in your daily lives.

### **Course, Assignment, Midterm and Final Exam Details**

Introduction to Computing and Information Systems is a beginner course and consists of six units with six quizzes that are open book and each worth two percent. There are also six assignments for this course each worth three percent. There are three projects each worth ten percent and are designed to give students a hands-on experience. The course does not have any midterms, but there is a closed book online final exam worth 30%. Conference participation is also marked in this class, worth a total of ten percent.

The quizzes are open book and fully multiple choice. The goal of the quizzes is to check student's knowledge of textbook readings. The assignments are written and require students to complete questions from the textbook. Students have the flexibility to select their own questions from each chapter. Overall, the quizzes and written assignments are relatively short and simple to complete.

The three projects on the other hand, require a bit more time to complete. The first project gives students the first-hand experience with programming, the second project requires designing a database, and the last project is designing database queries. The three projects are a great chance for students to determine their interests (or areas they do not like) and help them determine their specializations for their Computer Science program.

For the conference participation, students are required to answer textbook questions in the forum on Moodle or complete an assigned activity. Students are also required to respond to other student's answers in the forums.

The final exam is a closed book online exam and is fully multiple choice. It covers the entire course material.

## **Student Tips**

### **Assignments**

From my personal experience, the quizzes and assignments are relatively quick and easy to complete. However, remember that the quizzes and assignments are designed to test your general knowledge. Whereas the projects are the ones where you will spend more time researching and problem solving. For quizzes, I highly recommend making short notes and having the textbook



open and only referring to the textbook if needed. For the assignments, if you read through the textbook, it should be relatively straightforward. The projects will require more time and individual research. I highly recommend going to the forums if you are unsure where to start. Many past students put valuable feedback and links that will be helpful for you.

### Final Exam

For the final exam, I recommend using Quizlet to study for the exam or cue cards, as the course consists of a lot of memorization and definitions. Once you feel ready, I recommend constantly practicing the quizzes and the sample final exam until you feel you can answer all the questions. I personally did this myself and found myself very comfortable in the exam. Thus far, this course has been my highest mark.

### Tips from Course Coordinator and TAs

When I took this course, this was my very first AU course. I was a bit nervous and worried how I would tackle an online course as all my previous University courses were done in person. I did not hesitate to reach out to my TA who gave me valuable advice and feedback. Since this is a beginner course, students will find an overwhelming amount of material they do not understand, and this is perfectly normal. It will take reviewing the content more than once to fully grasp the material. If you are struggling with the material or certain concepts, please do not hesitate to contact your TA or search on Google/YouTube and watch a video. Practicing is also important and using Quizlet or cue cards are very helpful for this course as there is a lot of content to memorize. When preparing for the final exam, make sure to time yourself to ensure you do not go over the time limit.

### Questions?

If you have any further questions regarding the course, please do not hesitate to contact the Course Coordinator at [fst\\_success@athabasca.ca](mailto:fst_success@athabasca.ca). Happy computing!

*Karen's taking her Computing Science degree at AU, learning French and Korean, and is into K-pop, SF, and politics*



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

National Handwriting Day is January 23, coinciding with the birthday of the original John Hancock. This day of recognition for handwriting was, not surprisingly, conceived of by the Writing Instrument Manufacturers Association (WIMA).

**Your brain on cursive.** Writer and former Voice editor S.D. Livingston contemplates the usefulness of handwriting in an increasingly digital world. "[P]ressing a letter on a keyboard doesn't activate our brains to the same degree that handwriting does." Write Stuff — X Marks the Spot, May 11, 2012.

**While you've got pen in hand.** Janice Behrens makes the case for old-fashioned correspondence. "The sense of your personality that is revealed to the recipient by your penmanship – far more evocative than the use of electronic smilies, bullets, fonts and underlining." The Lost Art of Letter Writing, October 20, 2004.

## Fly on the Wall

### Descartes and His Demons

Jason Sullivan



### Is Attention Span a Form of Suffering?

Ever study so hard your brain hurts? It's common, but not everyone talks about it. Maybe that's because the traditional solution, a brain break, seems obvious. Yet, what if that dull pain behind our eyes is merely our ego deceiving us into thinking that we're suffering from intolerable mind cramps? As we try and cram for that invigilated AU exam, things come into focus and we power through such discomfort. Yet, for the rest of the semester, the tendency is to give in and take a break rather than push our limits. The question of whether what we're feeling is valid, or a justification for what the more vulgar among us term *screwing the pooch*, has haunted philosophy evermore.

Consider how in every moment our mind is there doing the feeling; we are the common denominator in all that we encounter. When we're worn out from studying the feeling is real but is it objectively verifiable? For Rene Descartes, our physical senses were suspect and by no means sensible. Descartes trusted his intellect far more than his senses. While

our eyes can be fooled our minds eye can acquire lucidity when we concentrate. "While I was trying to think everything false, it must needs be that I, who was thinking this, was something" (Descartes in Williams, 347). Wherever we go, there we are.

And therein lies the crux of the matter: to contend with our feelings we must contend with our self as the one who feels. And to succeed at distance education we must make peace with our attention span such that we interrogate our feelings that we may better ward off excess dalliance. Remember, since we were little the concept of a recess was exciting. Less so the concept of studying when we didn't have to. The trick at AU is to make the "have-to"s enjoyable, or at least bearable. It takes discipline, but for Descartes the start is to realize that what's most true in our mind is that we are there prior to sensations of even our mind wandering.

Once we separate our essence from the flighty passions of our distractions, we have a shot at improving our rate of progress in a course. Comparing evidence helps provide context; for instance, if you know that ninety minutes is your maximum time for taking notes without having a conniption fit, then when you feel beat after half an hour you can wager that it's your lazier side running up the surrender flag. We deceive ourselves all the time; think of how different it feels to be full of vegetables than full of pizza, or of doing any enjoyable task rather than engage in drudgery. Our limits tend to be subjective and that includes the limits of what we can know to be true. Descartes was suspicious that, lurking just behind his eyes and masked amidst the belief in intuitive and self-evident truths, was an Evil Demon. This creature, or in the language of what I'd term the modern Industrial Therapy Complex, this core belief, lives like a parasite embedded in our consciousness. Such a rogue could fancifully lead us to believe a fallacy such as that  $1 + 1 = 3$  or, crucially, that we are too tired to do our schoolwork. Happily, Descartes figured that he had an ace in the hole: himself! His incantation went: "...let him deceive me as much as

he wishes, he will never bring it about that I am nothing as long as I think I am something. Thus, having weighed up everything adequately, it must finally be state that this proposition 'I am, I exist' is necessarily true whenever it is stated by me or conceived in my mind" (<https://partiallyexaminedlife.com/2015/08/18/descartess-horror/>). We're always there as the one who thinks and feels, our being precedes our essence in this case.

