

THE VOICE

Vol 29 Issue 09 2021-03-05

Minds We Meet

Interviewing Students Like You!

Classic Literature

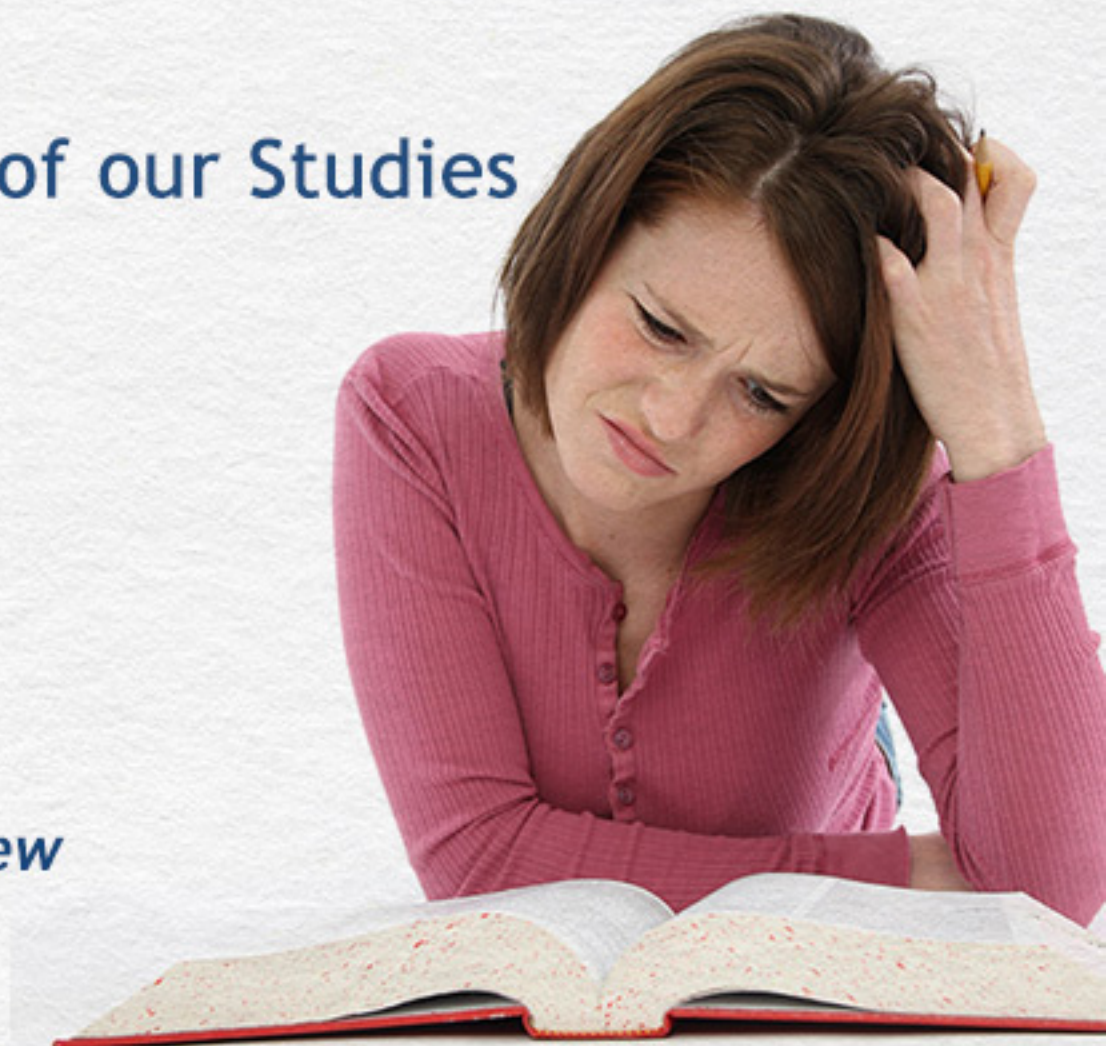
It Doesn't Mean "Good" Literature

Fly on the Wall

Personal Measurement of our Studies

Plus:

*Homemade is Better: Beef Stew
Small Wins Add Up
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

They: Always be Learning

Karl Low



I got a small lesson today about the use of pronouns. I have no issue with people using pronouns that may match their gender, regardless of their sex, but “they” and “their” are plural pronouns and without explanation it can make the writing difficult to understand. So when editing, and the pronoun being used is a plural one, someone like me finds myself asking “Who’s the other person they’re hanging around with?” Until I’m informed that that’s what their pronoun is.

Much of that confusion is cleared up if it’s pointed out ahead of time that this pronoun use is deliberate, but in my first edit, I noted that they prefer to use the pronouns “they”, “them,” and “their”. The problem, however, was the use of the word “prefer”. It was pointed out that this can suggest that the entire gender is a preference, and not simply part of who they are.

And as soon as it was pointed out to me, it was obvious. Of course it’s who they are. I would never suggest that a male who identifies as a woman or vice versa simply prefers to do so. It’s very rarely

that simple. So why do I assume it’s a preference when it’s “they”? This showed me that there’s still those unconscious biases within me that I need to keep aware of and keep working on.

But the use still gives me pause. It’s because “they” isn’t actually gender-neutral, which is how it is sometimes used in this manner. It’s gender irrelevant. The primary point of “they”, unlike “he” or “she” isn’t to identify gender, but rather to identify quantity. And because of that, using it as a gender-neutral term runs into issues. Less so when it’s an article about one person, but what happens when you have an article talking about two or more people, such as a band. Then any use of the pronoun becomes unclear as to exactly which they you’re referring to. Is it a singular person who uses “they”, or is it more than one person?

This is one area where I believe we need to have actual gender-neutral pronouns in our language, such as the Spivak or Elverson pronouns: “ey”, “em”, “eir”. That way we can maintain proper gender referencing while also having the ability to refer to a singular person. Unfortunately, these pronouns are not in wide use, and so some take issue with the notion of being “singled out” with an unusual pronoun. But then that singling out happens regardless, as editors and writers struggle to make the meaning clear to the rest of the world where “they” most often has a plural definition.

Fortunately, while this is a nit that looms large in my brain as an editor, it really isn’t relevant in the larger scheme of things. The important bit is we have a great interview here in the Minds We Meet column, and this nit is really just interesting here because of how it pointed out that I still have more to work to do on seeing and dealing with my own biases.

Meanwhile, this week, we also have a look at how just because something is literature doesn’t mean that it’s good, and with the rapid changing of temperature as spring approaches, the Fly on the Wall considers how the perception of temperature relates to our own ability to be open to other interpretations of things, much as with the issue of pronouns. Plus, of course, a selection of recipes, advice, humour, events, scholarships, and more.

