



THE VOICE

Vol 29 Issue 04 2021-01-29

Minds We Meet

Interviewing Students Like You!

Navigating Movie Night

The Politics of Picking a Film

Don't Zap Isolation

A Shocking Study

Plus:

A Rant on Pizza

*What a Small Town Taught Me
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

Cancellation Considerations

Karl Low



Sometimes I feel a bit old. This week, for instance, was the 25th anniversary of my marriage. I remember when I was a kid, 25th anniversaries were the domain of old people. And yet even though we're marrying older, for some reason it seems those with 25th anniversaries are younger than ever.

Perspective makes all the difference it seems. This week, I find I'm thinking about cancel culture. The idea that what you do in one realm of your life, even in the past, can have ripple effects across all of it. Some people rage against the idea, but really it's just an effect of modern technology making public who we are. Most of what people get "cancelled" for they would have been cancelled for in any event if there was hard proof that they were doing it.

But before, because what was done wasn't necessarily recorded and preserved forever on the internet, you could be as heinous as you wanted in private and never have to deal with the repercussions in your public life. That's changing. And I think it is in some ways a bad thing for those of us caught in the transition period. Many of us who've been given, if we're honest, too much leeway to be jerks when we think people aren't looking, are going to have rude awakenings. Overall, though, I expect it will be a good thing, as it will make people realize that being a good person isn't just something you do in public, and thus force people to look at how they truly act through all aspects of their lives.

I tend to feel that people being made to be self-critical will end up with positive effects in the long run. Maybe we'll learn how to express our anger and frustration with situations and people in a way that helps bring change, rather than just seeks to attack or tear down what we don't like.

Like anything, though, it can go too far, and we're going to have to learn how to differentiate between things that we just don't like, and things that are actually causing damage—such as inciting violence or hatred toward specific groups. Does using a racist epithet justify "cancellation", for instance, or merely condemnation? I think we can all agree that anything advocating violence or destruction of an entire peoples certainly deserves to be shunned by society and those at large, but for lesser offences it gets trickier. I have more thinking to do on the issue.

In the meantime, be sure this week to check out our interview with student and AUSU Councillor Devon Romanick, and the Fly on the Wall's look at how an AU student deals with isolation—and how we're better off than the poor people who did an isolation study as reported in Time Magazine.

Also this week, new writer Savannah Ugo starts off with advice on how to make the difficult choice for movie night to pick something that works for your entire social group, even across COVID enforced distances. Between "what should we watch" and "what should we eat", you've covered probably half the conversations between myself and my partner over the last twenty five years, so this helps.

Plus we've also got scholarships, advice, recipes, events, news, random rants and thoughtful articles on everything from pizza restaurants to Ukrainian Christmas. Just a selection of the vast group that makes up *The Voice Magazine*. Enjoy the read!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Karl', with a stylized flourish at the end.

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 AU student, and AUSU Councillor, Devon Romanick, currently living in St. Jacobs, Ontario, located on the traditional territory of the Neutral, Anishinaabeg, and Haudenosaunee peoples.

Devon was born in Calgary, Alberta, before moving to Ontario with her mother at a young age. They lived in Toronto and Kitchener before moving to the small farming community of Atwood, Ontario. Devon later moved to Halifax, Nova Scotia for two years in her early twenties “just to experience the East Coast,” and attend college. She currently lives in St. Jacobs, Ontario with her children “after being all over the place from West to East!”

Devon is in her third year of the Bachelor of Commerce program, stating, “I just dropped my major last year, so I’m in the General Studies to allow for more electives for a legal focus.” She would like to attend law school when she completes her program, with hopes of enrolling at the Bora Laskin Faculty of Law at Thunder Bay’s Lakehead University.

She plans to apply “with three years of undergrad,” stating “If I can fast track it even a year that would be great!”

Although she initially struggled with the thought of being a mature student, now, she stated, “I almost find it easier because I know things, and I have had personal life experience that has helped me in my classes. I know things now that I wouldn’t have known at 24.”

When she is not studying, she is “very outdoorsy.” She and her children “do a lot of hiking, a lot of spelunking [cave exploring and], snow shoeing in the winter.” She stated, “We all have kayaks, so we’re all out on the lake usually every weekend in the summer months. I think our lifestyle doesn’t allow for an abundance of free time, but if it’s free, we’re outside.”

Her mother has had the greatest influence on her desire to learn. She stated, “My mother taught herself coding; she taught herself how to program. She didn’t have any formal post-secondary and ended up making it to a senior IT position with a huge life insurance company. She’s incredible. She had a desire to learn, and so she took every avenue available and put in so many hours. I remember when it was just my mom and I when I was a kid; my mom was always tending

to my needs but also, on the side, fitting in all this other learning. She just moved her way up, and she stayed with that company for thirty five-years, constantly learning, constantly growing. I think it showed me that there shouldn't be barriers to education; you have to have that desire. You have to have the desire, and you have to push forwards and go for it. She's pretty incredible!"

So far, her experience with online learning has been positive, following a brief learning curve. She explained, "I've done traditional brick and mortar college and so the first semester was difficult. It was a bit challenging to start and create that schedule and stick to it." She continued, "I work the best under pressure."

"It's tough not to leave everything until that last month. I also found it tough not having that in-class support with your peers, bouncing ideas and sharing ideas. But once I figured out different class forums for different courses and got used to that general format, it became a lot easier. As somebody with a lot of anxiety, I almost kind of embraced it. That I could work independently and focus."

Despite the positives, Devon mentioned that she wavered about continuing her education during her second year. She explained, "I wondered if it was worth it; the road just seemed so long. I thought at this age, I have enough experience that I could go out and get a decent job. 'Why am I doing this at this point in my life?' And then a very good friend of mine ... [asked] 'Has anyone ever told you how incredible you are? You're just doing this. Here you are, you're parenting, you're running a house, you're working, you're studying – with these goals.'" This was "like a refresher on what [her] goals were;" she stated, "I have somewhere that I want to go. I have somewhere where I want to be. I got to keep going, for me. And I want to show my kids that it doesn't matter how old you are. Life should be continuous learning. It's all about setting good examples for younger generations."