### Be There Now but are We Ever Absent?

No one takes attendance at AU; our outcomes must speak for themselves. And that's all the more reason why we have to be conscious of our attention span—or lack thereof. Being there and paying attention: that key to academic greatness, or at least a reasonable degree of scholarly success. But wait, when are we not really paying attention? Think of the diligence with which we prepare a hard-won snack between study sessions; our attention isn't costing us the same price as when we do something harder, requiring more assiduous brain linkages.

It seems our brain seems to freeze right when we need it most! Maybe our ego is just lazy and butt-hurt that we're not allowing it to meander whimsically through more pleasurable material. School, like anything that fits a need rather than a want, offends the sensibilities of our ravenous lizard brain that would prefer that all the world be a reservoir for wish fulfillment. Those moments in which we are conscious of our attention are like tree tops above snow drifts; most of our potential to flourish remains beneath the surface. And once we're aware that we're focused, we've already broken the spell of rapture. That'd sure explain why our minds feel sore and exhausted when we study for too long: we've no time to be lost in thought when our attention is directed and programmed by our learning program. That's why the act of looking at one's watch or phone is implicitly a sign of boredom; awareness of time implies a flight from the present.

It may even be that attention span, something we pay as well as something we give, is itself in the nature of suffering. Consider how a key Buddhist text makes of the external sensory world a land of hellfire akin to the infernal fires of Dante Alighieri:

*"The eye, monks, is burning, form is burning, eye-consciousness is burning, eye-contact is burning. The feeling that arises dependent on eye-contact, whether pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral, that also is burning.*

*With what is it burning? It is burning with the fire of passion, the fire of hatred, the fire of delusion. I declare that it is burning with the fire of birth, decay, death, grief, lamentation, pain, sorrow, and despair.*

## AU-thentic Events Upcoming AU Related Events

### Bannock and a Movie January Edition: Our People will be Healed

Jan 1 to Jan 31

Online

Hosted by AU Nukskahtowin

[indigenous.athabascau.ca/bannock/index.php](http://indigenous.athabascau.ca/bannock/index.php)

Access through above link

### Talk to a Librarian Drop-in Session

Tues, Jan 26, 9:00 to 9:30 am MST

Online via Microsoft Teams

Hosted by AU Library

[library.athabascau.ca/orientations.html](http://library.athabascau.ca/orientations.html)

No pre-registration necessary; access through above link

### Wikipedia and Academic Research

Tues, Jan 26, 12:00 to 1:00 pm MST

Online via Microsoft Teams

Hosted by AU Library

[library.athabascau.ca/orientations.html](http://library.athabascau.ca/orientations.html)

No pre-registration necessary; access through above link

### Sticky money: exploring the acceptability of sugar-sweetened beverage taxation among Indigenous populations

Wed, Jan 27, 3:30 to 4:30 pm MST

Online

Hosted by University of Manitoba and The

Faculty of Agricultural and Food Sciences

[news.athabascau.ca/events/sticky-money-](http://news.athabascau.ca/events/sticky-money-exploring-the-acceptability-of-sugar-sweetened-beverage-taxation-among-indigenous-populations/)

[exploring-the-acceptability-of-sugar-](http://news.athabascau.ca/events/sticky-money-exploring-the-acceptability-of-sugar-sweetened-beverage-taxation-among-indigenous-populations/)

[sweetened-beverage-taxation-among-](http://news.athabascau.ca/events/sticky-money-exploring-the-acceptability-of-sugar-sweetened-beverage-taxation-among-indigenous-populations/)

[indigenous-populations/](http://news.athabascau.ca/events/sticky-money-exploring-the-acceptability-of-sugar-sweetened-beverage-taxation-among-indigenous-populations/)

No pre-registration necessary; access through above link



*The ear, monks, is burning, sound is burning, ... and despair.*

*The nose, monks, is burning, odour is burning, ... and despair.*

*The tongue, monks, is burning, taste is burning, ... and despair.*

*The body, monks, is burning, touch is burning, ... and despair.*

*The mind, monks, is burning, thought is burning ... and despair.*

*Seeing thus, monks, the well-informed noble disciple is disgusted\*\* with the eye, is disgusted with forms, disgusted with eye-consciousness, disgusted with eye-contact.”*  
(<https://www.buddhistdoor.net/features/the-fire-sermon-the-third-sermon-of-the-buddha/>).

Our senses, required to read and write and learn, must be subordinate to our mind if we are to cathect our creative impulses into an intriguing mixture that will make our assignments sing. We are not robots; thus, to think mechanistically about learning is as questionable as taking our sense of being brain-bored at face value. It's when we interrogate our sensations using our greatest tool, our mind, that the magic kicks in. Perhaps when our brains feel stymied that's because there's unheralded potential waiting to be unleashed. Catharine Malabou reminds us that we don't always realize how much genius we have, because we're trained to adapt to, rather than transcend, our circumstances: "To ask 'What should we do with our brain?' is above all to visualize the possibility of saying no to an afflicting economic, political, and media culture that celebrates only the triumph of flexibility, blessing obedient individuals who have no greater merit than that of knowing how to bow their heads with a smile." So instead of resisting our brain's call for a break, maybe we can learn to listen to what our brain wants to add to our AU proceedings. After all, learning is about learning how to learn and apply our selves to our studies.

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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.