Enjoy the read!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Karl', with a stylized, flowing script.

MINDS WE MEET



Enjoy the read!

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 a chance to chat with Karly Ross from Calgary, Alberta, the Treaty 7 territory of the Blackfoot Confederacy (the Siksika, Piikani, and Kainai First Nations), the Tsuut'ina First Nation, the Îyâxe Nakoda (the Chiniki, Bearspaw, and Wesley First Nations), as well as the Métis Nation of Alberta (Region 3). Karly uses the pronouns “their”, “they”, and “them”.

Karly is currently registered in a second degree from AU, the Bachelor of Science in Computing and Information

Systems degree, after graduating last year from a Bachelor of Science in Applied Mathematics. As for plans post-graduation, they stated, “I currently have some contacts in the University of Calgary, and I’m looking at doing some graduate studies in computing, mathematics, and education-related disciplines.”

“Born and raised in Calgary,” Karly “spent a bit over a decade in the mountains of the interior of British Columbia,” with a brief stint in Ottawa, before returning to Calgary. Karly’s parents have had the greatest influence on their desire to learn; both of whom “constantly encouraged my insatiable curiosity, particularly my mom who did an education degree while I was a child.” In particular, Karly’s mother made them understand “what it meant to be a good learner,” stating that this “is part of why I use the Athabasca platform, because it gives me the flexibility to learn the way I want.”

When not studying, Karly stated, “I have a love affair with my bicycle. ... When I’m not studying or working, I work as a math tutor. I also sit on the board of a bike advocacy organization here in Calgary.” They continued, “The organization’s name is Bike Calgary, and we do advocacy to try to improve – to make biking better in the city. Historically, we’ve looked at improving safe

infrastructure in the city of Calgary, and also we're moving into—and have done some—community engagement. And of course, in the face of Black Lives Matter—part of the reason I've joined the organization is that I see the need to draw on that and also make the realities of different experiences of space for different populations part of the conversation. I am coming from that as a queer person, but that also brings in many other voices that haven't been there."

When asked about their experience with online learning, Karly stated, "As with any learning, online learning is really mixed." They enjoy the "flexibility" and "asynchronous online learning" of AU, stating, "When I find a subject I really like, I like to dig deep into it. The flexibility that Athabasca gives me means that at those periods where I find those subjects that I really like I can take the time to dig deeply and read a bunch of academic literature and really understand what's happening." They mentioned having worked with fantastic tutors on research and have "found great community at AU" during their previous degree. However, they also mentioned, "On the other hand, I've had courses I felt very disconnected from the instructors."

Communication with their course tutors has "been really mixed." Karly explains, "One of the things that I find consistently challenging is that I really like to ask questions." Continuing with, "I find it challenging to frame questions that fit with each instructor's mode of communication because often I have no insight into that mode of communication." They stated, "My assumption now is even if they are not giving me the responses I am seeking ... Start from the generous assumption and then move from there."

Although Karly has had a few favourite courses, one standout has been MATH495: Mathematics Projects. They stated, "My most memorable and most enriching was my research project in Mathematics, my final project in mathematics." They continued, "With the support of Professor James Greenwood-Lee, I was able to really do what I wanted in that course, but he also provided guidance on how to learn to think better on how I frame projects and how I approach my learning."

If they were the new president of AU, Karly had some ideas, but prefaced their statement, "I think our outgoing president has started to work on this, just to identify and acknowledge that it's not completely new work." They continued, "One of the things I love about AU is that I believe it provides a platform for more equitable, and in my mind, somewhat decolonized education. However, I find a lot of our course content continues to have deeply colonial themes embedded in what we're teaching and how we're teaching it or how we're presenting it. And so if I were—and maybe that's not in the purview of the president—but if I were in any position of leadership at AU, that would be one of the key things that I would be driving toward. Recognizing that we can be leaders in decolonizing education in Canada and making that part of what we're doing every step of the way."

As for a famous person, past or present, that they would like to meet, Karly chose author James Baldwin. They stated, "Not that I would deserve the meeting, but the person I would find very enriching to speak to would be James Baldwin. In terms of critical race theory and from reading his books, how he speaks about how to show up and interact with one another. Just in reading his books, I find that this is a person I want to learn from and that I probably have a lot to learn from."

As for the most valuable lesson that they have learned in life? "Even when people are being crappy, there is probably a story. If I knew this story, I would probably not be angry. I would feel great compassion for them. For a significant percentage of time, that's true. Though I might not know the story, but I know enough about people to know that that's usually the case." For

this reason, it is important “to always show up with that assumption even when people are being less than ideal humans.”

The most recent proud moment in Karly’s life has been their AU graduation last year. They stated, “A moment that I did feel great pride, not just in myself, but also for all of the people who had supported me, was when I attended grad back in the fall for the degree I got last year. That was a very proud moment, not just for me, but for the other people who were in attendance, even though it was digital and was very different from what we expected.” AU’s Reimagined Convocation left Karly “so utterly impressed with how they set up the digital grad.” They continued, “I really enjoyed it. I came away feeling very connected with the AU community and very connected and grounded, particularly in the department of Science and Technology.” They stated, “I thought it was really well done.”

As for a non-AU book that they are currently reading, Karly chose *Bike Lanes are White Lanes: Bicycle Advocacy and Urban Planning* by Melody L. Hoffmann, which considers “how race and cycling and urban development all intersect, and how that’s a far more complicated issue than putting down pavement. There’s a whole cultural component to it.” They are also watching *The Musketeers* and the *It Crowd*.

As a final note, they stated, “Athabasca [University] is positioned to be a leader in how we do education in the future, and that can be absolutely transformational if all of us in the institution strive to make it so.” Best of luck Karly!

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>.



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Fly on the Wall

The Personal Measurement of Our Studies

Jason Sullivan



“Sure a cold one, eh?”

“Warmer now that you’re here!”

Nothing’s more banal, or adroit, depending upon its users, than a conversation about temperature. But did you know that the gendered pronoun controversy can blow like an Arctic front into the temperature mix? Consider the French term, *il fait froid*, normally translated as a way to say that it’s cold. Literally the phrase reads that *he* makes cold. Who is this he? He can be an it or a he, the word has two implications (and, I’m told, some guys are more of a Pinocchio than a Real Boy). However, when we speak, the he is me, the speaker. So, then, wherefrom arises the temperature? We don’t make it but it comes from the same noun as ourselves.

Baruch Spinoza would say that temperature comes from God-or-Nature but in truth the cold is also in the eye of the beholder (and whether said beholder is dressed to conditions). To speak of the temperature is to personalize reality; numbers implore us to make them our own but, in the end, it’s our activity that makes the temperature feel like what it is (or what it is not). As such, temperature is as personal as our AU education. It’s up to us to be dressed for success with study habits that fit our temperament.