Her most memorable course so far has been LGST 390: Women, Equality, and the Law, even though all her law courses have been interesting thus far. She revealed, "It really touched on a lot of issues that were near and dear to me as a woman and as an adult in society." Topics included a woman's right to choose and the gender pay gap. It also introduced Devon a many different perspectives. In addition, her tutor was "amazing!"

She finds course communication with her tutors to be "so-so." She explained, "There are some really great tutors." She continued, "They go above and beyond with things. Then there are others that you can't track them down." She continued, "I think that there could be a lot more improvement. I think that the university could push a little harder for tutors to be more accountable to the students." She stated, "This is our future. We're paying for this, we're putting in the time and the work and the effort. It should be returned."



If she were the new president of AU, Devon would “make marking and feedback more consistent” with “faster turnaround.” She “would really enforce that,” stating “I think that is kind of a core to a lot of anxiety with students. You’re running through a course, and you’re not really sure how you’re doing.” She continued, “With independent study you never actually know until you get that feedback. I would definitely do an overhaul on the tutors and get everybody streamlined, and put in some strict deadlines for marking and feedback.”

Her pet peeve school wise “are late markers or tutors who don’t give a mark back for weeks.” On a personal level, she chose “rude people who belittle others.” She explained, “I have no trouble, now in my adult years, calling that out if I see it happening. I’m part of a 519 community outreach program, and it’s about raising awareness and changing attitudes toward homelessness and people who are struggling. Just some comments that you hear really get under my skin.” She is currently making snack packs and “period packs for women, which is something we don’t think about being such an issue, but those products are expensive.”

As for a person, past or present, who she would like to have lunch with, Devon chose empanadas and coffee with Maya Angelou. She stated, “I’m blown away by her messages of empowerment and peace.” She continued, “Once I went to see the Dalai Lama. He came to Toronto and I got tickets. And I felt like a better person just for going.” She stated, “Maya Angelou would be that tenfold! I feel like she would make me strive to be a better person. She just has this heart of gold, and she’s like a modern-day Mother Theresa. She’s lovely.”

Her most valuable lesson learned in life has been patience. She stated, “I’ve never been a particularly patient person.” However, she has changed in the past seven years, explaining, “There’s a lot of value in developing patience.” “We look back on life and realize how much we’ve missed.” She continued, “We all need to just step back, and have a little patience.” In addition, “Good things come, and they take a while to build. We all need to just take a deep breath and enjoy life. We only get one, and we’re here only for a limited time.”

Her proudest moment “was making the Honours List at AU.” She stated, “I was on the Honour’s list after college, but I didn’t have children, and I didn’t work full time.” She continued, “I was nervous about that coming into a bachelor’s degree. It’s next level. With so many family responsibilities and commitments, I was worried that I would even make the grade. Getting a notification that I made the Honours List that was a pat on the back moment.”

She is currently reading *Where the Crawdads Sing* by Delia Owens “and loving it.” She stated, “I have a love for the Deep South, North and South Carolina especially. This book takes place in North Carolina, and I’m loving it. I’m only halfway through, but I would recommend it.” Devon mentioned that she has a friend in West Virginia, who she had the opportunity to visit two years ago. They took a road trip to Asheville, North Carolina. “It was my first time eating all sorts of great Southern food, like biscuits and gravy and pimento cheese. I like I could just live there and eat my way through life!” As for her favourite Southern dish, she chose pintos and chow chow [relish] and pimento cheese. “I can’t pick between the two; they’re delicious. I never thought of pinto beans as an interesting food to eat but add a little bit of chow chow and some shredded onions and it’s delicious, especially on a biscuit!”

As for a TV show she is currently watching, Devon chose Season 1 of *Virgin River* on Netflix, “because I had to watch something that gives me a little bit of a study break; kind of light and not heavy,” as well as the last season of *Lucifer*. Best of luck Devon!

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>.



Fly on the Wall

Don't Zap that Splendid Isolation

Jason Sullivan



Gregarious people can become AU students, but the reality of individualized study tends to speak for itself. Ours is not a social butterfly experience replete with hallways full of chatter and leisurely times lounging with peers in a dormitory. Study for us typically consists of our meek humble selves studiously applying our skills within the walls of our chosen cave of solitude. Isolation allows us to transcend our social context and that's where learning propels us forward. Easier said than done, to be sure!

To excel at our studies, we must harness our self-starter impulses and find a means to manage our natural mind drift. If only because our foraging brains may prefer to explore in any direction other than deeper into the disciplined realm of our course material. The struggle is real, not least because we'll never be saved by the bell—at AU, class is never quite dismissed. The endless possibilities for study, crammed into whatever interstitial crannies of spare time we can find, can turn into a bit of a nightmare. It's like being on call for a job

only you're the boss *and* the employee. So naturally, we might metaphorically feel like we'd rather stick our fingers in a light socket than suffer another minute of worry over our schoolwork. Anxiety really does bite, and it turns out that the psychology of isolation has been documented.

From Pop Culture to Time Magazine Or Is There a Difference?

Wherever electric shocks are implicated humor cannot be far behind, especially when combined with the intrigues of the all-too-human mind. Consider the classic film *Ghostbusters*, where Bill Murray is able to drum up a date from one of his erstwhile research subjects, doing so at the expense of a male of the cohort. By lying about the lady's telepathic prowess, he flatters her into submission while the real savant suffers blow after blow from the electric zapper apparatus. Disgusted, the victim storms out shouting "you can keep the five bucks!". The joke is on us at AU, though, if we don't remember that we are in charge of our destiny, free from egomaniacal instructors. And we are the one's paying our piper in terms of our future.

