



THE VOICE

Vol 32 Issue 11 - 2024-03-15

Mindes We Meet

Interviewing Students Like You!

Criminology with Professor Davies

Introducing the World of Policing

Puppy Therapy

How to Get Yourself Some

*Plus:
Inside AU Events
Chazz Bravado
and much more!*



CONTENTS

The Voice's interactive Table of Contents allows you to click a story title to jump to an article. Clicking the bottom right corner of any page returns you here. Some ads and graphics are also links.

Features

Minds We Meet: *Interviewing Rachel Pettitt*..... 4

Articles

Editorial: *You Must Choose, But Choose Wisely* 3

Puppy Therapy: *How to Get it Without a Dog* 6

Criminology with Carleton University Professor Darryl Davies 7

How A Phone App Can Sculpt Our Most Magnificent Dreams 12

How to Live Longer (and not Succumb to Disease) 16

Covering the Foreign Interference Commission..... 21

Columns

Fly on the Wall: *Interpolation and Essence*..... 13

Inside AU Events: *AI Uses and Misuses* 15

Beyond Literary Landscapes: *Science Fiction Sub-Genres*..... 18

[blue rare]: *A Higher Form of Life*..... 20

News and Events

Scholarship of the Week..... 5

AU-thentic Events 9

Student Sizzle 23

Comics

Chazz Bravado: *Trump Mug Shirt* 11

Poet Maeve: *Loan of a Rifle* 24

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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

You Must Choose, but Choose Wisely

Karl Low



The polls are now open and you can make your choice among the various candidates on offer. Of course, student councils always seem a lot harder to choose your votes than normal elections because we don't have months of coverage, events, and policy debates beforehand. But for most of us, do we really pay attention to that stuff anyway? After all, a Princeton University professor found that giving random people a choice of two candidates from an election race in another state, candidates that they didn't know anything about other than the photo, people would choose the candidate that got elected about 70% of the time.

First impressions, as they say, are everything.

But, since we're university students, it's expected we'll be more critical or discerning than the average and take into account as much information as we can about the candidates before making our choices. So, before you vote, take a look at all the information that's available. Some of the candidates have been interviewed in our minds we meet column. Some of them took

part in the candidate interview, and they all have some information over on the AUSU site and in the app. Take in as much of that information you can to find the candidates who best represent you, and who represent you the least, and use that information to cast your votes.

And that's one of the other things that makes student council elections different. Unlike our normal federal and provincial elections, you can pick more than one candidate. It's surprising how often students choose not to pick as many choices as their allowed, because even if many of the choices don't seem particularly better or worse than the others, I find I can almost always identify at least one contender who's my least favourite choice, but to prevent that person from getting elected requires making sure that all the votes I have are cast.

One of the other things I noted over the past week was the photo scandal of Princess Kate, with Kate's social media claiming that she did the photoshop herself. Whether you believe that the palace would allow any of the Royal Family direct access to their own social media feeds is another story, but what struck me is how quickly the forces of the internet jumped on the photo to point out various indicators of it being edited. Why? Of all the things people could be doing, why are we trying to pry into whatever is happening with this family. The editing of the picture points out just how much pressure these people must feel to present a good image at the same time that it points out how they probably aren't doing that well. How much of a bubble have people like you and me forced on people like the Royal Family or other celebrities whose lives are disrupted by paparazzi because we'll pay to see it.

But this is celebrity, right? This is what people who put themselves forward in the public choose to undertake when they get the positions, right? But I don't think it is. And it's absolutely not the fault of the children who are born into that family, so in respect of those, the next time you see a paper or website or news program offering gossip about someone. Consider taking your attention elsewhere. Remember that two children in that family already grew up as orphans because of our need for news about them. We don't need to create any more. So go, make your vote, and enjoy the read!

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Karl".

On a more personal note, Rachel let us know that she is “34 years old and diagnosed with ADHD.” She continued, “I am married to a talented musician/carpenter. We got married in New Orleans nearly 6 years ago. We blended our family with his now 15-year-old daughter, my 12-year-old daughter, and together, we have an 8-year-old daughter and 3-year-old identical twin boys. I currently work as a hospital unit clerk. I have worked in healthcare for nearly 15 years in various specialties, but my favourite is psych.”

This busy student had some great study tips for fellow learners. “I work shift-work, but I have days off when my kids are in school that I dedicate to my studies. I study best by brewing my favorite coffee, creating a cozy workspace, and playing instrumental music during focused intervals.”

When Rachel is not studying, she liked to “spend quality time” with her family, “playing games, visiting [their] friends, going to concerts, and having [their] own little dance parties at home.” (Speaking of family, she credits her husband as having had the greatest influence on her desire to learn. “He has been incredibly supportive and believes in me more than I believe in myself sometimes,” she said). She also enjoys reading, crediting Dr. Gabor Maté as having “been the most impactful author” on her life. “His insights have led me to personal growth and healing,” she explained.

As for her experience with online learning so far? “I have found it quite challenging to be self-motivated, but that has made completing anything exceptionally rewarding.” And her communication with her course tutors? “So far, I have found them quite responsive and provide helpful feedback for the most part,” she stated.

The Voice Magazine also asked Rachel what her first project would be if she were the new president of AU, and she chose organizing “enhanced study groups.”