## More AU-Thentic Events

### Global Studio Lecture Series: Decolonizing Design Equity Workshop

Thur, Jan 28, 9:00 to 10:30 am MST

Online

Hosted by AU RAIC Centre for Architecture  
[news.athabascau.ca/events/global-studio-lecture-series-decolonizing-design-equity-workshop/](https://news.athabascau.ca/events/global-studio-lecture-series-decolonizing-design-equity-workshop/)

Register through above link

### MBA for Executives Webinar

Thur, Jan 28, 10:00 to 11:00 am MST

Online

Hosted by AU Faculty of Business  
[news.athabascau.ca/events/mba-for-executives-webinar-20210128/](https://news.athabascau.ca/events/mba-for-executives-webinar-20210128/)

RSVP through above link

### Talk to a Librarian Drop-in Session

Thur, Jan 28, 3:00 to 3:30 pm MST

Online via Microsoft Teams

Hosted by AU Library

[library.athabascau.ca/orientations.html](https://library.athabascau.ca/orientations.html)

No pre-registration necessary; access through above link

### The Grad Lounge

Fri, Jan 29, 5:00 to 6:00 pm MST

Online via Microsoft Teams

Hosted by AU Faculty of Graduate Studies

[fgs.athabascau.ca/news/events/index.php](https://fgs.athabascau.ca/news/events/index.php)

No pre-registration necessary; access through above link

*All events are free unless otherwise noted*

## How ASMR Affects your Brain

Emily Viggiani



### What is ASMR?

If you've been on YouTube lately, you may have noticed a new trend. That trend is ASMR. It stands for Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response, and it means subtle sounds like whispering, paper ripping, or a fire crackling that gives the listener a tingling sensation on the scalp down the back of your neck.

There are ambience rooms on YouTube. You can be transported to Victorian London, England, the Ottoman Empire rose gardens, or a Chinese Tea Room. You can hear old doors creaking, a pencil scratching on paper, or rain hitting a roof.

### What is happening?

Science cannot explain ASMR entirely yet. However, it is believed that endorphins cause the tingling sensation experienced by this phenomenon. Endorphins are a hormone that is caused by parent-child bonding, they make you feel safe. It makes sense that they would be triggered when girls who do ASMR say they will

lull you to sleep and massage you. I say "girls" because a) it is more common for girls to do these rituals and b) the female voice is more powerful when whispering in ASMR.

### What good will these crackling sounds do?

ASMR is thought to have positive effects on the brain. It is claimed by some as a means to cure insomnia. It is said to relieve stress. The sounds can be a meditation aid. ASMR may also improve digestion and blood flow, improve your mood, and even assist with weight management, though the science is not conclusive yet on any of these.

Also, everyone has a different "sound trigger". Meaning, different sounds can cause tingling sensations in different people. For example, I favour rain hitting a roof. Someone else might react more strongly to the sound of someone getting a scalp massage or a haircut.

### ASMR and Meditation

The connection between sound and the mind has been known by the ancients for centuries, but modern science is beginning to back some of them up now. Many YouTube accounts such as Meditative Mind connect sounds to each of the seven chakras in the body.

As an example, mantras are Hindu or Buddhist words used to help the practitioner concentrate more on their practise. Words like *namo* (homage - as in to the Buddha, the Bodhisattvas, or Hindu gods) or *om* (the most sacred sound in the world, according to these beliefs) are commonplace words in these mantras. I'm so bad at meditating, that to focus on my breathing, I may need to listen to some ASMR or a mantra at the same time.

That's because meditation is not just "doing nothing" - it's a practise. Meditation was initially recorded in history as being a Hindu practise in Ancient India around 1500 BCE. Around the 5th

century BCE, Chinese Taoists and Indian Buddhists started their own meditation practises. The Buddha explained meditation in a lot of detail in his 49 years teaching after reaching nirvana.

### Why Should I Meditate?

- 1) Meditation could cause you to have more compassion for others.
- 2) Meditation on a consistent basis will likely help you focus on your schoolwork more.
- 3) Meditation often helps with anxiety/depression/
- 4) Meditation could make you more compassionate towards yourself.
- 5) Meditation can increase your attention span, improving your ability to concentrate.

There are four steps outlined in Buddha's Four Foundations of Mindfulness. It is not recommended to go out of order if you want to do it properly. I am still on the first of the four foundations. It's said that one of the worst things you can do to your mind is go about the meditation practise the *wrong* way. This can lead to depersonalization (the sensation of your mind floating away from your body), which is a symptom of some mental disorders.

For this reason, I highly recommend that if you want to start meditating, you follow the Buddha's instructions on the subject. Even if you are not a Buddhist, you can read his scriptures and learn how to start a healthy meditation practise from him. If you don't like what he wrote, he won't mind. I promise.

Further Reading:

<https://www.theasmr.com>

<https://mindworks.org/blog/history-origins-of-meditation/>

<https://www.lionsroar.com/the-buddhas-four-foundations-of-mindfulness/>

<https://positivepsychology.com/benefits-of-meditation/>



## Scholarship of the Week

Digging up scholarship treasure for AU students.

**Scholarship name:** EDC International Business Scholarships

**Sponsored by:** Export Development Canada

**Deadline:** February 22, 2021

**Potential payout:** \$4000

**Eligibility restriction:** Applicants must be Canadian citizens or permanent residents, be enrolled in a full-time accredited bachelor's degree program at a Canadian university or college, studying business or business combined with environmental or sustainability courses, be returning to full-time studies for the 2021-2022 academic year, and be in excellent academic standing (minimum B average.)

**What's required:** An online application, including a letter of intent describing your areas of interest and your aspirations, a résumé, official academic transcripts, and an academic or employer reference letter.

**Tips:** Read the [application form](#) carefully for a detailed description of supporting documents.

**Where to get info:** [www.edc.ca/en/about-us/student-programs/scholarships.html](http://www.edc.ca/en/about-us/student-programs/scholarships.html)





## Let Your Voice Be Heard

Adrienne Braithwaite



The pandemic is stretching all areas of our society from health care and small businesses to blurring the boundaries between public and private life. Graduate and undergraduate students are not immune to the struggles of our global crisis, but many are also facing the additional challenge of traversing an entirely online learning experience. Adapting to new technology, participating in mandatory virtual group assignments, and trekking through digital proctored exams are just a few of the things students are having to navigate. But are university administrators actually listening to the needs of students and learning from the mistakes of the Spring/Summer and Fall 2020 semesters? I believe now is the time for students to act, to share their experiences, their frustrations, and their successes with others so universities can improve the 2021 experience for all of us. There is so much power in a story, especially one which is a relatable experience shared by many others going through similar physical, emotional and spiritual challenges. We may not all be “in the same boat,” but we can help prop each other up by throwing out some life preservers.