Kudos to every student who completes even a single AU course. Remember, many folks claim to enjoy psychology, or perhaps mindfulness, but to actually read and annotate a whole textbook for a course and write a few big essays? That’s another matter.

Likewise, surviving a prairie wind or an alpine snowshoe expedition connotes a different sort of *we have cold winters* than does the mere fact that the thermometer outside of our heated abode dips into the nether regions. As Canadian students we know that winter means business and we have to plan our study breaks accordingly. Joyous though it be to run outside and jump into a snowbank, we don’t do so without awareness of the consequences. Our clothes decide the overall joy of the feeling far more than the actual temperature and the same is true with our chosen method of study schedules, mnemonic devices, and essay editing. (Sometimes a mental paper cutter has to give way to the white heat of a metaphoric acetylene torch, for instance). True too is that if we choose to annoy ourselves with the wrong background music, our personal study nook may become as hellacious as a library doing double duty as a daycare. Above all, at AU we must personalize our experience of reality and pack the proper emotional parka to ward off the winds of procrastination. Okay, that was a clunker, but if we can’t note and accept our failings then how can we succeed?

Time is like temperature in that it can be the cause of excitement or trepidation. Time seems to skip along faster while we scroll through social media but we know that the seconds are ticking

and tocking at the same rate as when we wade through actual coursework. It's just, well, time flies when we're having fun and/or wasting it. And so, procrastination *will* happen and is as inevitable as the seasons. And we need the proper rejuvenating study breaks to ward off what I call *The Drift*. We have to face reality with clarity and honesty: AU is not going to be a sunny walk in the park with *al fresco* dining on easy A's. The freedom to make one's own schedule is in fact a greater responsibility than we might ever have imagined. Happily, good study skills can become as smooth and natural a process as pulling on our long johns and waffle shirt before going outside on a winter morning.

Facts Salted and Facts on Ice

As with natural aptitudes, think here of the concept of a gifted child, some realities are unavoidably true. A thermometer never fibs as it stands nailed against a wall. But the aspect of the wall, windy or north-facing, or sheltered and south-facing, makes all the difference. Visiting the federal weather station in my town reveals that some temperatures are literally taken from within a hole in the ground, the better to reduce bias from wind. In a vacuum temperature is true but, as with our studies, it's our personal feelings that we must remember to include.

The very human reality that runs hot and cold is illustrated by the twists and turns of technologies for measuring temperature. The line of progress from Fahrenheit to Celsius is not so cut and dried as one might imagine. Fahrenheit was invented in 1724, and involved measurement based on a mixture of salt and ice. Celsius, meanwhile, came along in 1742 and was based, as we know, on Zero the temperature at which water freezes.

Mercury in thermometers was Mr. Fahrenheit's idea but thermoscopes, as they were once called, go way back:

"One of the first thermoscopes was developed by Italian inventor, Galileo Galilei in 1593. It used water as the liquid and glass bulbs inside an open tube. The glass bulbs rose and fell with the changes in temperature. In 1612, another Italian inventor, Santorio Santorio, used a numerical scale on the thermoscope but it was very rudimentary. In 1654 the first sealed glass tube was developed by Ferdinand II, the Grand Duke of Tuscany. It contained alcohol and had a numerical scale, but wasn't very accurate.

The more modern thermometer was invented in 1709 by Daniel Fahrenheit. It was an enclosed glass tube that had a numerical scale, called the Fahrenheit scale. The early version of this thermometer contained alcohol and in 1714 Fahrenheit developed a mercury thermometer using the same scale" (<https://jamaicahospital.org/newsletter/history-of-thermometers/>).

Note that a warmer clime, Jamaica, provides this viewpoint. It's a place where temperature is not about hypothermia or frostbitten appendages and more about pediatric care and viral well-being. In today's cultural climate of plagues and hypochondria it's not surprising that safer quick scanner thermometers are popular; the irony, though, is now that no child's fever goes undetected kids seem sicker more often.

It's a bit like checking the weather forecast the day before an outdoor event; if we expect inclement conditions, we are entering the fray with a pessimistic outlook. And at AU the worst thing we can do is set out to fail a course or exam by failing to make a study plan. If we must constantly check our progress we're already in trouble. So too with the psychology of exam

anxiety and writer's block; the best solution to both, in my opinion, is to cease with the predictions and engage with the task at hand. You can always go back and erase later. Plus, the fear factor never hurts. Embrace it! It wasn't so long ago that fears about the deployment of a thermometer was cause enough for one's symptoms to abate. Motivation to get well, or at least play the part, was for good reason: for most of medical history thermometers were of the rectal variety. "The first real medical thermometer was invented by Sir Thomas Allbut in 1867. It was six inches long and took about five minutes to take a person's temperature".

For Colour to Return to Faces, Considering Creativity as one of Fahrenheit's Graces

Most of us at AU grew up with Celsius and its logic of zero being the temperature at which water freezes. But Fahrenheit did once hold sway. Contemporary with the switch to Celsius was the arrival of the metric system to Canadian shores. Some will recall Charlotte Diamond summarizing the glory of measurements with easier math: "I love to multiply by ten", she sang.

Yet, Fahrenheit is not without its benefits. One might argue that Fahrenheit allows more space for the expression of our creativity. Fahrenheit allows for more precise details; there's a vaster subjective difference between 66F and 72F as any room heats up, and it's something arguably harder to quantify with Celsius' lesser scale of possible temperatures between 19C and 22C. Likewise, when the mercury dips toward zero in Celsius it's not such a big deal as in Fahrenheit thus giving, perhaps, a different sense of the ontological state of *being* freezing. Sub-Zero as a concept is more drastic in the Fahrenheit scale as it is when thinking about the gulf between positive and negative thoughts, feelings, and experiences. Think of Elton John's famous album *Too Low For Zero*.

At the other end of the index, when it's 100F in Summer that sounds positively like the planet Mercury, whereas 38C is hot, but still within a two-digit range of reality. So, for those who feel deeply and with much complexity, Fahrenheit might be the scale for them. Or at least this argument I've just made can be cause for giggles. In any case, pedagogically it's to our benefit to look beyond simple binaries wherever we find them.

Crucially for our studies—and critical thinking more generally—to realize that external hard facts invoke social interpretations is ground zero for unlocking critical thinking and questioning underlying core beliefs. And, as when we mature as thinkers and become more open-minded, we might see that temperature relates not just to what someone on TV says or how some gadget on the wall reads.