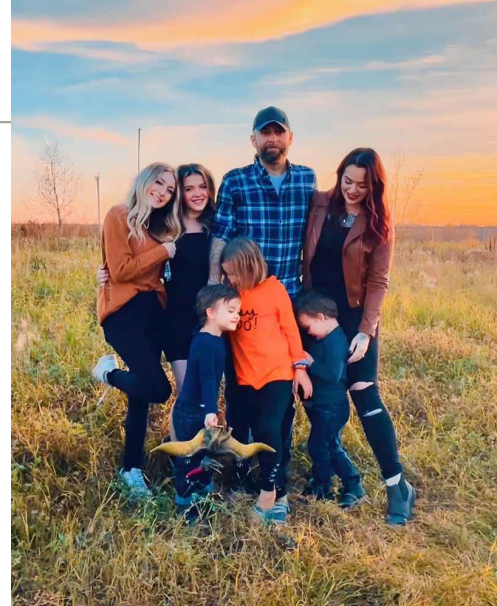
We also asked which famous person, past or present, she would like to have lunch with, and why, and she chose Taylor Swift. “She seems knowledgeable about a fascinating blend of music, psychology, and economics,” she stated.

As a final note, Rachel shared her most valuable lesson learned in life, which was “the power of perception.” She explained, “There have been many times in my life that a conscious shift in perception has been beneficial. Not only to help others effectively but also to help myself.”

And her proudest moment? “There are many equal proud moments. From the birth of my children, witnessing them being exceptionally kind to others or achieving something that was difficult for them. Plus, watching my husband captivating audiences from the stage.” Best of luck, Rachel!

At times, in an online learning environment, it can feel like you are all alone, but across the nation and around the globe, students just like you are also pursuing their Athabasca University (AU) studies! Each week, *The Voice Magazine* will be bringing you some of these stories. If you would like to be featured next, do not hesitate to get in touch!

Natalia Iwanek (she/they) is currently completing her Bachelor of Arts in English with a minor in Political Science at Athabasca University.



Scholarship of the Week

Digging up scholarship treasure for AU students.

Scholarship name: G3 Grow Beyond Scholarship

Sponsored by: G3

Deadline: April 10, 2024, 12:00 pm CST

Potential payout: \$5000

Eligibility restriction: Applicants must be attending a Canadian high school, graduating in 2024, and planning to enroll full-time at a Canadian post-secondary institution in a first-year degree or diploma program in any field of study. (Scholarship not open to residents of Quebec.)

What's required: A completed application form, acceptance letter (if available—can be submitted later), and a 2-to-3 minute video addressing the following questions: What is your chosen field of study and why does it interest you? What is one major challenge facing the world that you believe could be addressed through innovation in the field of agriculture? Describe this innovation and how your studies can achieve it.

Tips: Only 125 applications will be accepted, so don't delay.

Where to get info: www.g3growbeyond.org/



Puppy Therapy and How to Get it Without Owning a Dog

Xine Wang



Before owning my dog, I spent a few hours every weekend in pet stores playing with puppies. I found it an incredibly energizing and therapeutic process that I decided to get my own dog. In an increasingly fast-paced and stressful world, many people seek solace and relief from the demands of daily life, and sometimes a break from human interaction can help nourish the soul. While traditional therapy methods certainly have their place, a new trend has emerged that offers a furry, four-legged alternative: puppy therapy. This innovative approach to mental well-being harnesses the natural charm and affection of puppies to provide comfort, reduce stress, and promote emotional healing.

Many studies have demonstrated the therapeutic benefits of interacting with animals, particularly dogs. When we pet a dog, our bodies release oxytocin, a hormone often referred to as the "love hormone" or "cuddle chemical." Oxytocin promotes feelings of trust,

bonding, and relaxation, making it an effective antidote to stress and anxiety. Additionally, spending time with dogs has been shown to lower blood pressure, reduce cortisol levels, and improve overall mood. These physiological responses highlight the profound connection between humans and dogs, paving the way for the development of puppy therapy as a viable therapeutic intervention.

Puppy therapy sessions typically involve supervised interactions between individuals and a group of friendly, well-trained puppies. These sessions can take place in various settings, including schools, workplaces, hospitals, and community centers. I personally like going to a local pet store because it is easily accessible to have pet play dates without having to book an appointment in community centers or hospitals. Usually, the pet store puppies are not well trained but simply being in their presence was therapeutic, and presents a number of benefits including:

Stress Reduction: The mere presence of puppies can have a calming effect on individuals, helping to alleviate stress and tension accumulated throughout the day.

Emotional Support: Puppies offer unconditional love and companionship, providing a source of comfort and emotional support during difficult times.

Mood Enhancement: Interacting with playful and affectionate puppies can lift spirits, boost mood, and foster feelings of happiness and contentment.

Social Connection: Puppy therapy sessions create opportunities for social interaction and bonding among participants, fostering a sense of community and belonging.





How AU students can benefit from puppy or dog therapy

As the demands of school pile on, it can be increasingly difficult to get away on a vacation, so locally finding ways of energizing yourself can be valuable. It is hard to feel stressed when surrounded by a herd of adorable puppies of all breeds. For AU students, it may also help improve their mental health and take a much needed break from studying for midterms. Moreover, the time invested can be as short or as long as you'd like.

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



Criminology with Carleton University Professor Darryl Davies A One-Of-A-Kind Introduction into the World of Policing.