AUSU’s *The Voice Magazine* is a powerful tool for sharing experiences and creating a sense of community among AU students, alumni and faculty. In a recent article, AU’s Writer in Residence Joshua Whitehead shares his academic and personal journey. I was personally enticed by Whitehead’s comment to “Be wary of the ways in which we, as storytellers, archive or note-take in our lives as people—don’t consume voraciously, be strategic in how we curate our inspirations and our traumas.” Whitehead’s comments show an understanding of the influence of storytelling and its impact on collective identity. *The Voice Magazine’s* writer Natalia Iwanek regularly shares the stories of current and alumni AU students, and if you have a story to tell, I know she would love to hear from you!

The stories and experiences of university students during a pandemic can uplift others and encourage resiliency. UNESCO has started a campaign called #LearningNeverStops where students from all over the world can share their learning experiences, successes, and frustrations during COVID-19. Many of the videos depict innovative ways teachers and professors are adapting instruction in response to new and emergent technology. After watching only a few of the videos I was moved and inspired to try harder and be more persistent in my own studies in 2021. It can be difficult to navigate and stay motivated during online instruction. We expect learning to be social and interactive but knowing others have succeeded through similar challenges can help us be encouraged to stay engaged with our own learning.

One of my favourite things about Athabasca University is the diversity in the backgrounds and geographical locations of its student body. Sharing stories can break across these cultural boundaries to foster empathy, respect, and compassion for others. Miriam Plotinsky, an

education specialist, claims storytelling should be at the heart of instruction as “students engage more authentically with instruction because of the organic human interest.” As an education student, I truly believe stories have the ability to solidify understanding in an educational setting while also strengthening relationships between students.

What stories will we share in 2021? In Canada we are almost at the one-year mark of the pandemic’s direct impact upon our nation and, as university students, we have traversed failing or changing technology, virtual graduations, digital exams, and both library and academic facility closures. We all have a story to share, and possibly our story can change our own academic journey in 2021 as well as the future of online education for incoming post-secondary students. There are many ways we can start sharing our story: it could start with just providing course feedback through [AU’s Peer Course Reviews](#) or completing course evaluations. [The Voice Magazine, right here](#), is another channel reaching AU’s current students, alumni and faculty and is an ideal place for giving opinions, addressing educational challenges and pitching new ideas. At the Voice, we love to hear real lived experiences of students and encourage you to share your story with others.

On a personal note, I am looking forward to change and progress in post-secondary education in 2021. I hope Canadian universities have learned from our frustrations as students and that our feedback has been heard so it can impact change. We are a resilient group who have now faced something no other group of university students have. We are learning to adapt in a different learning environment, and I hope we will come out stronger and more flexible as a result.

*Adrienne Braithwaite is completing her After-Degree in Secondary Education at AU. She has a passion for literacy and cultural studies and hopes to pass on her enthusiasm to secondary students in the future.*

## Brush Aside Bad Thoughts Easily

**Marie Well**



Negative thoughts can be brushed aside, more freely than we realize. And pure love, forgiveness, healing, and faith can replace that negativity in a snap of a finger. If only we knew how simple it is to achieve these positive states. Even during the most traumatic circumstances—the ones where we just want life to end—blissful thoughts can be attained, not just quickly, but easily.

I believe love is our natural state. Anything less than expressions of love is a growth opportunity, and that growth can be attained instantly—even in the vilest of circumstances. And this awareness that we are essentially love, albeit on a flawed human journey, can help us feel self-love, despite negative pasts or present-day trauma. Self-love, or stated differently, self-compassion, not ego, further helps us wash away negativity.

So, how do I think we can brush aside negative thoughts? We can say no to negative thoughts and choose to heal instead, moment by moment. For instance, we might be

side swiped with some unthinkable trauma, so severe, so devastating, we lose all hope for happiness. But if we don't react, especially negatively, but instead think loving thoughts, we could



find ourselves on a healing path within three weeks' time. The shock of trauma fades, not escalates, when fueled with loving kindness.

We might also release negative thoughts by replacing them with forgiveness. If a murderer kills our family, it's possible to do more than grieve (another form of love). We could grieve but also forgive and feel love for the soul so lost, so tormented, on his or her journey that human lives were taken. Grief is complex, but forgiveness comes easily if you believe and realize the true essence of our souls, which I think is pure love. Forgiveness can be possible for the worst crimes imaginable and certainly for the least of slights, even when the least of slights feels like the worst offense or when the worst offense leaves millions of lives devastated.

I believe we can shrug off any negative thought, such as doubt, replacing it with the most beautiful thoughts. I find it's so easy to find faith—whether in God, our family, even our enemies—when we simply brush aside doubt, replacing it with unfiltered love. And we can do something similar for all our loved ones. When they do a deed that lowers our perception of them, that stirs up doubt in our love for them, just shrug the offense off. That critical eye is neither intrinsically us nor beneficial, nor is love finite.

And, yes, I believe thoughts can be shoved into our heads unwillingly. Just look at people who have OCD, bearing recurring and terrorizing thoughts—and these are good people. We're all good people, despite the hardships and traumas we all face, fumble over, and, at times, fail at. We're all on a journey where self-development, especially during hardships, is our destiny. We're all good people, even when some force pushes negative thoughts into our minds or when circumstances pull us onto a harrowing path. But our true essence is instantly accessible if we just realize we are all beings of love, every one of us, despite each of us being flawed, however severely, on our journeys.

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

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

### AthaU Facebook Group

Getting things done, eventually: A long-time AU student seeks assistance setting up a student email account for the first time. With the link and password long buried, the usual steps don't work so an AU staff member provides a link to the IT helpdesk.

### Discord

Shopping in our underwear again: a discussion about the merits of various laptops leads to a hot tip for an online discount retailer of computers and accessories.