Usually when we think of an electric zap, and some of us rural AU pupils grew up around electric fences as a temptation if not a reality, we think of playful times rather than a realistic entertainment option. After all, the whole punchline of the *Ghostbusters* scene, like the joke of a real electric shock, is about human interactions and not physical reality. We at AU can be our own best or worst task masters but the fact of the matter is it's down to us to be the academic magic we imagined for ourselves when we first bought the ticket for the distance education ride.

Zap, Zap, Getting Our Motivation Back!

If we're feeling sapped it helps to remember that we're some of the few students who can accomplish the impossible: working at our own pace and finishing what we start. The rat race was invented as an outgrowth of authoritarian factories replacing the self-set pace of the "putting out system."

Where once a family with a loom would put out their production outside their hovel for the owner to pick up weekly, industrial whip-meisters came to demand constant attendance at the old 8-to-5 penal-style worksite. The former system still exists in some places, such as the Yucatan peninsula where certain traditional hammocks are created, but as anyone familiar with our realm of Amazon corporate factories and business-model education knows, panopticon settings with surveillance and attendance checks are the modern norm. Not comfortable with an ankle bracelet monitoring device? Say hello to demands for cellphones to be on your person at all times.

Would You Rather?

Without a taskmaster, many students fall away from their studies never to return; however, there is evidence that distance education success rates are on the rise. Nevertheless, academic anxiety can still draw down the power of anyone's temerity. Anxiety over being alone with one's thoughts or alone with one's coursework, may correlate. Think of all the time we spend distracted by our surroundings and you get an idea how hard it is to maintain concentration on something that essentially only exists in our private mental domain.

Even as our goals transcend our context, we must find a way to be in the here and now to accomplish the little things that actualize our learning. But it's not easy, as a recent research study reported in *Time Magazine* shows us.

The premise of the research was simple: stick some candidates alone in a room for "6 to 15 minutes" with nothing but their wits, their thoughts, and a buzzer causing a self-induced electric shock. It may sound a bit like the worst moments of AU study struggles, only these psychological lab rats had a less pleasurable out than effing around on crackbook, playing with mindless cellphone apps, or texting with friends they met during Zoom meetings. And guess what? Compared to another treatment group who was given "mundane external activities," what elementary school teachers to this day term *busywork*, respondents in the solitary isolation group didn't like sitting alone one bit. So how did they cope? Enter the ace in the hole to really test mental priorities: the electric shock option.

Researchers found that "people would rather stick their finger in an electric socket than sit quietly and think. Or rather, men in particular: 67% of male participants in one study "gave themselves at least one shock during the thinking period," write University of Virginia psychologist Timothy Wilson and his co-authors. On average, the study participants who elected to self-zap gave themselves 1.47 shocks in a 15-minute interval — "not including one outlier," the paper says, in an impressively straightforward way, "who administered 190 shocks to himself." ... Women were far less likely to shock themselves, with only a 25% participation rate."

So much for the stereotype that women worry more than men do! While the self-administered electric shock wasn't exactly akin to a digit in a light socket it certainly wasn't a pleasant option. And yet, apparently, any port in a storm beats being a lone beacon in one's inner existential lighthouse.

Not surprisingly, the researchers concluded that "most people seem to prefer to be doing something rather than nothing, even if that something is negative." Despite mention of negative "ruminative cycles", that the researchers blithely claim can be corrected by assorted therapies, the take-home message for us at AU is this: if we are to succeed in our studies we have to not only be comfortable with being alone with our thoughts, as we sort and organize our minds to write those elegant essays and study to write erudite exams, but we also have to learn to face the solitary mental realm of academia without constantly resorting to distractions, no matter how shocking.

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.

The Politics of Picking a Film for Family Movie Night

Savannah Ugo



Family movie night, that hallowed Friday tradition to cap off a fruitful week is one of the most rewarding yet controversial activities that a household can share. Amidst varying tastes, moods, and the unspoken law of “who picked last,” is there possibly a common ground amongst movie enthusiasts, a simple code that can be followed to ensure cinematic bliss? Matching the right movie with the right mood, the identification of a no-fail genre, and other considerations can be difficult, but with careful scheduling, planning, and strategic allotment of popcorn rations, this mythic activity may be achievable.

An excellent starting point for the novice movie planner is the identification of a no-fail genre. Is there a film genre that your

entire posse consistently enjoys? If so, try to save this genre for movie nights after a tough day. Even if the genre that you choose isn't Oscar worthy, it may still be good for a few laughs or an hour and a half of enjoyable hate-watching. It can also be rewarding for your group to shout out potential ending guesses halfway through the film. Also, don't rule out popular franchises. Sometimes they make five sequels for a reason.

Much movie night success depends on matching the right film to the right mood. Maybe don't attempt that intense thriller after you've had a harrowing shift at work. Alternatively, viewing a poetic and scenic film based on a true story might not work out as an engaging flick right after you've just spent the past several hours studying a dry topic. Try to feel out the mood of your group beforehand. Drop the titles of potential film candidates, then watch carefully to see if they are met with enthusiasm, anger, or apathy.

An important aspect of movie planning is identifying your target audience. True movie enthusiasts will likely be willing to watch nearly anything. There is, of course, always the danger of encountering the kind of viewer who would rather read a book. My experience is that such a viewer can usually be coerced into watching an old-timey musical or an art or foreign film. Somewhat related to that viewer is the movie-goer who reveals (unfortunately while already halfway through the movie), that she would rather watch a tv show. There is no dealing with such individuals, aside from the intuitive responses of turning up the volume, shooting them a glare, or a voicing a resounding “sshhhh!”

The current pandemic restrictions may pose a bit of a challenge to the novice movie planner, but the movie professional remains unfazed. With such tools as screen sharing on Zoom, group watching on Disney+, or WhatsApp, there are still many viable options

for a virtual movie night that are available to movie enthusiasts right now. Zoom viewing an exciting flick through screen sharing is no doubt all the more suspenseful because the film is liable to freeze at any unpredictable spot, no matter how crucial the plot point.