Alek Golijanin



One of Canada's most cited criminology professors is Carleton University professor, Darryl Davies, who studied criminology at Cambridge University and has witnessed the differences between policing in Canada and the U.K. in action, and his expertise on policing has even been requested by the likes of the RCMP. A recent meet and chat with professor Davies touched on everything from the differences between policing in Canada and U.K. to the policing ecosystem in Ontario. It also resulted in an invite to sit-in on one of his classes, a one-of-a-kind introduction into the world of policing, where students interact directly with different policing stakeholders. Here are some of the takeaways from that dynamic think-chat where professor Davies shared his knowledge and expertise on the matter of policing.

Policing across the Commonwealth differs greatly. Canada and the U.K. are at odds.

Policing in Canada has roots that stretch all the way back to the United Kingdom, around 200 years ago, but the differences in policing between the two nations might be best described as being at odds.

At first glance, the U.K.'s approach to policing might give the impression that elements of their approach are something of a contradiction of sorts, stemming from how they employ security cameras to monitor public activity, how the majority of officers are equipped with non-lethal weapons, and how residents are encouraged to report "anti-social behavior". Simply put, their policing policies have elements that some might consider to be incompatible with policing across Canada: the infringement of an individual's privacy, officers not being equipped to handle situations that may become violent, and the implications of individuals being encouraged to report all "anti-social behaviors". None of these three approaches would be welcomed in Canada.

One element of policing that is likely to create confusion stems from how policing stakeholders in the U.K. have created a culture that encourages residents to report “anti-social behaviors”, officially referred to as an Anti-social Behavior Order (ASBO). ASBOs were initially introduced in 1998, when they outlined undesirable behavior in public. Some of these behaviours included intimidation, drunkenness, and violent behaviour, but it also lumped in things like begging and rudeness. Although it has been claimed that ASBOs were formally abolished in 2014 by England and Wales, at least one municipal police service in England actively encouraged residents to report “anti-social behaviors” as recently as 2020.

Other stark differences, more positive elements, include how the institution of policing interacts with the judicial system with an emphasis on cautions and deterring bad behavior in an attempt to reduce the criminalization of individuals. The “Caution Act” essentially ensures that anyone aged ten or older will receive a caution for a minor crime, but they must admit to the offence and agree to the caution. A caution is not a criminal conviction, but it could be used as evidence of bad character if that person goes to court for another crime. Additionally, there are conditional cautions, which require a person to stick to certain conditions like going to treatment for substance-related offences or repairing damaged property, and people can be charged with a crime if they do not stick to the conditions. For individuals over the age of eighteen, they may receive penalty notices, which are financial penalties for things like shoplifting and being drunk in public.

To conclude, the institution of policing in the U.K. might be best described as an intricate puzzle, and attempting to understand where and how its different elements fit together can be quite the challenge.

Significant public policy improvements can be achieved in under a year and without costing seven figures.

In addition to being a criminology professor, professor Davies also spent time working at the Department of Justice and shared his thoughts on the amount of time and money it may take to bring about legislative reform. Professor Davies referenced how he had previously been asked to carry out a study for the RCMP, it was for the sum of \$80,000 and it had to be completed in four months. Based on this experience and his background knowledge of government, professor Davies believed that almost all legislative reform could be completed and finalized in under a year and without ever having to break the million-dollar mark for costs associated with things like hiring subject matter experts and carrying out supporting studies.

There was also discussion related to the challenges with amorphous terms and abstract language. One such challenge had to do with the three-headed challenge of “in the public interest”, “reasonable prospect of conviction”, and “putting the justice system in disrepute” when it came to laying charges. Another challenge had to do with Crown attorneys asking for a specific number of years as a penalty a person should receive as our courts are based on past precedents, so having Crown attorneys involved in that process was unnecessary and could be inconsistent.

Data management was another topic of discussion, and it was explained that data management had almost never been a priority for policing stakeholders. But the most important discovery may have been how many policing stakeholders lacked internal research units that could play a pivotal role in better understanding different challenges. Despite the different challenges, policing in Canada was in a far better position than other countries, but our biggest challenge seemed to be a lack of will to better the status quo.

Professor Davies’ One-of-a-Kind Approach to Introducing Students to the World of Policing.

When Carleton University’s Criminology and Criminal Justice Department decided to cancel internship opportunities in 2020, making it impossible for students to gain experience with

different policing and corrections organizations, students were no longer able to take advantage of opportunities with the RCMP, Ottawa Police, the Correctional Service of Canada, and Ottawa Carleton Detention Centre. To account for the limitations of the arbitrary policy enacted by the school's department, there was a need to offset the barriers that were damaging the post-secondary learning experience for criminology majors.

As a result of the limitations, professor Davies decided to open his class to different policing stakeholders, but he conferred decision-making powers to set out the terms of those interactions upon his students. The only rule that was imposed by professor Davies was that he would not sit-in on those classes to avoid influencing how students interacted with different police stakeholders. It quickly became a course-defining feature of professor Davies' class, where students would submit topics of interest for policing stakeholders to receive interest-specific presentations. And it was even suggested by professor Davies that the future sessions could expand to include discussions led by police brass and that the spectrum of policing stakeholders could expand to include speakers from FINTRAC, the CRA (who have a new civilian investigator role), and even the Communication Security Establishment.

Professor Davies' fourth-year students. The Ottawa Police Association. And myself.