### reddit

It's easy when you know: a student is apprehensive about the unlock code requirement to access an exam, but others explain that the invigilator (ProctorU in this case) will enter the code.

### Twitter

@austudentsunion tweets: "Want some great info on the Canada student loans and grants process? Check out this new video from the National Student Loan Service Centre (NSLSC)! <https://bit.ly/2LU4Lg2>."





## Books to Start off Your New Year

Karen Lam

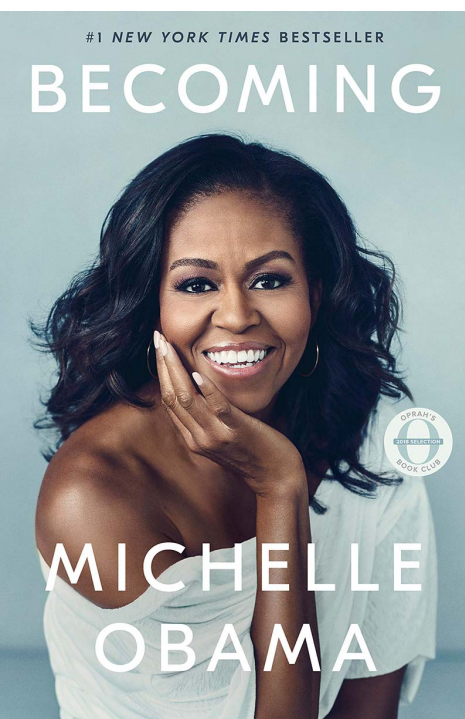
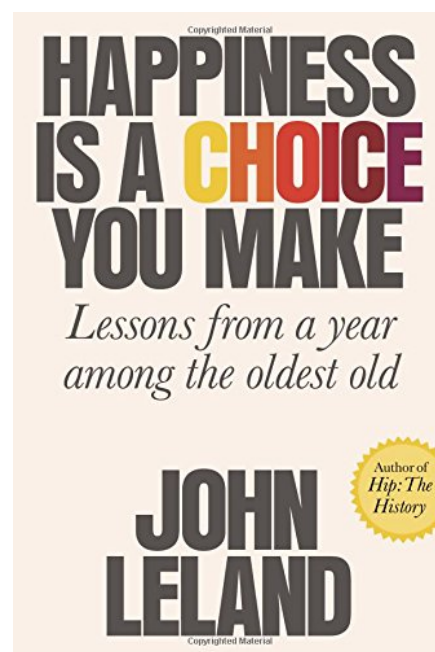


2020 was a challenging year for all of us. With the pandemic, it has impacted us in many ways and as a result, we all had to adapt to a new normal. Here we are, starting 2021, still living under a pandemic, however, now with vaccines rolling out, we can finally see the light at the end of the tunnel. Let's all start 2021 off strong and start over, change our lifestyle if we wish, start a healthy habit and keep the good ones going!

New Year is always a great time for us to reflect on the previous year and look ahead. No matter we have in mind, reading an inspiring book can help us set our priorities and goals!

### **Happiness Is A Choice You Make by John Leland**

*Happiness Is A Choice You Make* is a book written by John Leland and is compiled of real-life stories of members of America's fastest-growing age group. Readers look into the many lives of those members learning to live with new challenges, loneliness, deterioration of body, mind and quality of life, and how they each live their lives with surprising positiveness, lightness and contentment. It is a beautifully written book reminding us that we all carry strong power to control our own quality of life no matter what age we are. As we start 2021, this book brings to us a reminder that although the pandemic still stays with us as we begin the new year, we ultimately have the power to control our own happiness.

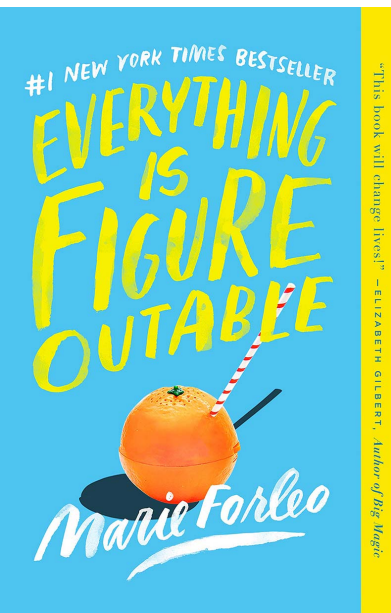
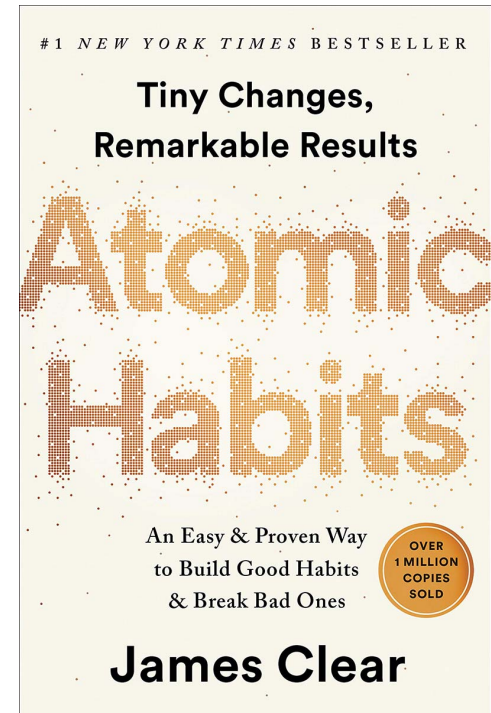


### **Becoming by Michelle Obama (Book and Netflix Documentary)**

*Becoming* is a book written by Michelle Obama, and is also a documentary that is available on Netflix for those who wish to watch instead of reading. The story is a poignant and emotional memoir of the former First Lady of the USA. For those who haven't read it yet, this is a must read as it delivers a powerful and uplifting message about preservice and defying expectations that we all can benefit as we start the new year.