Our feelings matter in every equation, no matter how objectively the facts are presented. Education is about making our learning our own that we may pronounce our unique view upon the world. Creativity, after all, is about being a special enough snowflake that we can express ourselves without being reduced to caricature as a windbag. Wind-chill suggests this metaphor nicely if we think of the nature of our local geographic region; some folks live with constant wind and the resultant drop in temperature is a fixture in their reality (if not their sheltered thermometer). In fact, just as the personal is political, there's a certain forging of ideology within the way temperature seems separate from contextual wind chill. Lucky for us at AU, we're not tied to the culture of a particular brick and mortar institution and the view of AU we present to others is largely of our own creation.

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.



A Rant

Classic Literature is Not Necessarily “Good” Literature

Jeff Shermack



I was recently given a mug, decorated with the opening lines of nearly two dozen books that would all be considered literary classics. Excerpts of excellent writing cover the sides of the mug like novel wallpaper. (*Does a mug have one side, or multiple sides?*) Included in the featured quotes are excerpts like “All this happened, more or less,” from Vonnegut’s *Slaughterhouse Five*, “It was a pleasure to burn,” from Bradbury’s *Fahrenheit 451*, and “Mrs. Dalloway said she would buy the flowers herself,” from Woolf’s *Mrs. Dalloway*. I was given this mug because of my education in English literature, but as an English major, I was almost ashamed to admit that I had only read nine of the novels.

“Oh,” said my friend, “All the books on there must be good though.”

And I said, “That depends on how you define “good” books.”

Someone with a stern education in English might now bring up the term literary canon, but you can take that term and blow it out of an actual cannon. Just because a work of literature is considered a classic does not mean that it is good literature. If you ask me, the root of the definition of “good” books grows out of how you describe the purpose of literature.

And I’m talking about an academic definition of literature here, not the literature that gets mailed to you every week with coupons for hamburgers or the monthly publication you get full of the latest news about accounting. Although even going that far is liable to start a debate about semantics, so I better get back on track.

Many might say that the purpose of literature is to reveal a specific truth about the world, but that would be wrong too. Revealing truth is one thing that literature can do, maybe even something that good literature does, but the purpose of literature is not so philosophical. The purpose of literature is to entertain, and not everybody is entertained by the same things.

All three of the books that I quoted in the first paragraph of this article are examples of excellent works of literature, if you ask me. But if you asked me, then you would be asking someone with an English degree. It’s my opinion that most people who choose to study English are masochists when it comes to reading, and four years of university taught me that many writers are sadists. Why else would I drag out the point of this article so much? *Slaughterhouse five*, *Fahrenheit 451*, and *Mrs. Dalloway* are all excellent stories that I would not ever recommend to the average reader, although Bradbury is absolutely the most accessible author in that list (again, if you ask me).

By “average reader,” I mean somebody who reads around a dozen books in a year. That’s the average according to Pew Research Center (Perrin, 2016). People with limited time and a limited interest in reading will not want to waste their time on a book that is going to challenge them,

unless they're a masochistic English major who just watched *Bladerunner 2049* and now wants to explore the significance of Nabokov's *Pale Fire* in the narrative of the movie (which is incidental, as it turns out). A challenge is exactly what Vonnegut and Woolf present to readers with their shifting points of view, nonlinear narratives, and unreliable narrators.

Likewise, average readers won't be interested in a book with low entertainment value, which can be a huge detriment to older books. Much of the interesting fiction in Bradbury's science fiction is lost to a reader already familiar with the novel ideas that Bradbury predicted, like flat screen TVs, earbuds, and bank machines.

Just because these novels are considered innovative, unique pillars of literary creativity and radical thought, does not mean they will entertain somebody today. To one person they are good literature, to another they're not.

Consider Stephen King, one of the most prolific and successful authors of the late twentieth and early twenty-first century, but a constant recipient of the criticism of failing to be a literary author. What does "literary" mean when people say that? Is he a poor writer? Not if you ask his dedicated readers. In 1998 Stephen King was "the world's best-selling novelist, with 300 million books sold, in 33 languages" (Singer, 1998). What about if you asked the readers of Barbara Cartland, whose published romance novels and sales dwarf King's by a large margin? Shakespeare may be the best-selling fiction author of all time (arguably), but Agatha Christie is right there behind him, penning whodunits in second place.

There are myriad ways to judge literature. It can be done with a panel of experts assembling an accepted canon. It can be done by measuring book sales and revenue. It can be done by counting print runs and re-prints, but none of that matters if you put the book down halfway through because you don't even know where, or when, Billy Pilgrim is.

I can say that so far, all the books on my mug are good books, because the only books that are truly "good" are the ones that you enjoy reading.

AU-thentic Events **Upcoming AU Related Events**

Bannock and a Movie March Edition: **Wahkohtowin: Cree Natural Law**

Mar 1 to Mar 31

Online

Hosted by AU Nukshahtowin

www.athabascau.ca/indigenous/bannock-and-a-movie/index.html

Access through above link

Talk to a Librarian Drop-in Session

Tues, Mar 9, 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

MBA for Executives Webinar

Wed, Mar 10, 10:00 to 11:00 am MST

Online

Hosted by AU Faculty of Business

news.athabascau.ca/events/mba-for-executives-webinar-20210310/

RSVP through above link

Talk to a Librarian Drop-in Session

Thur, Mar 11, 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

AUSUnights Virtual Student Social

Thur, Mar 11, 5:00 to 6:00 pm MST

Online via Zoom

Hosted by AUSU

www.ausu.org/event/ausunights-virtual-student-social-4/

RSVP to ausu@ausu.org for meeting link

The Grad Lounge

Fri, Mar 12, 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

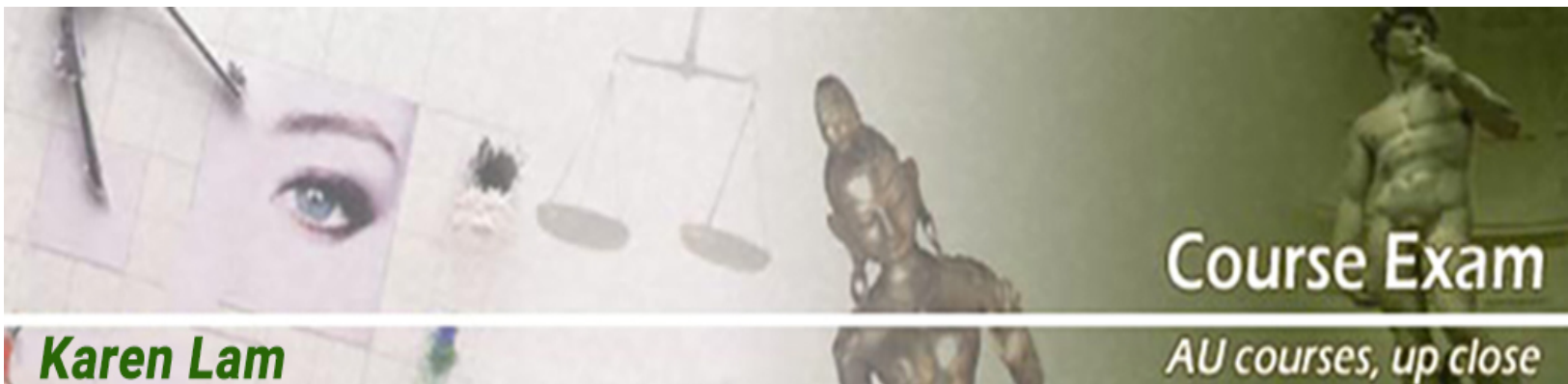
All events are free unless otherwise noted.