After the meet and chat with professor Davies, we arrived at his classroom, and he introduced me to his class of about twenty students. The students were anticipating a special presentation provided by the Ottawa Police Association (OPA) that would focus on tactical police operations and crisis management. Prior to the arrival of the officers and with professor Davies having left the class, the students spoke openly and shared their experience with this unique learning environment.

All of the students enjoyed the interactive learning experience that was created by having guest speakers come in and speak on different policing-related topics. None of the students believed that the university should be making decisions on career-life decisions on their behalf and about which opportunities they could pursue through the school. As it related to careers in policing, the majority of students preferred municipal policing over federal

AU-thentic Events

Upcoming AU Related Events

AUSU Council Election: Voting Period

Mar 14 to Mar 18

Online

Hosted by AUSU

www.ausu.org/event/voting-period/

More info available through above link

Library Chat

Tues, Mar 19, 10:30 am to 2:30 pm MDT

Online

Hosted by AU Library

www.athabascau.ca/library/index.html

No pre-registration needed; access through chat box on home page

The Writing Process

Preparing to write

Tues, Mar 19, 12:30 to 1:30 pm MDT

Online via MS Teams

Hosted by AU Write Site

www.athabascau.ca/news/events/the-writing-process-webinar-series

Register through above link

Faculty of Business Undergrad Program Orientation for New Students

Wed, Mar 20, 12:00 to 1:00 pm MDT

Online

Hosted by AU Faculty of Business

www.athabascau.ca/news/events/faculty-of-business-undergraduate-program-orientation-for-new-students-20240320

RSVP through above link

Library Chat

Thur, Mar 21, 10:30 am to 2:30 pm MDT

Online

Hosted by AU Library

www.athabascau.ca/library/index.html

No pre-registration needed; access through chat box on home page

Write Site's Writing Forum

Organization and time management

Thur, Mar 21, 12:30 to 1:30 pm MDT

Online via Microsoft Teams

Hosted by AU Write Site

www.athabascau.ca/write-site/writing-forum.html

No pre-registration necessary; use sign-in sheet on above link before joining meeting

AUSU Student Council Meeting

Thur, Mar 21, 6:00 to 7:00 pm MDT

Online via Zoom

Hosted by AUSU

www.ausu.org/event/council-meeting/
RSVP through above link

policing. Their reasons for preferring municipal policing over federal policing included having read about sexual harassment and the inability to implement effective policies around the issue, how municipal police were on the front lines and how students wanted to make an impact, but it also included how federal policing does not pay well compared to municipal policing and that the entire compensation package was better at the municipal level. Overall, the students wanted to know as much as possible about policing in Canada.

When the OPA officers arrived, there were four in total: the OPA president, the OPA labour relations officer, a crisis negotiator, and a tactical officer, with an average of twenty years of experience between the four of them. The class began with the tactical officer who discussed everything from his career path to sharing key insights on different aspects of his job. The crisis negotiator also shared her career path and the science behind crisis negotiations. Together they would build upon each other's material as well as answer questions, and the OPA president and OPA labour relations officer would also add to the discussion. The students were eager to engage and were asking questions about everything including questions on gender-related data, officer safety, barriers within policing, organizational culture, legislative standards, compensation packages, other crimes, and much more.

In around two hours, the class of just over twenty students had somehow managed to ask a total of seventy questions. The OPA officers did not shy away from answering any of the questions either. The entirety of the class was more of a free-flowing discussion, and the students provided their full attention to the speakers. There was even a sharing of experiences between some students who worked in shelters and how it connected with what officers were seeing. There was also an acknowledgement about how there were more firearms on the streets and that the contaminated supply of lab manufactured opiates like fentanyl made other hard drugs like crack cocaine look like aspirin, and just how much havoc opiates were causing throughout the city.

The breakthrough moment of the evening might have been when the discussion shifted to the topic of integrity and deceit. All of the officers believed that the higher the standard the better the institution of policing would be. Deceit was viewed as the universal kiss of death. The crisis negotiator would go on to share a story about a mistake they had made in court and how mistakes could also add credibility when individuals took ownership of them. Nobody wanted deceitful officers in the organization, not the OPA, nor police brass, and none of them wanted to watch an organization fall in disrepute. However, it was hearing the OPA president and OPA labour relations officer also acknowledge how they themselves had moments where they erred in judgement and made mistakes as young police officers that seemed to catch everyone by surprise, and what was possible by taking accountability.