### **Atomic Habits by James Clear**

As we start 2021, we have new goals that we would like to achieve. To ensure we achieve our goals whether academically, for work, or for family successfully, it is important that we have good habits. Good habits will help us to successfully work towards our goal and complete it. Of course, we all know it is much easier said than done. For example, most of us have made a goal at one point of promising ourselves to get more exercise or to avoid procrastinating on an assignment/studying for exam, but it is extremely easy to not follow through. The reason is because creating a new habit is challenging without understanding the science behind it. *Atomic Habits* explores the psychology of habit formation and why many our goals fail. The author James Clear provides step-by-step instructions on how to successfully make goals and habits work!



### **Everything is Figureoutable by Marie Forleo**

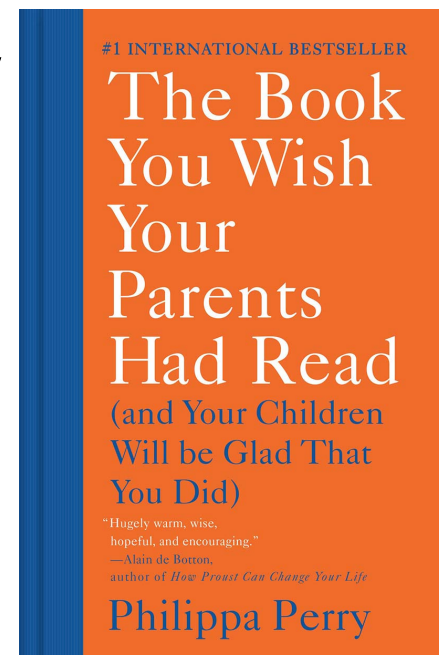
Looking for a light and inspiring book to pump you up for 2021? This may be the one! Author Marie Forleo explores many life problems and gives you answers. Whether that problem is how to face a fear, successfully fulfill a dream, or find an answer to what seems to be an unsolvable puzzle. Forleo gives readers a new way of thinking to solve your problems. The author brings readers motivation and inspiration even when life gets rough. This book is a light, motivating and inspiring book to give you optimism as we start 2021! Let's all start 2021 with strong optimism no matter how challenging the year may look.

### **The Book You Wish Your Parents Had Read (and Your Children Will Be Glad That You Did) by Philippa Perry**

Being a parent is a challenging task. For all to-be-parents and existing parents, this is a recommended read on what to look for, support, and be a good parent to your children and partner. Psychotherapist, Philippa Perry writes about essential "do"s and "don't"s of relationships. Even if you are looking to understand your own upbringing and how it has helped you become who you are, or seeking to understand and handle your child's feelings, or just simply hoping to support your partner, this book is a must read. Perry provides realistic and insightful information and tips for everyone.

Regardless of what your goal is for 2021, whether it is academic, work, or family goals, we hope that these books will bring you tips, motivation and inspiration as you start the new year.

*Karen's taking her Computing Science degree at AU, learning French and Korean, and is into K-pop, SF, and politics*





## Homemade is Better

### Beef Wellington

**Chef Corey**



Are there many other dishes that sound as sophisticated as beef Wellington? Possibly. Lobster, souffle, crème brule—these might be a few. What if I told you that you could make this dish at home, and it will cost around half of what you might pay at a restaurant!? The most expensive part of this dish will be the tenderloin, a 2-3 pound tenderloin roast might set you back \$20-\$25 per pound. Many restaurants might charge \$30 or more per plate, and I was able to get six servings using this recipe for what would be an approximate cost of \$180 from the restaurant just for the main courses, while you might pay \$50 - \$75 for the tenderloin. Keep in mind that beef prices change by the season and by the distributor. A company like Sysco will charge a restaurant more than a smaller distributor, but you don't always get what you think you're getting.

The beef industry is an interesting one, as different distributors will charge different prices depending on how long they age their meat, how they age their meat if it's steer or cow that the meat came from, the age of the animal, and

the grade of the meat. In Canada, a steer that has been graded as AAA is thought to be the best grade you can purchase. There is a better grade, the grade of Prime. It's not generally available to you or me because it is given to less than 2% of all Canadian beef, and the chance that you or I will see it in the grocery store is significantly less than that. Most of the Prime grade meat is sold to restaurants or internationally.

In my steak article, I briefly discussed the different cuts you can get and touched on grading. To receive the AAA or Prime grade, the animal needs to be a castrated bull, also known as a steer. It must be younger than two years old, but that's an approximate age as the Canadian Food Inspection Agency and the Canadian beef grading agency don't give an actual age. Once the steer is considered mature, it cannot be graded in the top letters: A, AA, or AAA. If you've ever seen commercial-grade meat, that could be an older steer. It could also be an older cow, the female, though I believe most of the meat from cows goes to make dog food. But don't quote me on that; I could be wrong.

The next factor that affects the price is aging. I do not mean the animal's age, but rather the time from when the meat has been removed and packaged from the animal. There are two ways to age meat, dry aging and wet aging. Most meat nowadays is wet-aged, it is vacuum packed at the processing plant, and, as long as it isn't frozen, it will continue to age or develop that beef flavour. It starts to break down some of the enzymes in the meat. The longer you age it, the more flavour it is supposed to have. This also has a cost associated with it, and companies that have aged their meat 28 – 30 days can charge more. You can buy beef for cheaper though, Costco, for instance, often sells meat that is minimally aged. If you look at the tag on it, you'll notice that its processing date is usually seven days before







when you bought it. That means that the meat has only aged for the required one week before production. So, if you happen to buy a whole striploin or tenderloin, you'll need to put it in the fridge as is for the next month to get that restaurant quality ageing if you want that. Dry ageing is when the producer will put the meat in a temperature-controlled environment and leave it for a set period, 28 days, 30 days, 50 days, whatever they decide. The benefit of dry ageing is the flavour. It is a more robust beef flavour than wet ageing; however, you can lose up to 25% of your meat's weight, and you have to trim off the dried outer layer, losing yet more of the meat. It might be another 5-10% if you know what you're doing. That also adds a cost; in the culinary world, we call it a yield loss. You take the weight of the meat before drying, then the weight after ageing and trimming. Divide them, and the number left over is the yield. Now you increase your price per pound by that yield.

For wet ageing, you don't lose as much weight; thus, it's cheaper. The yield cost increase would be figured by a similar process: your weight before ageing, then open the bag and drain it, dry it off, weigh it again and increase the price by the difference in yield.