Group watching allows you to share moving cinematic experiences with your friends, along with the ignorant bliss of not being able to see if they are checking their texts in the middle of it all. And texting through WhatsApp, while not actually allowing you to view a movie together, may still be useful for a brief, pre-film prediction session that is at least likely to stir up a bit of much needed controversy before each member of the group goes to watch the film on their own. Alternatively, if you already have enough members in your immediate household to view a film in person, that's perfectly fine too.

The selection of a movie night film is one of the most noble and selfless acts of recreation available to us right now. With careful premeditation, you, too, can succeed at such a task, and provide a much-needed recreational outlet for your family and friends. And if absolutely all your attempts fail, there is always the old-fashioned alternative of a family or friends board game night instead.

Savannah is an aspiring animator, baseball player, and pyromaniac (actually she just really loves s'mores)



Student Sizzle — AU's Hot Social Media Topics

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

AthaU Facebook Group

A library that lends books: one student's query about the loan term for AU library books leads to other students discovering that actual books can be borrowed from AU's library.

Discord

The horror: One student's revelation that coffee causes tummy issues prompts much concern and advice. Nothing helped, but love was in the chatroom. Not specifically a school topic but, coffee!

reddit

Good question: a student who enrolled in three courses is perplexed that her verification of enrolment says she is part-time, yet she meets AU's definition of a full-time student. Still waiting for a clear answer on this one.

Twitter

@AthabascaU tweets: "For all you early birds who like to study first thing on a Saturday morning, please note that VitalSource will be undergoing system maintenance from 6-7 a.m. on Feb 27. Access will be unavailable during that time. Sorry for the inconvenience."



A Rant: “The Best Pizza in the City” Does Not Exist

Jeff Shermack



I’m going to avoid naming any specific restaurants in this article because frankly I like pizza in any form, and I don’t want any pizza maestros reading this to decide that I might like it a little more with saliva added to the top.

With that short disclaimer out of the way, let’s continue.

Somewhere in the city where I live an expert chef is tossing a starchy parachute of dough into the air while someone else in the kitchen is cooking a delicious sauce next to a table of resplendent ingredients. Across town, a pimply teenager is sliding a pre-shaped slab of dough into a greasy oven, caked with years of blackened burnt sauce and cheese. Either of these two places could offer the best pizza in the city. Before you read the rest of this article, close your eyes and picture what you think is the best pizza place in your city or town. Now prepare a tablespoon of sugar and brace yourself for the next words I’m about to write.

(Please do not actually eat a tablespoon of sugar. I can only imagine the unhealthy response my own body would have to such a gross intake of raw sweetener).

That place you imagined is not actually the best place in your city, not because something is wrong about your chosen pizza slingers, but because the concept of the best pizza in a city is a fallacy. Such an object or location does not exist. It can’t. I am willing to concede that there is one situation where my declaration isn’t true, but we’ll get to that at the end of the article.

I’ve already heard all the objections to my declaration from other people:

“This place has the highest rating in the city.” “This place was on a TV show.” “This place has the best ingredients.” “This place has the cheapest prices.” “My friend Todd works at this place and he told me that they definitely wash their hands.”

All the reasons that people use to claim one restaurant or another offers the best pizza are also the reasons that none of those places can truly be the best pizza joint in the city. The principle behind this claim is simple: not everyone is looking for the same thing when it comes to pizza.

A specific pizza place in my city was recently recommended to me as the best place in the city. That recommendation was quickly followed by an addendum where I was told that they also had a three-hour wait and stopped taking orders after a certain hour in the evening. They also don’t deliver and they’re a half-hour drive away from my house.

“But the toppings are the best I’ve ever had,” said my friend.

The only situation in which this pizza is going to be the best for me is if I eat it sitting in my car while the steam from the open box fogs up my windows and hides my embarrassment from the world. However, for the individual who recommended this pizza place to me, who happens to live only five minutes away and doesn’t mind calling three hours in advance of when they want a pizza, this place is the best in the city.

Anywhere you go to get pizza, you're going to encounter this binary relationship. Somewhere with cheap pizza is also going to have cheap toppings. Somewhere with great tasting pizza might also charge you twenty-five dollars for a 12-inch pie. (This happened to me). For those with healthier diets than mine, that's generally the size of a medium pizza. Somewhere that your friend claims is great might be down the street from them, but forty-five minutes from your house. In that case, you could have a second pizza delivered and be eating it by the time that first pizza gets to your front door.

The point I'm trying to make here isn't that you shouldn't like your favourite pizza place. It's that there are so many factors and personal tastes involved with pizza, there's no possible way that one place could ever be the best place to order a pizza for every person living in a single city or town. Except for one situation.

If the city or town you live in is so miniscule that there is only one place to order a pizza, then I must concede, that is absolutely the best pizza in the city. In every other situation, keep on ordering from the place you imagined in the first paragraph of this article. It might not be the best in the city, but isn't that fine as long it's the best for you?

Jeff Shermack was studying English, writing SF and interested in experiments with storytelling structure. This February he'll be graduating from AU, getting ready to take on the real world.



Karen Lam

Course Exam

Phil 371—Ethics in Science and Technology

Course Exam

AU courses, up close

Karen Lam

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 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!

PHIL 371 (Ethics in Science and Technology) is a three-credit philosophy course that “provides an introduction to the special ethical problems and issues associated with science, scientific research, applied science, and technology.” PHIL 372 is considered a Humanities course, and has no required prerequisite, but recommends students to take PHIL 252 and one university-level science course beforehand. PHIL 371 can also be challenged for credit. Ethics in Science and Technology is a philosophy course that explores questions such as “should research be conducted on animals, and if so, under what conditions?” and “What ethical issues arise a result of our increasing use of computers?”