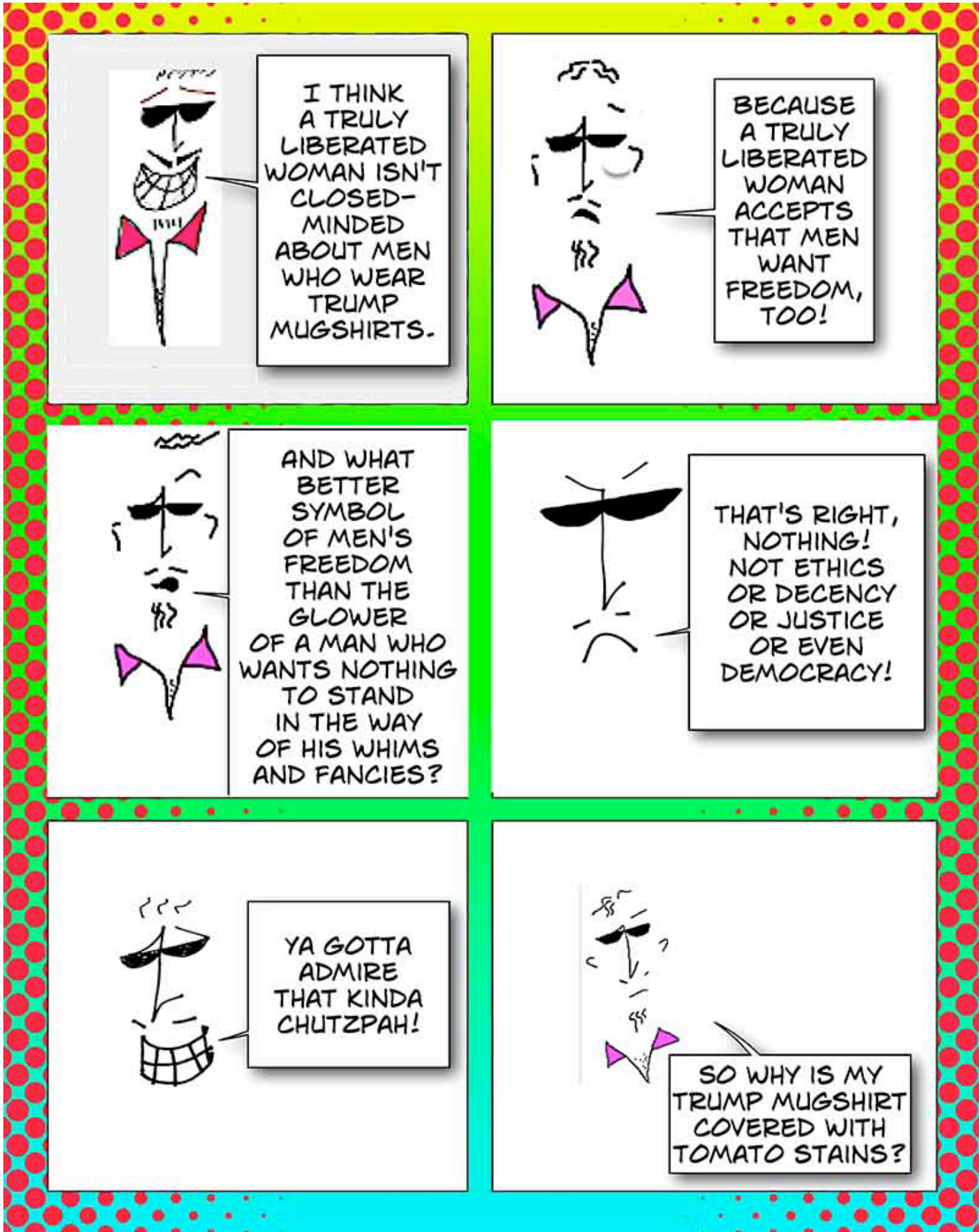
What makes the acknowledgement of having made mistakes so unexpected has to do with how many organizational leaders are unlikely to ever acknowledge personal shortcomings in public settings, but that is also why there is so much power with that approach. If the OPA's executive team can share this message of openness with enough listeners, it has the potential to change opinions on how different communities view the Ottawa Police Services and it may be enough to revive programs like having school resource officers back in schools.

A special thanks to Carleton University professor Darryl Davies for allowing me to sit-in on his class and experience his unique approach to facilitating learning among his students, and to the Ottawa Police Association for being open to having their presentation and discussion with students documented for the purposes of this article.

Alek Golijanin is an AU alum who considers himself a gentleman first, a scholar second, and a combat sports fanatic third. In that order.

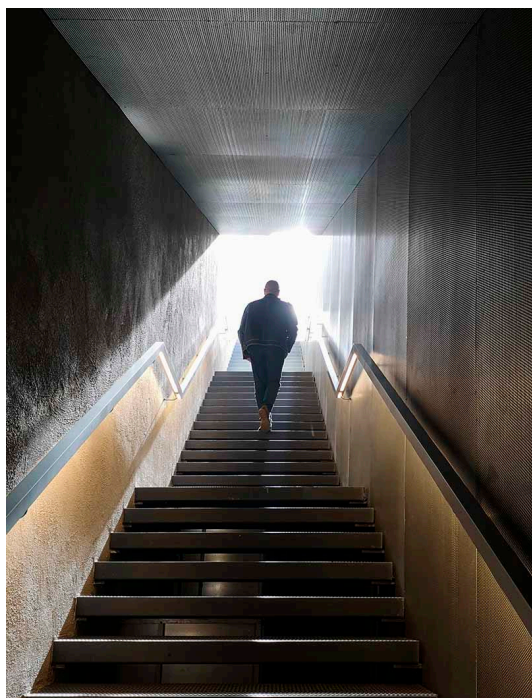
Chazz Bravado
Trump Mug Shirt

Wanda Waterman



How A Phone App Can Sculpt Our Most Magnificent Dreams

Marie Well



Task management mobile phone apps, such as Taskade or Clickup, offer an extensive task list with sublevels and checkboxes, allowing AI or manual input. As a result of using this app, I now excel doing many tasks I previously bombed at. And I can take on more projects without feeling overwhelmed or lost. With these kind of apps we can gain a clear roadmap to success, upping the ante with every win.