(Unless you want to get into an argument about the definition of the word good and it's grammatic correctness in this entire article. To which I say, again, semantics.)

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Singer, Mark. (1998). What Are You Afraid Of? – Profile of horror writer Stephen King. *The New Yorker*, September 7, P. 56.



Course Exam

Karen Lam

BIOL 205 (Principles of Biology IIB—Home Lab Version)

If you have a course that you would like to see a Course Exam article written for or you recently took a course that you would like to recommend to other AU students, please feel free to reach out with the course name and number, and any questions or feedback you may have. We'll be happy to write about it in our next Course Exam article.

BIOL 205 is the second introductory course in the field of biology, and is designed to prepare students for senior-level biology courses. BIOL 205 is designed to teach students “about the nature of life. The main topics of this course include the diversity of organisms, including fungi, plants, protists, animals, and bacteria.” It is important to note that for AU Biology students, BIOL 207 is mandatory and cannot be substituted with BIOL 205. The only exception is for students in the Biology Minor program and post-diploma route with previous biology lab components can take BIOL 205 in replacement of BIOL 207. This course does require BIOL 204 as a pre-requisite or equivalent and professor approval. There is no in person lab component for this course, and all labs can be done at home.

Why You Should Take This Course

This course is designed for those interested in expanding their understand of biology or science in general and potentially taking senior level biology courses in the near future. The course emphasizes on the evolution of the overriding biological principles and diversity of organisms.

A few years back, I did a Biology major at the University of Calgary and really enjoyed learning about organisms and cells. If you are interested in pursuing a graduate program in the near future in Medicine, Dentistry, Pharmacy or Masters/PhD in Research, you should consider taking this course or other BIOL related courses as many students who end up in this fields start with undergraduate degrees in Biology or general sciences/health sciences/kinesiology.

Course, Assignment, Midterm and Final Exam Details

The course itself covers two main topics: Evolution and Diversity, which are divided into six units. The six units include Principle of Evolution (exploring the Evolution theory, natural, artificial and sexual selection, microevolution, population genetics, macroevolution), Evolutionary

History (chemical evolution, evolution of cells, history of life, human evolution), Diversity of Life I (Prokaryotes, viruses, prions), Diversity of Life II (Protists, fungi, plants), Diversity of Life III (Animals) and the final unit, Conserving and Utilizing Biodiversity (Conservation of biodiversity, domestication).

The course includes two assignments each worth 10%, lab and exercises that are worth 40%. A midterm and final exam that are worth 15% and 25% respectively and must be taken online with an AU-approved exam invigilator. For the laboratory component, there are a total of eight mandatory labs including: Hardy Weinberg calculations, cladistics, sickle cell population simulations (using a program called SimBio), dog domestication (also using SimBio), flowers and trees (in SimBio), pig dissection (virtual), conservation biology, and cod biology, all of which can be done at home.

How to Be Successful in the Course

Student Tips

From all the Biology, Chemistry, and Physics courses I have taken during my first degree as a Biology major, students will find Biology courses are typically content heavy and require lots of memorization. For biology courses, understanding the content and building the big picture (along with memorizing) is key to being successful. One thing I found incredibly useful during my Biology degree was to use the course objectives when studying.

Often, students will find biology courses overwhelming with information (and may not know which concepts are important for the exams), use the course objectives/study guides to help pull information key concepts and then using the key concepts to ensure you understand all the details connected to those key concepts. Drawing diagrams are also extremely helpful to help understand the big picture. As students' progress toward senior biology courses, content typically gets more detailed and drawing diagrams make it very helpful to see the big picture. Using Quizlet or cue cards is also helpful to test yourself on definitions. Do not shy away from testing yourself, or even speaking out loud to explain a concept. If you can explain a concept to someone that means you understand the concept. Many professors in university recommend students to use a sibling/friend/partner or even a stuffed animal and explain to them specific definitions and concepts in your own words.

For labs, if you are confused, I highly recommend going to the "Discussion" parts of the Moodle forum to look for comments by other students. Often, you are not the only student with that question. Of course, if that does not work out, do not hesitate to approach your TA.

When preparing for midterms or final exams, make sure to study ahead of time. I personally found studying 30 minutes a day a few weeks ahead of the exam very helpful in science courses as there is a lot of content to cover. Since science courses contain lots of details, cramming is the least ideal and practical solution. I recommend students to spread out studying, doing perhaps 30 minutes – 1 hour a day. Students will find doing a little bit a day significantly more helpful, effective, and productive than cramming one or two days before the exams.

Questions?

If you have any further questions regarding the course, please do not hesitate to contact the Course Coordinator at Fst_success@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