Who and Why You Should Take This Course

If you are someone with a science or technology background, this course may fall in your interest! This course explores ethics behind science and technology and allows us to see the ethical issues that are often overlooked or forgotten in these fields. This course will expand your knowledge

and understanding of the world and allow you to be more well-rounded and think more critically. Upon taking this course, I personally started to develop more interest and did more readings on ethical issues in a wide range of topics.

Course, Assignment, Midterm and Final Exam Details

The course itself is comprised of eight units, starting with an Introduction, then delving into Ethics and Moral Reasoning, Research Ethics: Human and Animal Experimentation, Professional Responsibility and Whistle-Blowing, Bio-Engineering and Nanotechnology, Computer Ethics and Machine Ethics, Military Technology and Ethics, and lastly, Technology and Humanity. Students will be evaluated by two assignments. Assignment 1 requires students to write three essays, each with 500 – 700 words on three topics (students are provided with six topics and are required to pick three of their choice) for 30% of their total mark. Assignment 2 requires students to discuss either a case that they construct, or construct their case in approximately 2,500 words, and is worth another 30% of the final mark. There is no midterm for this course. The final exam for this course is an online exam that is worth 40%. The course does not include a textbook, instead students will be provided with many different articles to read for each unit.

Student Tips

Assignments

As this course is a philosophy course, you can expect to write and analyze for assignments. To prepare and successfully complete this course it is important to avoid cramming, if possible. Writing typically requires time to research, write and lots of editing. It is important to follow assignment criteria provided and properly reference. When writing for the assignments, make sure to select a topic you understand and feel comfortable with. If you have questions, do not hesitate to reach out to your TA for help.

AU also has a website (<https://www.athabascau.ca/write-site/>) that students can visit for tips, help, links to assist with academic writing. This website is useful for all writing courses and is not limited to this course.

Final Exam

The final exam is an online final exam divided into two parts. Part A is made up of short answer questions that require 200 to 400 word paragraph responses to the five

AU-thentic Events Upcoming AU Related Events

Bannock and a Movie February Edition: nîpawistamâsowin: We Will Stand Up

Feb 1 to Feb 28

Online

Hosted by AU Nukskahtowin

indigenous.athabascau.ca/bannock/index.php

Access through above link

Talk to a Librarian Drop-in Session

Tues, Feb 2, 9:00 to 9:30 am MST

Online via Microsoft Teams

Hosted by AU Library

library.athabascau.ca/orientations.html

No pre-registration necessary; access through above link

Talk to a Librarian Drop-in Session

Thur, Feb 4, 3:00 to 3:30 pm MST

Online via Microsoft Teams

Hosted by AU Library

library.athabascau.ca/orientations.html

No pre-registration necessary; access through above link

Writer in Residence:

Joshua Whitehead, "On Bodies of Writing"

Fri, Feb 5, 2:00 to 3:00 pm MST

Online

Hosted by AU Faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences

news.athabascau.ca/events/joshua-whitehead-on-bodies-of-writing/

RSVP at above link

The Grad Lounge

Fri, Feb 5, 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

No pre-registration necessary; access through above link

All events are free unless otherwise noted.

different questions provided. Each question is worth ten marks. Part B of the final exam is a long answer essay question. This part of the exam requires students to write 500 to 800 word essay responses to two different questions provided. Each question is worth 25 marks.

The best way to prepare for the final exam is to review all the course material thoroughly, ensure you understand the material and ask your TA if you have any questions, review the Study Guide and check answers to the practice questions in the Study Guide and lastly, review the learning outcomes of each unit. Don't forget to review the feedback provided for your assignments as well to ensure you do not make similar mistakes on the final exam.

Tips from Course Coordinator and TAs

Dr. Chris McTavish is the Academic Coordinator for PHIL 371, and has been with AU since 2010. Dr. McTavish currently coordinates seven Philosophy courses at AU, including PHIL 371. Dr. McTavish research interests include ethics, phenomenology and the philosophy of film. An interesting fact is that Dr. McTavish co-host a weekly podcast entitled "Philosophy in Film". For those interested in philosophy, you should try listening to these podcasts as they are very intriguing and interesting to listen to!

Dr. McTavish states that PHIL 371 "is a great course for students who are looking to think critically about the intersections of ethics, science, and technology. The concluding unit discusses how emerging technological forces have impacted fundamental features of the human condition, such as relationships, friendships, and information sharing."

Questions?

If you have any further questions regarding the course, please do not hesitate to contact the Course Coordinator/Assistant at ilagace@athabascau.ca. Happy studying!

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

There's a designated day for just about everything, so no surprise that the Curmudgeon's have their own day on January 29. Curmudgeon is a colourful term to throw around and a couple of our writers have done just that.

Not all editors, surely. Writer and former Voice editor Christina M. Frey invokes cranky editors while presenting the rationale behind grammar and usage rules. "Just like a three-piece suit blends in well at a formal party but would look silly on at the beach, so does formal language seem out of place in, say, dialogue between teens." The Writer's Toolbox—These Rules Were Made for Talking, February 28, 2014.

The Great Divide. Dual-citizen Wanda Waterman compares issues and opinions on both sides of the Canada-U.S. border. "[Americans] don't mind hurting feelings and calling each other idiots, but for Canadians that just doesn't seem right." Canadian Voter, American Election, November 16, 2012.

Eat Desserts to Score Higher Grades

Marie Well



To make the most of our studies, we need to eat well. The more wholesome foods we eat, the better we fare on exams and during moments of stress. But who says we can't be a little sinful when the sin is actually saintly? Who says we can't indulge in candy apples, milkshakes, pies, and chocolates when they help us lose weight, better our health, and help us perform at peak academically?

Pretending to eat sinful when actually saintly sounds like a paradox. But it's more than a paradox; it's a paradise.

Let's explore some desserts that'll give us the best of health—including brain health—for the ultimate day-to-day performance:

Banana split heaven:

Slice a slightly green banana (a prebiotic), stir in some Crema yogurt (high fat Greek yogurt), mix in

frozen berries, and sprinkle on top 70% or higher dark chocolate nibs. We can train our taste buds to prefer healthy desserts over the sugary ones. This taste bud shift happens when we also train our gut bacteria to love pure health by feeding it nature's best.