I'm using the app to outline tasks I need to do each day. The tasks include daily goals for making progress on bigger ambitions. For each goal, I list subtasks that I need to complete to achieve an A grade performance with the goal. I get an A if I do all the subtasks for that goal. I go from an A to an A minus if I miss a subtask. And I go further down the grading scale for every additional missed task. I also have bonus "A+" tasks that boost my grade up one level, so I can go from an A by completing every task to an A+ by completing at least one bonus "A+" goal.

If grades and GPA don't inspire us, choose something that does. This could be, for instance, pretend money (achieving every task could be conceived of as a "million-dollar future"). Or a scale of praise (achieving every task could be conceived of as "You rock!").

As background, I determined that the way to clean effectively is to go for an A+, where one missed cleaning day is an F grade. And we don't ever want to throw off our "GPAs." For me, an A for each day is making the bed, doing laundry, washing dishes immediately after use, cleaning the kitchen and washroom, and vacuuming, whereas an A+ is tackling any additional area, which is what I strive to do daily. Any missed task reduces the letter grade from A to A-, and so forth. And now my cleaning is so excellent, I rarely get complaints.

To get an A on personal grooming each day, I shower, shave, wash my hair, apply fragrant body wash, floss twice, brush twice, rub coconut oil on my face, apply light makeup, and spray perfume. If I shower before 10 am (as I work remotely), I get an A+. I checkmark each task on my app checklist, and now consistent A-grade standards for hygiene have become second nature.

The same goes for daily discipline with studies, where I set a standard for an A. To get an A, I study at least one hour each weekday, an additional 45 minutes at bedtime, and eight hours on weekends. Each extra hour boosts my grade one level.

The key is to select the most critical tasks in our lives and treat them as non-negotiable, where a minimum A must be met, an A+ is always the goal, and an F is never entertained. But what happens if we consistently get Fs on specific goals that are less important to us but need to be done? I have a strategy for tweaking these goals. If I don't get an A in a particular area, I revise the tasks to make them more attainable. This might include changing 30 minutes of daily work on my documentary to 10 minutes. If I succeed with A grades on everything, I can up the ante by adding something new, such as more time, tasks, or goals. We should tweak everything until we consistently get an A on every goal in our app--and then build more excellent and abundant goals.

By choosing this process, we are not competing with anyone but ourselves. So, organize our big dreams in an task management app to begin chipping away at the monumental vision of life we wish to achieve. And make it more and more beautiful every passing day! After all, we deserve to experience our ultimate visions of a fulfilled life!

Fly on the Wall: Interpolation and Essence Are We Ever Really Ourselves When We Click the Like Button?

Jason Sullivan



Being here on earth, ideally for a *good* time and not only a *brief* time, means that the hours we spend doing things by choice matter deeply. For humans, as for all beings, *play* is core to our socialization and sense of self. The reason for this is arguably quite simple: creatures who succeed at seeking pleasure in fleeting dalliances that don't seem to matter in terms of survival will concurrently find success in those vital aspects of life that really *do* matter. Birds have their plumage dances and we in 2024 have, well, memes snarky and profound.

Behind all life is a silent yet inexorable clock, a beacon of existential truth that ominously chimes with a dull thud: tick-tock. Online platforms replete with maddeningly-charming videos presented absent of a timer in the bottom corner that would allow us to see how long we will be under their thrall, and that

prevent us from zipping ahead to the end to see how things end, are by no means a matter of mere play. Scientists have uncovered some general realities of the social media experience: "Social media companies have created services being highly immersive, aiming to capture the attention of users as long as possible. As a result of a prolonged user stay, social media companies obtain deep insights into psychological features of their users, which can be used for microtargeting purposes. Such immersive platform design also likely drives users with certain characteristics into problematic social media use or problematic TikTok use (addictive-like behavior), but this aspect relating to TikTok use is understudied." Within the literature of psychology, social media functions within a paradigm of "insights from uses and gratification theory" – a reminder, as parents know all too well in any generation, that play is not always harmless. Often play teaches youth how to achieve rewards and what goals are desirable, and what mentalities convey appropriate aspirational realities.

In America, serious political chit chat and actual action have led to threats to ban the app Tik Tok from the country unless, that is, its political minders in the Chinese Communist (Maoist) Party turn ownership over to some domestic counterparts. Tik Tok, like the rest of the netosphere, gathers a lot of data and affects a lot of minds, while influencing us at the behest of our greatest economic threat to our way of life. But surely we can make up our minds about what we enjoy during our precious leisure time?

Our culture tends to assume that if we had our druthers, we'd all prefer to make our own choices and, blessed with the faculty of a mind untrammelled by propaganda, that we will make choices that are in our own best interest. However, shopping mall food court garbage bins stuffed to the



brim with fast food outlet packaging suggest that even in the freest of free markets our human decisions are led by the tail or tummy by our monkey brains. So too with our time, the most valuable resource we can imagine – our lifetime being our own private eternity without which time ceases to matter. So there's a reason, perhaps, that malls have as few clocks on their walls as Tik Tok videos have timers: we lose ourselves ever so easily in play—even, and especially, when we think we are making our choices under the auspices of our cherished sense of free will.