Homemade is Better

Beef Stew

Chef Corey

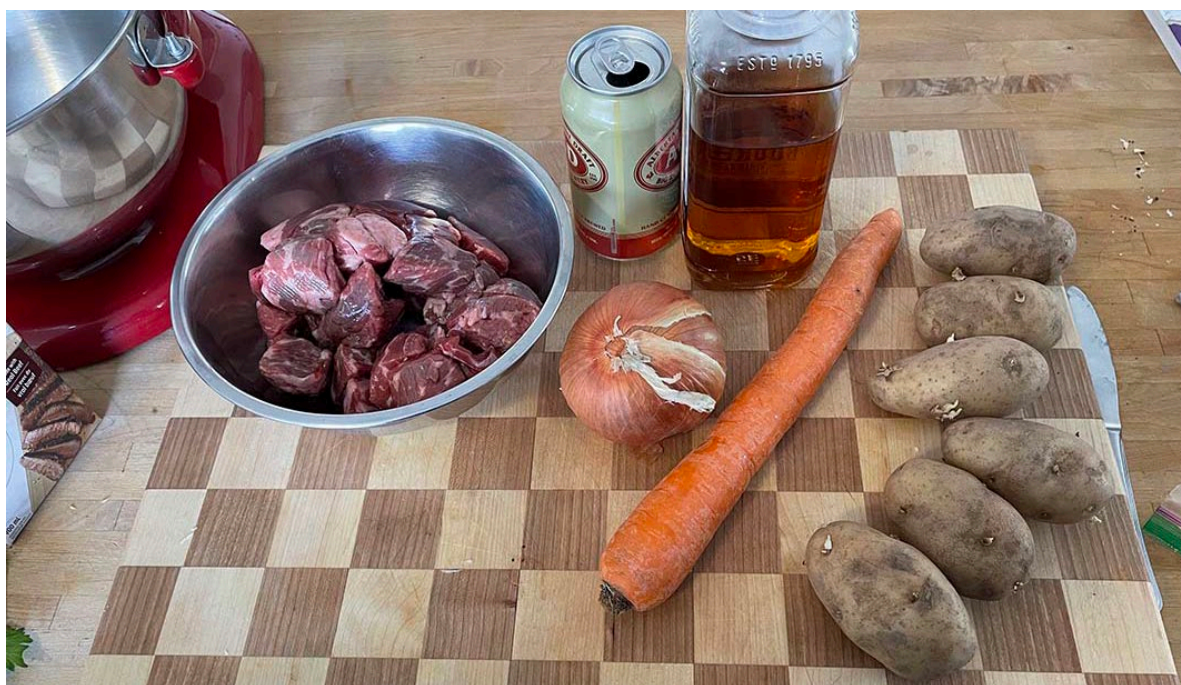


I would be hard pressed to find a meal more comforting on a cold day than beef stew. When I'm not feeling well I can down chicken noodle soup all day, and when I want a comfort lunch a good tomato soup with grilled cheese hits the spot. But when it's as cold as it was recently in Edmonton, a hearty beef stew just makes me feel good. Stews and soups somehow give me that feeling of connection to every generation that ever lived.

Soups and stews are interesting food. We boil stock, add stuff to it, simmer it for a few hours and viola, we have a meal. When I think of a stew I think of a liquid meal with chunks of meat and vegetables that have been simmered for hours and hours. It's not much different from soup, in that we generally perform the same actions to create a hearty meal. Soups might be more refined now than they were thousands of years ago. I would hazard a guess and say we can thank the French for this refinement. Much of my culinary training was classic French

methods of cooking, thus when I think of refined food French style comes to mind first.

For this week I made a hearty beef stew. I used eye of round and diced it up into ½ inch chunks and then added the rest of the ingredients to it. Stewing is really the process of cooking meat in a liquid for a long time. A medium to low heat is what you are looking for and at least an hour will give you the best flavour. I also like to add some alcohol to my stews, not too much, but enough to get the crispy bits off the bottom of the pan. It's best to brown your meat over high heat, but you are not trying to burn it, so you will need to watch it. I recommend a heavy bottom pot around the 5-quart size. If you have a cast iron one, even better. Cast iron gives you that perfect heat distribution.



Brown your meat in small batches, you'll want your hood fan on if you have a smaller kitchen. The reason you use smaller batches is to keep the heat in the pan consistent. Too much meat and

you reduce the distribution of heat which requires more time to come back to temperature. If you put in about half the meat at first and keep about a $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ inch of space between the chunks—that would be perfect. You don't need to measure this, it's just an eyeball estimation. Once the first batch is done let the pot heat back up for about a minute and add the rest of the meat. Add a tablespoon of canola oil to the bottom of the pot for the first batch and you should be ok. Brown your second batch, then remove it to the same place as the first. Add your vegetables and cook it, then add the meat back in. Add some flour to thicken it up, and then some of the alcohol goes in. You're using it to scrap the bits off the bottom. The culinary term is called the fond, its where a lot of flavor sits. Follow the directions, and you will be happy you were patient!

If you have a gas stove, read the directions before you cook. There is a technique called Flambe. Perhaps you've heard of it. It's when you light alcohol on fire and cook it. If you've never done this before, then I highly recommend you turn your burner *off* before adding the alcohol. You can turn it back on at a later stage. Just read my directions to keep you, your family, and your home safe.

I hope you enjoy! By the way, check me out on Instagram [homemade is better yeg!](#)

Beef Stew

Ingredients

2 TBSP canola oil
2 TBSP flour
 $1\frac{1}{2}$ - 2 lbs eye of round, cut in to $\frac{1}{2}$ " chunks
4 cups of beef stock
1 large carrot – peeled and diced
6 – 8 medium potatoes – peeled and diced
1 large onion – peeled and diced
4 cloves of garlic – minced
 $\frac{3}{4}$ cups your favorite beer – stouts are great for stews, but an ale or lager work as well
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup bourbon
1 TBSP parsley
2 tsp dried thyme
2 – 3 bay leaves
Salt
Pepper

Directions:

- 1) Heat a 5-quart pot over high heat, add 1 TBSP of oil.
- 2) Once heated add half the beef to the pot, a good sprinkle of salt, and brown the chunks on all sides.
- 3) Remove the first batch to a plate or bowl and add the second batch of beef, some more salt and brown the meat.
- 4) Once the second batch is browned remove it to the same bowl as the first.
- 5) Stir to heat the oil, then add the garlic and onion and cook for a few minutes until the onions start to look translucent.
- 6) Add in the carrots and cook until they are heated and brighter in color.





7) Add your meat back in and then add the flour. Stir so everything gets coated.

8) Add the bourbon and stir the bottom of the pot. NOTE: if you have a gas stove, turn it off before you add the bourbon. If you don't, this is where that fun culinary pyro show will start, we call it flambe, the fire department might not appreciate your culinary prowess though.

9) Cook the bourbon and the meat for about a minute, working it so the bits get picked off the bottom, add the beer. If you are working with a gas stove, you can turn it back on now.

10) Cook the beer for about 2 -3 minutes, then add the beef stock and the herbs, and potatoes.

11) Let it come to a boil and then taste it for salt content. You'll likely want to add another 2-3 tsp, but you be the judge. Similar with the pepper.

12) Turn the heat down to low and let the stew simmer for 1-2 hours, or 5. Add more stock as needed, you don't want it to simmer dry. The

longer you cook, the more tender the meat will be.

13) Check the flavor and add more salt and pepper if needed, but remove the bay leaves before serving, unless you play the same game we do at my house. Whoever gets the bay leaf does the dishes... it's usually my wife, but that's because my kids cheat and move the bay leaf into her dish.

14) Enjoy this stew!

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

Student Sizzle — AU's Hot Social Media Topics

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



AthaU Facebook Group

When you're just so keen to get going: A student wonders why two courses won't accept assignments on the first day; turns out there's sometimes a delay when enrolment is high.

Discord

Getting the nitty-gritty details: A question on how to cite an author who is "so-and-so the third" results in a posted link to [specific APA advice](#) for that instance.