Candy apple brain health:

Take a green or red apple, slice it in wedges and douse the flesh with flaxseed goodness. It tastes like a candy apple on nature's steroids. A sprinkle of unsweetened cinnamon can tickle the taste buds with a burst of flavor. Seconds anyone?

Pistachio ice cream highs:

Get a mushy avocado. Scoop its flesh inside your mouth. We need not second guess the delectable simplicity of this dessert. And keep in mind avocados release endorphins. Feeling good already?

Peanut butter cup brain power:

Dip a slightly green banana in almond butter and sprinkle some cinnamon and dark chocolate nibs on top. We never feel riddled with guilt when eating unprocessed foods. But what if we overindulge on pure health? Those saintly calories make us healthier, help us beat diseases like diabetes, and may even give us an academic edge. Some say dark chocolate boosts brain power.

Milkshake brain fuel:

Take a cup of kefir milk (prebiotic rich fermented milk) and stir in your preferred frozen fruits. Blueberries are great for the brain. So, when studies lead to the blues, reach for a blueberry milkshake, saintly style. Who said student life need be dull?

Berry pie measure of goodness:

Pull out the bran cereal, high in fiber, and stir in frozen berries and Krema yogurt (high fat Greek yogurt). The dessert could be a topic of stool health discussions. A science behind stool health exists, captured in part by [the Bristol Stool Chart](#). What a way to measure good health!

So, that's how to eat sinful foods like a saint. Feast up, dear readers and watch our health skyrocket toward a paradise of delectable desserts. And watch our grades skyrocket, too.



What Living in a Small Town Taught Me

Xine Xu



Currently I'm completing an internship in the town of Barrhead, Alberta. The town has a population of approximately 4,000 and is located about an hour away from the nearest urban centre, Edmonton. In my first weeks in the town I've learned a lot about the people and the local businesses and activities that have opened my eyes to the charm of living in a small town. For those who have lived in urban centres their entire life, small town life has a unique appeal that changes your perspectives. For example, the close proximity of all the different locations within the town makes the everyday commute to work, home, and the supermarket fairly quick. In fact, every major business in the area is within a five-minute drive radius! Having lived in Edmonton for two decades, most locations there are definitely not within a five-minute drive from each other. Besides these geographic advantages, what other lessons have the small town taught me in the first weeks of being

here?

A Tight-knit Community Makes your Experience Better

Living in the big cities sometimes can make you feel very isolated from your neighbors. People rarely wave or strike up a conversation with one another at the grocery store. However, that is exactly what I experienced in Barrhead on my first weekend in town. While picking out peppers at the local supermarket, I was asked by a resident what I would be cooking for dinner that night. It was a friendly, brief exchange that left me feeling welcome in the small town.

Taking Time to Appreciate

In the first week of my internship, I felt a drastic change in pace between internships in Calgary or Edmonton. I felt that people truly slowed down their work pace. Even though health care workers are still in high demand in this community, there was more time to take better care of patients. With this time, I've begun to strike up meaningful conversations with patients and truly understand their story without the time pressure of the big cities where I would be expected to serve more patients.

Less is More

Even though I can't find everything I need in the small town. For example, if I wanted to purchase makeup, there would not be a Sephora at my disposal. However, for the most part, the necessities are all we need and available in this community. Moreover, having access to less options for



groceries and other material goods actually helped me spend more time meditating and developing hobbies such as painting.

Support Local and They will Support You

Since arriving in the small town, I've taken the liberty of wandering around the commercial centres. From small Dutch bakeries to an ornate flower shop, I've seen an incredible array of local businesses that truly blew my mind. I was always greeted warmly by the owners and got a chance to learn about the origins of their stores. For example, the flower shop pictured here actually sold some of the best coffee in town and sells cookies made by a local baking enthusiast. When I took the time to learn about these businesses, they also came to learn more about me and even applied specialty discounts to my purchases which made me feel more at home.



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



Scholarship of the Week

Digging up scholarship treasure for AU students.

Scholarship name: Dick Shaw Memorial Scholarship

Sponsored by: International Society of Explosives Experts - Western Canada Chapter (ISEEWEST)

Deadline: February 16, 2021

Potential payout: \$1000

Eligibility restriction: Applicants must be Canadian citizens or landed immigrants, must be enrolled as a full-time student in a course of study with some relevance to the non-military use of explosives or blasting (e.g. mining, civil, or chemical engineering; geology; seismic exploration; avalanche control; blasting physics.) See [full eligibility requirements](#).

What's required: A completed online application form, including a résumé, proof of enrollment, and a submission (essay, PowerPoint, mixed media, or video, etc) entitled "The safe use of controlled blasting in modern day construction and mining."

Tips: Course of study has some flexibility; be sure to read the full PDF [description of eligibility](#).

Where to get info: iseewest.org/Scholarships



Food, Family, and Fire: Celebrating the Holidays Ukrainian Style

Natalia Iwanek



Unlike the Christmas Day commonly celebrated on December 25, many of those who follow the Eastern Orthodox and Eastern Rite Catholic faith continue to adhere to their traditional January 6 and 7 celebrations. This is because Ukrainians like myself, along with communities in Moldova, Montenegro, Serbia, Belarus, Georgia, Armenia, Kazakhstan, and Russia, still follow the earlier Julian calendar, as opposed to the more recent Gregorian. Coptic Christians from Egypt and Ethiopia celebrate on January 7 as well.

The Immigrant Experience

As ethnic Ukrainian immigrants from Poland, with a long history of cultural suppression, deportations, and forced resettlements, my family immigrated to Canada in the late 1980s. Here we have kept our

traditions alive, with Christmas being the most prominent.