Herein lies the ironic crux of the matter: all of culture, from entertainment superficiality to those whose job it is to keep the drains running on time (that we may be liberated from a faulty sewer or septic system) begins with *ideas* and proceeds outward from there. Occasionally the core concepts that guide this or that societal system are presented in a clear manner. When we go to the texts themselves, the words made by those creating content, we get a sense of the goals on offer. By studying quotes by Tiktok's guiding policy minds, experts claim that TikTok, that bastion of short attention span entertainment, is essentially a form of mental *warfare*, the better to make us compliant to the whims of the Chinese government's political desire to disable our resistance to their unrolling machine of globalization. It's all about marketing, where a product takes up residence in our metaphorical skull such that we claim that there's is the product for *us*. Zeng defines the "cognitive space" as "the area in which feelings, perception, understanding, beliefs, and values exist" and argues that this is where the battle for North American minds can be won. To that end, Zeng said, Beijing must use "information and popular spiritual and cultural products as weapons to influence people's psychology, will, attitude, behavior and even change the ideology, values, cultural traditions and social systems." According to Zeng, these cultural tools, including apps, video games, and films, should be used to "target individuals, groups, countries, and even people around the world."

It remains up to us, if we're capable and willing, to decide for ourselves the degree to which we, er, kowtow to the Tik Tok platform entity of the many-tentacled and human rights-adverse Beijing regime. After all, the phrase bread and circuses began two millenia ago when Roman emperors sought to distract their populace from a marked decline in life circumstances and hopes of a better future.

As a post-script, it's worth remembering a danger for we in university: by developing our critical inquiry muscles we may become insufferable purveyors of ironclad certainties and truths as pertains to hallmarks of cultural presentism. Without a heavy dose of humility, telling ourselves that not even we in our ivory tower minds possess infallible faculties of critical thought, we'll easily miss the elephant in any chat room: ideology functions best when, like a well-lubricated suppository, it slides into our being through the mother of all backdoors: the realm of common sense. However, while we're at it, avoiding the obvious pariahs of our internet time, we just might discover a few other realms of so-called entertainment that do more than just give us a chuckle or a chortle or a moment's respite from the vagaries of daily life. We can, after all, think and have fun at the same time: play is stimulating rather than stultifying, running amok rather than napping supine!

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



Inside AU Events

Natalia Iwanek

AI Uses and Misuses: Academic & Work Applications



At times, it can be difficult to find a sense of community in the AU digital sphere. However, there are a great deal of events occurring on a consistent basis. These range from style guide tips for assignments to research tips and tricks.

This *Voice Magazine* writer recently had a chance to attend a new AU research-focused series. The AI Uses and Misuses: Academic & Work Applications took place on March 8, 2024 from 11:00 to 12:00 MT.

A total of 48 students and AU faculty attended this session, which was co-sponsored by Faculty of Graduate Studies—and hosted by Dr. Stella Lee “an ed-tech and AI strategist, international speaker, startup advisor, LinkedIn Learning instructor, writer and executive board member for the Learning and Development Accelerator.”

After a brief introduction by Corrine Bossé, Learning Designer at the Faculty of Graduate Studies, Dr. Lee began the presentation.

The Concept of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

The discussion first centered on the very concept of AI. Although AI is admittedly a broad topic, many are familiar with what has been termed Generative AI. As one of many aspects of AI, Generative AI specializes in creating content, such as text or images. Many different types of AI tools exist; some examples are OpenAI and Gemini.

Academic and Workplace Applications

The discussion then moved on to how AI can be used in academic and workplace spaces. Indeed, AI can be used in a variety of ways for study and research. Some examples of how this can be done include

- generating ideas,
- conducting literature search and review,
- drafting,
- brainstorming ideas,
- collaboration, and
- streamlining repetitive tasks.

One specific tool that was mentioned was SciSpace.

Capabilities, Limitations, and Challenges

Next, a great deal of AI’s capabilities, limitations, and challenges were discussed. Some capabilities were AI’s increasing sophistication and ability to perform a variety of tasks. In terms of limitations, some that were mentioned included the fact that quality and scope of AI’s work depends on data, that it cannot create accurate diagrams, that it needs rigorous human checking, as well as its limited ability to explain the sources of information, and its reliability and consistency issues. Many challenges were also mentioned. For example, there have been many bias and ethical concerns, false content and hallucinations, as well as inequality of access.

AI Literacy Framework

The discussion then moved onto how to create an AI literary framework. Some suggestions included

- focusing on the fundamentals of AI,
- learning about data (not focusing on one group of people and leaving out other groups of people),
- thinking critically and fact checking,
- considering AI ethics, privacy, security, and trust,
- creating AI pedagogy (how AI can be used for educational purposes), and
- re-imagining the future of work (how AI is impacting society, including how it is changing the workforce and society at large).

The session concluded with a lively questions and answer period.

Future Events

Future events can be found on [AU's The Hub](#).

Natalia Iwanek (she/they) is currently completing her Bachelor of Arts in English with a minor in Political Science at Athabasca University.

How to Live Longer (and Not Succumb to Disease)

Marie Well



When I don't exercise, my life force leaves me, and I can no longer run. I walk slowly and often clock out of work to sleep throughout the day. This has a lot to do with a health condition, chronic fatigue. But when I return to exercising, I gradually turn into a machine. I do three hours of sprints and technique drills on weekends in the pool, cycle most every night for twenty to thirty minutes, do weights two to three times a week, and do martial arts, stretching, and ab work.

My life span would plummet hard if I didn't exercise. But with exercise, the promise of life seems to extend forever. Yet, it takes more than training to maximize health and energy; it also requires a strict diet. And the diet I created was most akin to the diet in the book *How Not to Die*, a godsend for turning any health condition around.