Now you have an idea of why some places charge different prices for their beef. So, that grass-fed 28-day dry-aged steak that is \$100 at your favourite restaurant has a reason for it. It's not just an arbitrary price that restaurateurs charge, or at least the ones that know what they are doing aren't just making up a price.

But back to the Wellington. There is a process to this recipe, and it will take time, but your efforts will pay off when you taste how delicious this is. And if you wait until I release my recipe on brown sauces, you'll be able to make a great sauce to go with it. But a standard gravy works just as well!

Follow these instructions very closely; it helps to make an excellent meal for your loved ones. And with Valentine's Day coming up, it could be a great meal to try, especially since COVID will likely be still very active!

I hope you've learned something new today, and thank you for reading my articles! I am always amazed when I hear of people who read these and make the recipes!

## Beef Wellington

### Ingredients:

1 LB mushrooms – chopped up fine  
 Onion- minced  
 5 cloves garlic – minced  
 8 – 10 slices of Prosciutto  
 ¼ - ½ cup Dijon mustard  
 2 – 3 lbs Beef Tenderloin Roast  
 1 roll of puff pastry  
 Pepper  
 1 egg yolk  
 1 tbsp cold water



**Directions:**

- 1) Chop up the mushrooms, onion, and garlic until the mixture is very fine.
- 2) Heat a non-stick frypan over medium-high heat.
- 3) Cook the mushroom, onion, and garlic until there is no moisture left.
- 4) Put the mixture in a food processor and pulse until it forms a paste.
- 5) Heat a metal or cast-iron frying pan on high, with a tbsp of oil.
- 6) Generously season the tenderloin with salt and pepper .
- 7) Sear the meat on all sides until browned.
- 8) Place in the fridge to cool.
- 9) Layout two long strips of plastic wrap, approx. 1½ - 2 feet long each, and overlap them.
- 10) Lay the prosciutto side to side, just barely overlapping.
- 11) Remove the tenderloin and cover it with the mustard.
- 12) Place it on the prosciutto so that there are 2 inches of room on either end of the meat.
- 13) Roll the prosciutto and meat in the plastic wrap and roll the wrap tight.
- 14) Place this back in the fridge for 30 minutes to 1 hour.
- 15) On a floured surface, roll out the puff pastry so that it is 2 inches longer than the tenderloin; this may require more than one sheet of pastry.
- 16) Spread the mushroom mixture on the pastry, but leave 1 inch on all sides clear.
- 17) Place the meat at the bottom of the pastry, but on the mushroom mixture.
- 18) Mix the egg yolk and water; using a pastry brush, spread some of the yolk mixtures on the clean edges.
- 19) Carefully roll the pastry and meat into a log using the plastic wrap—roll the log tight.
- 20) Cool in the fridge for 1 more hour and set your oven to 400F.
- 21) Once the oven is ready, grab a baking tray and place some parchment on it.
- 22) Remove the Wellington and brush it with the remaining egg wash.
- 23) You can use a fork to put in fun designs if you're feeling creative.
- 24) Bake the Wellington for 20 – 39 minutes or use a probe thermometer set in the center of the meat and remove it when the tenderloin has reached between 120 and 135F. Any more than that and the tenderloin is overcooked.
- 25) Let it rest for 10 – 15 minutes, then use a bread knife to cut 1-inch slices
- 26) Enjoy with some red wine, baked potatoes, and broccoli or cauliflower, or whatever other sides you wish!

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







Dear  
Barb

Barbara Godin

## Anxiety After COVID-19

Dear Barb:

*Hi, I have pretty much been at home since this pandemic began and I've been okay with that. I suffer from social anxiety, so during the lockdowns and closures my life has been stress free. The only person I see is my husband, and I video chat with my mother who is staying safely at home.*

*However, with the vaccines beginning, I fear what will happen when I have to start going out again. I fear my anxiety will be at an all time high, and I wonder if I will be able to function. We will be expected to not be fearful of other people but I don't think that will just happen automatically. How will people like me who have been able to stay at home comfortably be able to cope? It's all too much for a lot of people, and I think anyone with mental health issues will have a super hard time adjusting to their old way of life. Where are these people going to turn for help? Maybe I'm just seeing a problem where there isn't one, what do you think? Thank you, Samantha.*

Hi Samantha:

Great question! According to research there is going to be a lot of mental health issues which will carry on long after the pandemic is over. The social isolation, hand washing and distancing will definitely impact people long term, although history has proven that these are important ways to halt the spread of the virus and hopefully get our lives back to normal.

"Historically, we know that pandemics and other public health crises, much like natural disasters, have a lasting impact," said Itai Danovitch, MD, chair of the Department of Psychiatry and Behavior Neurosciences at Cedars Sinai Hospital.

Individuals who already struggle with OCD or are germaphobes, will experience an increase in their symptoms and will most likely have to receive ongoing treatment after the pandemic is over. Those who experience anxiety, as yourself, will also feel more anxious and these feelings may continue long after this virus is gone, as they may fear a resurgence of a variant strain. As well, individuals, like yourself, who experience social anxiety and have become comfortable living in isolation, will have a difficult time adjusting and may become resistant to opening up their lives to others after the threat of the virus is under control.

Historically we have survived many disasters such as Hurricane Katrina, Chernobyl and SARS just to name a few, and as a result much research and studies have been, and are presently being carried out, to find ways to help individuals cope with the after affects of COVID-19. Fortunately there have been some positive affects, as you have witnessed in yourself. Individuals have experienced a reduction in panic attacks due to living with less stressors, from the outside world and living in a safe environment that they are able to control. Although there is a risk of becoming too isolated, the takeaway is to find that important balance.

Your concern is genuine, but it appears there are some preparations in place to deal with the long term affects. Thank you for your letter Samantha, and there is a light at the end of the tunnel.