On the eve of January 6, my family sits down to a traditional meatless meal of twelve dishes symbolizing the Twelve Apostles, as soon as the first star is seen in the sky. Pre-COVID-19, this may have meant upwards of thirty individuals getting together in far too small spaces. Often, groups of traditionally attired and costumed carolers brave the frigid temperatures to visit the homes of local Ukrainian families. In return, they are offered sweet and savory delicacies, as well as the ubiquitous glasses of vodka. One of these visitors is the Goat, or *Koza*, a type of trickster. Although the Goat traditionally is not a respected figure, he is also said to symbolize wisdom and usher in an abundant harvest.

Traditional Dishes

- Varenky (Вареники) – Various Filled Dumplings

The highlight of the meal is always *Varenky*, small flour based dumplings, also known as *Pierogi* in Poland and the smaller, meat filled *Pelmeni* in Russia. Although most are boiled, pan friend versions are available as well.

My family favourites include sauerkraut and mushroom filling and potato and tvorog cheese. At other times of the year, savory varieties are often topped with fried onions and bacon fat, along with a dollop of sour cream and fresh dill, while sweet fruit versions are topped with sour cream and sugar.

- Borsch (Борщ з Ушками) – Beet Soup with Small Mushroom Dumplings

Different varieties of this classic beet soup can be found all over Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, and parts of Central Asia. In my family's traditions, we eat a vegetarian broth version with small mushroom dumplings called *ushka*. The soup is finished off with fresh dill.

Our beloved soup is not without controversy. There is currently an ongoing clash between Ukraine and Russia over its origin, as a chef has attempted to designate the soup as Ukraine



cultural heritage thorough “an application to the United Nations’ cultural body, UNESCO.” In many ways, “[t]he borscht dispute highlights deeper grievances between Ukraine and Russia,” given a long history of imperialism and current tensions.



• **Olivye Salad – Potato, Egg, and Pickle Salad**

Other favourites include Olivye Salad, which my family makes without ham, instead focusing on potato, egg, carrot, green apple, onion, peas, and mayonnaise. It is also known as *Ensalada Rusa* throughout Latin America.

• **Holubsti (Голубці)– Mushroom and Rice Cabbage Rolls**

While our Christmas Eve version must be vegetarian, meat and rice version are also quite popular, often topped with a tomato based or chicken stock-based sauce.

• **Pidpenky Machka (Підпенкова Мачка)– Wild Mushroom Gravy**

Often made with wild boletus mushrooms, this wild mushroom gravy is a must for all *varenky* and *holubtsi*.

• **Kutya (Кутя)– Traditional Sweet Wheat Dish**

Kutya is a traditional sweet dish made with wheat, walnuts, poppy seed, and honey. Traditionally, a spoonful is thrown up on the ceiling; if it sticks, good luck will come.

Holiday Traditions

• **Didukh (Дідух) – Traditional Wheat Sheath**

One tradition during Christmas is to bring in a *Didukh* (wheat sheath) after the sighting of the first star and placed beside an icon. The *Didukh* is then burnt to honour our ancestors. During pagan times, it was meant to protect the family from evil, hold “the strength of family ancestors, [and] symbolizes the preservation of memorable family events and traditions.” It was traditionally made from the stalk of last year’s wheat harvest.

• **Malanka (Маланка) – Ukrainian New Year**

Malanka is our New Year’s celebration, traditionally falling on January 13, according to the Julian calendar. The day is believed to be based on supernatural and animalistic, pre-Christian secular, pagan beliefs. In the diasporic community, including here in Toronto, *Malanka* festivities are held yearly by various community organizations.

• **Pavuk (Павук) – Handmade Straw Spider**

Made of straw, these handmade diamond shapes in the form of a spider protect the home from negative energy. The previous year’s *pavuk* is burnt following *Malanka* to make way for the current year’s version. This tradition is believed to be based on an old folk creation tale, which stated that a spider spun a web so intricate, that the universe was created.

Бажаю вам щасливих свят! (I wish you all a happy holiday!)

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

Pork Tenderloin with Apple Salsa

Chef Corey



This past weekend I asked our youngest what we should have for dinner, her response was a typical Albertan meal, Steak with potatoes. I had to laugh, and then I remembered that I had some pork tenderloin in the fridge and thought I should try something with it. After looking up a few ideas with apples, I came up with my apple salsa below. If you want to play with it a bit, you could add red or green peppers, or jalapeno peppers for more heat if you'd like. I decided on sriracha, but in a small amount because I wasn't going for spice as much as flavour.

You might be wondering how I can call the condiment a salsa. So, I did a little digging to find out what the etymology of the word salsa is. It turns out that salsa just means sauce in Spanish; I've also heard some Italians call their sauces salsa.

But while looking up salsa, I noticed an odd reference to studies that looked at food poisoning from eating salsa. I had to look into it. It turns out that, like many foods, improper storage of your salsa can cause a plethora of foodborne illnesses from E. Coli to Salmonella. Wikipedia cited a 2002 study done in the University of Texas – Huston campus where they test sauces from Guadalajara and Houston. Surprisingly 66% of those testing in Mexico were positive for E. Coli and 44% from Houston!

A CDC research paper in 2010 found that 1 in 25 foodborne illnesses reported between 1998 and 2008 were from improper storage of salsa. And another group of researchers conducted a study in 2010 regarding salmonella. They found that the addition of fresh lime juice or fresh garlic would prevent this bacteria's growth.

Now I'm not going to tell you to smear fresh lime juice on raw chicken or pork to make it safe to eat, but it did reinforce something I learned in food safety classes. To prevent the growth of bacteria, one must change the conditions in which bacteria thrive. Thus, cooking many (but not all) foods above 140C or storing them below 4C, increasing or decreasing the ph level of the food, and even washing your vegetables when you get them home. These simple steps can have an impact on food safety. Which is also why washing your hands is so important. We've all heard that soap kills bacteria on our hands, but an interesting lesson I learned is that the water temperature doesn't matter as much as the soap itself (Sima, 2020). I am not suggesting that you start washing your vegetables and fruit with soap, but a rinse in water would be helpful.