Twitter

[@AthabascaU](#) tweets: "The [@aulibarchives](#) pulled together some challenged books, including [#HuckleberryFinn](#), [#HarryPotter](#), and Extraordinary Evil: A Brief History of Genocide, that [#AthabascaU](#) Learners have access to <https://bit.ly/3sn4Gl8> [#FreedomToReadWeek](#) [#BannedBooks](#) [#ChallengedBooks](#)."

YouTube

Don't blink, but AU made the news: *The Edmonton Journal* posts the video in [Meteor captured by Athabasca University camera](#).

The Study Dude Small Wins Add Up

Marie Well



We students might start a course overwhelmed, uncertain, wondering whether we'll pass. For instance, math classes can create a lot of anxiety. And anyone taking a five-course load needs to get time-efficient fast.

The goal is to do well in a course. A lot of battles will occur along the way. There may be an assignment, a midterm, another assignment, quizzes, and a final exam. A lab or tutorial might also loom. But each of those battles amount to small wins that add up to victory.

The wins boost self-esteem. They raise confidence. They teach us better study habits. They give us the power to push the grades even higher the next class.

The victory is in learning the process that is necessary to succeed. Each small win cements our knowledge of how to succeed. Each small win creates grooves and connections in the brain that transform us into powerhouses of thought.

A small win is basically decomposing a large problem into bite sized pieces. Let's break down writing an essay into small wins: dissecting the course outline is the starting point. The course outline relays information on due dates, exams, paper topics, and graded weight for each assignment. These bits of information need to be burned into our memory, placed on calendars, in visual view at least once a day.

Papers, like most everything worthy of achieving, need to be broken down into small wins. For instance, once we know the assigned topic for an essay, we should gather books and articles that same day. No hesitation. And then we can plan our papers using a 1:2:0.5 model. Meaning if we have only three-and-a-half weeks to research and write a paper, we should dedicate one week to researching, two weeks to creating an outline and writing, and half a week to editing. Many of us may find that the outlining and writing take up the brunt of the time, so squeezing in some outlining during the research stage can pay off.

But key is to spend a little bit of time each day on the process, dedicating heavier amounts at the beginning of each stage to make headway.

Remember to dedicate as much time as possible to writing an essay, preferably at least a month.

For the research stage, try printing out articles in bulk. Then you can speed read through each article, highlighting salient points. Beside each quote highlighted, write a one to three word summary of its topic in the margin. You'll likely find patterns will emerge with similar topics.

Next, you can write down each highlighted quote on a cue card or type them all up in an outline. With each cue card or outline entry, it's vital to include the in-text citation and bibliographic reference.

Now on the back of each cue card there's room to write the topic in one to three words. That makes it easy to group all the cue cards by similar topics. With enough research, you should end up with at least three piles, each pile focused on a specific topic, each filled with cue cards. Now you just need to see if you can find a common thread to weave the three topics into a three-part thesis statement.

As a caveat, it takes at least sixteen articles and books (mostly articles) to have enough fodder to write an A paper.

Three topics, that's enough for a thesis statement. For instance, one topic might be "historical context," another might be "the ultimate revolution," and a third might be "the role of opposition." This suggests a thesis statement saying "an effective revolution depends, in part, on three key considerations: (1) it's historical context, (2) the model of the ultimate revolution, and (3) the role of the opposition." For academic writing, you'll probably want to use hedge language, too, such as "in part" to prevent any assertions from being incorrect.

Whether using the cue card system or a typed up outline, we need to have either method typed and structured in outline format. In the outline, each of the three topics in the thesis statement would contain subheadings, each subheading with three or more quotes. Microsoft Word has an outline view that can help with this if you remember to use it.

Once the outline is structured, the paper writes itself. Just write a sentence before each quote providing context and a sentence after the quote suggesting how it ties into the argument. Then, when the paper is finished, you'll want to consider two or more rounds of edits. If possible, take a day or two off between each edit, preferably two days. The break lets us approach the paper fresh—and better ensures we don't overlook mistakes.

As a final caveat, an A paper typically has zero spelling errors and zero grammatical errors. Plus the structure needs to be sound.

Each step has its system, and completing it is a small win. Together, those small wins should add up to a class-act grade.

Scholarship of the Week

Digging up scholarship treasure for AU students.

Scholarship name: Manulife Life Lessons Scholarship Program

Sponsored by: Manulife

Deadline: March 31, 2021

Potential payout: \$10,000

Eligibility restriction: Applicants must be permanent residents of Canada, between 17 and 24 years of age, currently enrolled or accepted to a college, university, or trade school within Canada, and have experienced the death of a parent or legal guardian who had little or no life insurance coverage.

What's required: An online application form, including a maximum 500-word essay or 3-minute video, describing the financial and emotional challenges you have experienced as a result of the death of a parent or guardian who lacked sufficient life insurance coverage.

Tips: Read the [Rules and Regulations](#) carefully for full details on application requirements.

Where to get info: www.manulife.ca/personal/plan-and-learn/life-events/life-lessons-scholarship.html





Dear
Barb

Barbara Godin

Conversation with COVID-19

Dear Barb:

Hi, my wife and I have been married for 10 years and we seem to be growing apart. We don't have any children and that was our choice, but it's like we don't have anything to keep us together. It seems to be getting worse since the beginning of the pandemic, even though we spend all our time together, we seem to talk less and well, we can't do anything, so we stay home except for the occasional walk or grocery shopping. I don't want our relationship to fall apart, but I don't know what to do about it. Do you have any suggestions to spice up our marriage?

Thanks Mike.

Hey Mike:

You may not be growing apart; you may be feeling this way because of the pandemic, as it has changed all of our lives so much. You probably don't have a lot to talk about because you don't do anything or go anywhere which is what usually generates conversation. You say you stay home most of the time, what do you do during this time? If you just sit and watch TV, this isn't doing anything together. How about playing cards or a board game or preparing a meal together. Try to create something interesting to do together. You will be surprised how preparing dinner together will generate conversations, probably nothing mindboggling, but just sharing thoughts and feelings. It seems like you two have gotten into a rut, but you can get out of it if you work at it.

Communication is the cornerstone of any relationship; try a different approach to communicating. For example, sitting, watching TV and only talking to each other when there is a slow or uninteresting part is not healthy communication. Words are a powerful force to connect or disconnect so choose your words carefully. A few positive words can go a long way in creating a close intimate bond, just as a few critical words can easily create a defensive negative atmosphere. Turn the TV off and spend time talking, it doesn't have to be about your relationship, talk about anything, like a book you read or a movie you watched. A conversation that begins in this way, will likely lead to more personal topics, and help you both to see a new or different side of each other.

Also spending a bit of time apart is a good thing. Even in the middle of a pandemic, you can go out by yourself for a walk, or a bike ride, or drive in the car. This will give you both some breathing room. Growing apart is a normal part of marriage and doesn't necessarily mean there are problems or issues.