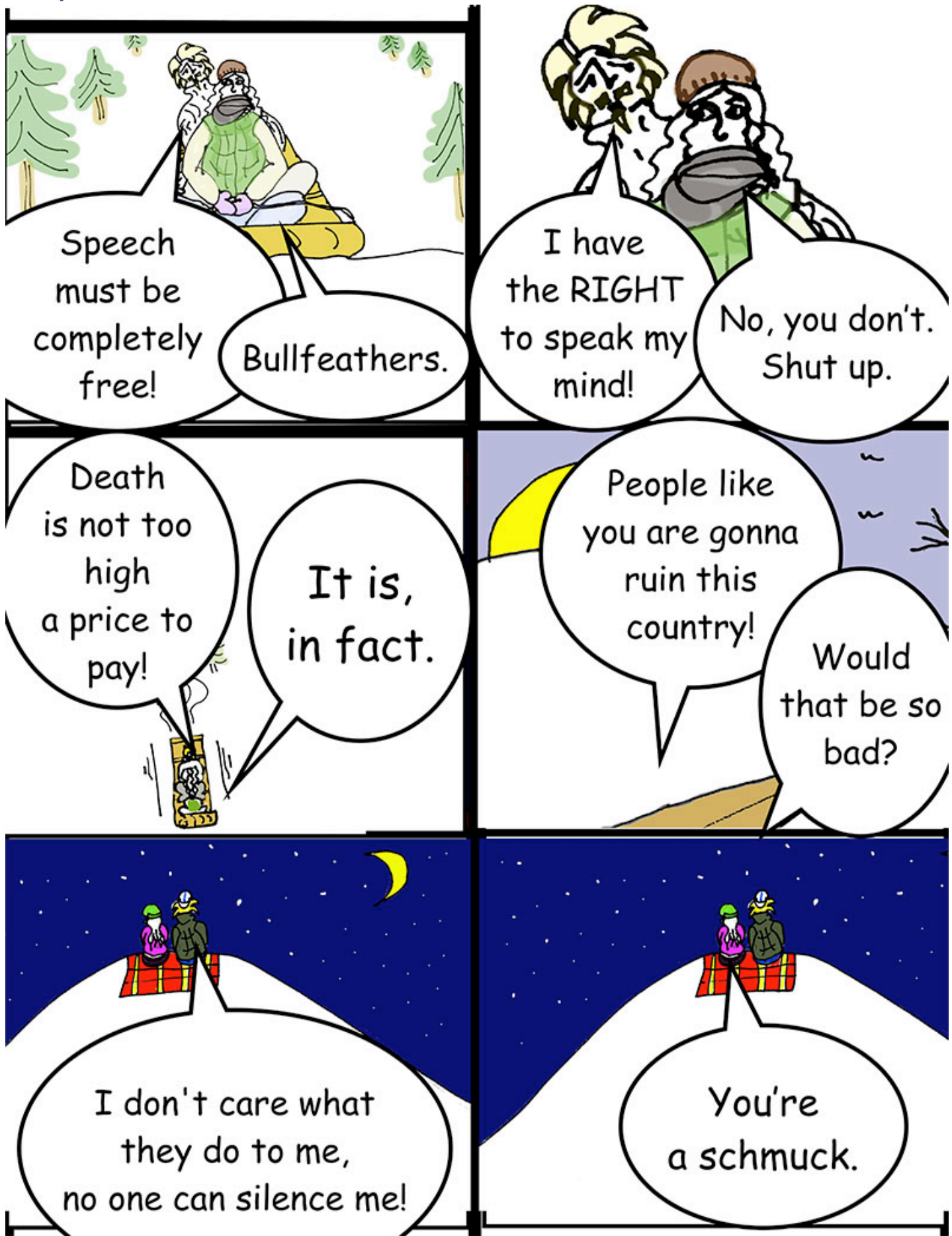
*Email your questions to [voice@voicemagazine.org](mailto:voice@voicemagazine.org). Some submissions may be edited for length or to protect confidentiality; your real name and location will never be printed. This column is for entertainment only. The author is not a professional counsellor and this column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





Poet Maeve  
Free Speech

Wanda Waterman



The information on this page is provided by the AU Students' Union. The Voice does not create this content. Contact AUSU at [services@ausu.org](mailto:services@ausu.org) with any questions about this article.

## IMPORTANT DATES

- Jan 30: [Deadline to apply for course extension for Mar](#)
- Feb 10: [Deadline to register in a course starting Feb 1](#)
- Feb 11: [AUSUnights Virtual Student Social](#)
- Feb 15: [Mar degree requirements deadline](#)
- Feb 17: [AUSU Public Council Meeting](#)
- Feb 28: [Deadline to apply for course extension for Apr](#)

## AUSU Inspire 2021 Contest

AUSU is giving away \$10,000 in prizes to AU students to help ring in the new year! We want to hear from AU students about what inspires them while studying at Athabasca University.

Post a story, comment, favourite quote, or picture to social media about what inspires you while studying at AU, tag @AUSStudentsUnion, and be entered to win a \$250 Amazon gift card.

**We have 40 gift cards available, totalling \$10,000 in total prizes!**



### How to Enter the Contest:

1. Post a picture, story, quote, and/or comment about what inspires you while studying at Athabasca University to Facebook, Instagram, or Twitter.
2. Tag @AUSStudentsUnion in your post.
3. Be automatically entered to win a \$250 Amazon gift card (40 available)!

### Deadline to Enter: February 10, 2021

*Must be a current AU undergraduate student to qualify. Students who enter the contest agree to allow AUSU and AU to reshare their post on AUSU social media platforms. Winners will be selected by random draw after the contest closes.*



## New AUSU Open Mic Podcast

AUSU chats with the new Vice President External and Student Affairs Natalia Iwanek about several new initiatives from AUSU, including the AUSU 2SLGBTQIA+ Coalition Discord Server, the new virtual food assistance program, and joining the Council of Alberta University Students (CAUS). We also talk to her about her path to AU and the many, many different places she has lived.

[Click to Listen to this Episode](#)

*Starring: AUSU VP External and Student Affairs Natalia Iwanek, Governance and Advocacy Coordinator Duncan Wojtaszek, and Executive Director Jodi Campbell*

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



## AUSU Executive Blog

In our latest AUSU Executive Blog, our VP External and Student Affairs Natalia Iwanek talks about her experiences during COVID-19 and how the doors are opening for accessibility and accommodation. She also gives some updates on some exciting new initiatives from the Students' Union!

Check out the Blog online [here](#).



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# CLASSIFIEDS

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## THE VOICE

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