I hope you enjoy this recipe!



Pork Tenderloin with Apple Salsa

Ingredients:

2 pork tenderloins cleaned
Salt
Pepper
1 large carrot
2 stalks of celery
1 yellow onion
Baby potatoes



Directions:

- 1) Preheat the oven to 400F.
- 2) Cut the celery in half.
- 3) Cut the carrot in half then halve the larger end.
- 4) Quarter the yellow onion.
- 5) Set the vegetables aside for later.
- 6) Clean the silver skin from the pork.
- 7) Season it with salt and pepper.
- 8) Put a large metal pan on high and add 1 tbsp oil.
- 9) Once the oil is hot, add the meat and sear it on all sides.
- 10) Remove the meat and set it aside.
- 11) Turn off the burner, and add the carrots, then the celery, arranged perpendicularly.
- 12) Put the onions on the outside, place the pork on top of the onions going opposite directions.
- 13) Add the baby potatoes around the outside.
- 14) Roast for 30 – 45 minutes or until the meat reaches 145-150F.
- 15) Once it reaches temp, remove it and cover it with foil.



Ingredients:

1 Granny Smith - diced
1 spartan – diced
1 small red onion – diced
2 tbsp cilantro
¼ - ½ tsp cumin
¼ cup lime juice
½ tsp kosher salt
¼ tsp sriracha
½ tsp black pepper

Directions:

- 1) Peel, core, and dice the apples into a mixing bowl.
- 2) Dice the red onion and add it to the apples.
- 3) Add the rest of the ingredients and mix.
- 4) Taste it, cause it's good!



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





Dear
Barb

Barbara Godin

Credit, COVID, and Christmas

Dear Barb:

Well, I survived Christmas. It was a difficult Christmas since I couldn't spend it with my family. My boyfriend and I live together, so we spent Christmas alone. I was hoping that I would be spending less money with the virus limiting visits, get togethers, and shopping, but nope, it didn't. In fact, I spent more money this year. What I didn't spend on entertaining I spent on ordering food and buying lots of wine! I bought gifts for my family online and had them delivered to their homes, which seemed like a good idea, but I ended up losing track of how much I bought for each person and spent a lot more than I planned to. I avoided looking at my credit card payment until this week. Wow! I was floored; I probably spent twice as much as I did last year. Now I'm stuck with this big credit card payment and both me and my boyfriend had our hours cut because of COVID, so we are in a bad situation. I am looking for advice on how I can get ahead of this so it doesn't happen again next year.

Thanks, Miranda.

Hi Miranda:

Every January I get letters like yours, so, even without COVID-19, most of us spend more than we should. We spend too much at Christmas, thinking our gift represents the love we feel for the person, but that is not the case. Gifts and money should not be an indication of how much

love we feel for a person.

Now that you have gotten into this situation, you have to find your way out. Begin by prioritizing your debt. You need to work on paying off your credit card and high interest debt first. When you have your debts paid off, you can begin to save money for next Christmas. Open up an account just for Christmas and make monthly deposits. It's important that you don't deposit too much money and not have enough money for your monthly expenses, then use your credit cards. Save only what you can comfortably. Whatever you have in that account by next Christmas, is what you can spend on gifts and entertaining. You have to be disciplined and not spend more than you have in that account, no matter how tempted. If you get a bonus, or refund on your income tax, add some that to your Christmas account.

It's all a matter of living within your means, not always an easy task, but it is attainable with a little discipline. Thanks for your very timely email Miranda.

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
Pants on Fire

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 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](#)

Athabasca University Students' Union News Release

Regarding the Athabasca University Tuition Increase

Athabasca University students will have to dig deeper to pay for tuition starting in September 2021 with the Board of Governors approving a 5% tuition increase for all students, including out-of-province and international students. This increase comes on the heels of dramatic operating funding cuts from the Government of Alberta since 2018, along with increased costs from investments in digital infrastructure.

"Students are disappointed that in the face of a global pandemic, Athabasca University is turning to tuition hikes to balance the books for this coming year," said Athabasca University Students' Union (AUSU) President and Athabasca University Board of Governors member Stacey Hutchings. "We were relieved and want to acknowledge that Athabasca University is one of the only institutions to not seek the maximum possible increase, but any increase will be difficult for many students."

The Government of Alberta changed the rules starting last year, allowing Alberta universities and colleges to increase tuition by up to 7% each year for three years following a tuition freeze. Tuition increases were brought in to decrease the reliance of institutions on government funding. Athabasca University is already the least reliant university in Alberta on government funding, thanks to enrolment increases and an efficient distance education model.

"We asked students at the beginning of the month how much of an impact a 7% tuition increase would have on their studies, and 97% of students said it would have an impact, with 87% of those saying it would have a significant impact," said AUSU Vice President External and Student Affairs Natalia Iwanek. "It is going to have an especially large impact on students outside of Alberta like myself, who already pay substantially more tuition for a course than Alberta residents."

"At the end of the day, tuition increases are a direct result of government underfunding, which is acute here at Athabasca University when we receive less funding per student than other institutions," concluded Hutchings. "We hope that in the midst of their Alberta 2030 review of the post-secondary system, the Government of Alberta realizes Athabasca University and AU students are a great investment for public dollars."

Media Contact:

Stacey Hutchings
AUSU President
president@ausu.org

Read AUSU's full press release [here](#).

The AU Students Union has been advocating against the need to increase tuition at AU, especially in the midst of a global pandemic. AUSU has also advocated to the Government of Alberta to take another look at budgetary decisions that led to the increases and will be engaging in ongoing advocacy on this topic.

Read more about AUSU's advocacy [here](#).



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.

Enter to win one of 40 **Amazon Gift Cards worth \$250 each**.

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 [@AUSUStudentsUnion](#) 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.

[Get full contest details 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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