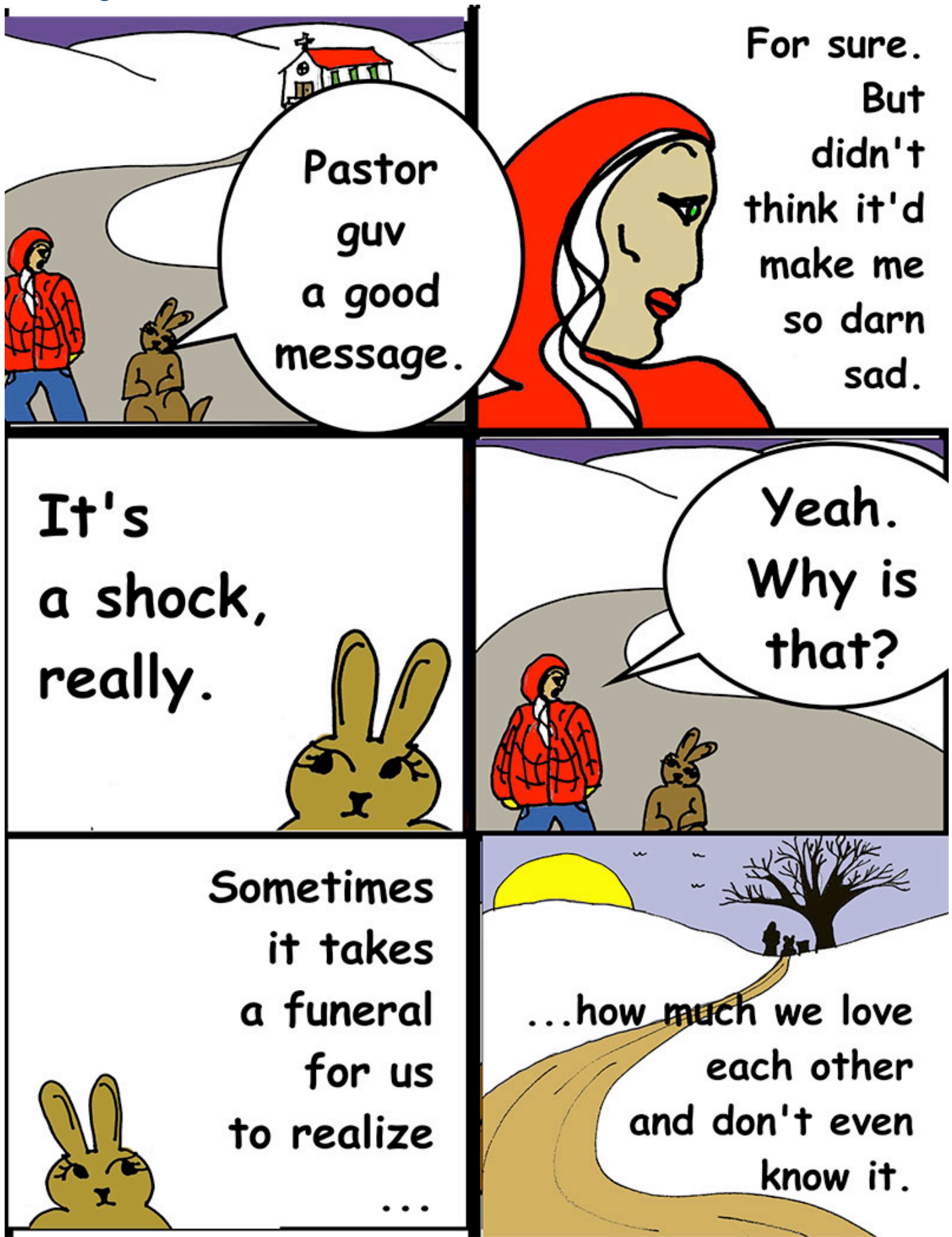
Thanks for writing in Mike.

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
Discovering Love

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

- **Mar 10:** [Deadline to register in a course starting Apr 1](#)
- **Mar 11:** [AUSUnights Virtual Student Social](#)
- **Mar 15:** [Apr degree requirements deadline](#)
- **Mar 17:** [AUSU Public Council Meeting](#)
- **Mar 31:** [Deadline to apply for course extension for Apr](#)
- **Apr 8:** [AUSUnights Virtual Student Social](#)

Services from AUSU

If you are an undergraduate student at AU, that means you are also a member of the AU Student' Union!

What is AUSU?

Being a member of AUSU entitles you to access [AUSU services](#), attend events and online council meetings, receive support and advocacy from AUSU, and run in our election for a position on AUSU council.

Services for Students

As a member of AUSU, you have access to our services and resources, **no matter where you live or how many courses you are taking**. These include:

- [Awards and Bursaries](#)
- [Student Advocacy](#)
- [Free Mobile App](#)
- [Free LinkedIn Learning](#)
- [Free Resume Review Service](#)
- [AUSU Open Mic Podcast](#)
- [Eye-wear Discounts](#)
- [Pharmacy Discounts](#)
- [The Voice Magazine Student Publication](#)
- [Virtual Food Assistance Program](#)
- [2SLGBTQIA+ Discord & Resources](#)
- [Career Resources](#)
- [Peer Course Reviews](#)

For more info, visit the [AUSU website](#).



AUSUnights Trivia

AUSUnights is a Virtual Student Social trivia night held on the second Thursday of every month. They are a great opportunity to connect with AU fellow students through Zoom, play some fun trivia games, and get a chance to win some prizes and swag from your Students' Union!

RSVP to ausu@ausu.org for an invite to the virtual meeting room. Be sure to specify which date!



AUSU Year-Round Bursaries

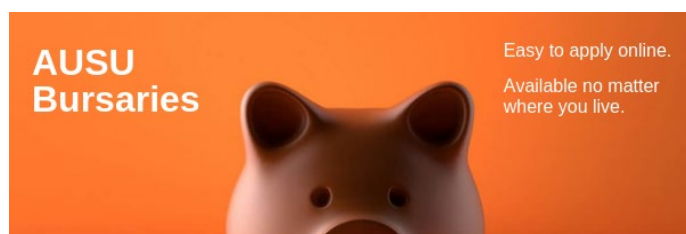
AUSU has [year-round bursaries](#) available for AU undergrad students in financial need.

Computer Bursary - provides new laptops for members who need one for their AU coursework and are otherwise unable to afford one.

Emergency Bursary - can pay for AU course extensions, late exam, or supplemental exam fees for members who require them due to unforeseen circumstances.

Travel Bursary - can help pay travel expenses related to an AU course, such as travelling for exams, labs, practicums, or related conference.

Applications are on the [AUSU website](#).



CLASSIFIEDS

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

THE VOICE

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