Yesterday, I watched a video by Rhonda Patrick, Ph.D., about lifestyle habits that can impact aging. Her presentation was fabulous, and I hope my overview and commentary on her key points will help us all change our lifestyles so that we steer clear of disease and live long, healthy lives. We can view her video at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uGNLrWxsTiw>.

In her video, she recommends the following supplements and exercise components we can all incorporate into our lives. I'm making significant changes based on her advice, and I hope to celebrate us all doing the same:

Eat at least 2 grams of Omega 3 daily, ideally through seafood. Before questioning whether this is worth the investment, consider the following: Nonsmokers with low omega 3 had a similar life expectancy as smokers with high Omega 3 intake, according to Rhonda. That means not eating Omega 3 (ideally through seafood) is as bad as smoking. According to Rhonda, the low consumption of Omega 3 from seafood is one of the top preventable causes of death. To get 2 grams of Omega 3s daily, I eat half a can of salmon for dinner, giving me 1.6 grams of Omega 3. I also eat Sunny Boy cereal every morning, which contains flaxseed, which tips my Omega 3 intake over the 2-gram range. However, I want a higher Omega 3 daily intake, so I will add dollar-store walnuts for an even more significant benefit. (Did we know Omega 3 is good for the brain, especially regarding learning and memory? So, consider loading up on salmon, Sunny Boy Cereal, and walnuts, especially before exams.)

Eat magnesium daily for a longer lifespan. Rhonda states magnesium is linked to a 40% reduction in all-cause mortality and a 50% reduction in cancer deaths compared to the lowest magnesium level intakes. Magnesium is found in leafy green vegetables—in chlorophyll. I eat a bowl of premade salad with no sauce daily for dinner. To get more chlorophyll in my diet, I buy unsweetened greens powder from Amazon, which is a powder made of various vegetables, fruits, matcha tea, and other healthy ingredients. Also, I purchase barley green powder from Amazon USA, so the shipping cost is high, but it tastes delectable. These chlorophyll-rich powders are so tasty that my hunger for them is insatiable, indicating I might have a magnesium deficiency. I wonder if my extreme cravings for these powders are related to chronic fatigue.

Take 1000 IU to 4000 IU of Vitamin D daily. Vitamin D deficiency accelerates aging, states Rhonda. Furthermore, she says, "70% of the population has inadequate levels of vitamin D." She recommends 4000 IU of Vitamin D daily. I take 1000 IU of Vitamin D a day. Sometimes, I accidentally take up to 3000 IU of Vitamin D a day, which gives me toxic effects that are uncomfortable, so I would only personally take up to 2000 IUs.

According to Rhonda's chart, vigorous cardio exercise can increase lifespan by over 4.9 years. Studies also show that people who got their maximum heart rate to 75-80 percent, five to six hours per week for periods of 25-30 mins in a session, reduced the structural makeup of the heart by 20 years, according to Rhonda. That sounds like five to six hours per week of exercise with 30 minutes at maximum heart rate leads to a 20-year younger heart. So, if we're 40, we've now got the heart of a 20-year-old. I swim about 3 hours a week over the weekends. However, I may join a second swimming pool facility in 2025 to do two additional hours of swimming. My sweet spot goal is to get at least 5 hours of swimming each week and make up for the remaining hour with my exercise bike.

Instead of an hour of exercise, try an exercise snack! Exercise snacks consist of one-to-two-minute bouts of vigorous activity done only thrice daily. According to Rhonda, exercise snacks can give us a 40 percent reduction in all causes and cancer mortality. Exercise snacks include jumping jacks, fast lunges, sprints up staircases, speed cycling, and sitting in a chair to a standing position. I will hop on my exercise bike, which I purchased on credit from Amazon, and do two-minute sprints three times daily for my exercise snack. The stationary bike sits about one meter from my work desk, making it convenient for 2-minute exercise snack work breaks.

Try my favorite snack! I found ways to indulge in a treat as tasty as dark chocolate ice cream without sugar or aspartame. Instead, this delicacy is pure health. I take a bowl of plain Greek yogurt, add a tablespoon of pure, raw organic cacao powder (from Amazon), and add frozen blueberries, bananas, or pineapple. I indulge in one to two bowls of this a day. Raw organic cacao is filled with magnesium and is loaded with antioxidants. And it's delicious!

When I was so unhealthy that I couldn't function enough to work a full day, I started by walking the hallway for about ten minutes a day. And it exhausted me. So, if we want to live healthier lives with less risk of disease—or overcome low energy or pre-existing conditions—make the above lifestyle changes. Start with one change and build from there. And remember, fantastic health starts with making health a goal. Once health is a conscious goal, we enter into worlds we would never have imagined had we not entertained it. Even ChatGPT says that people with severe chronic or autoimmune conditions could work their way up to acquiring a varsity athlete level of fitness within two years. Just ask ChatGPT for a routine.

(This article is for entertainment purposes only. Consult a medical professional when changing diet)

Beyond Literary Landscapes Science Fiction Subgenres

Natalia Iwanek

Hard and Soft Science Fiction



From my early beginnings as a young introvert, the public library has always been a bit of a refuge. Years later, not much has changed, albeit with an additional affinity for endless hours spent scouring second-hand bookstores to add to my ever-growing “to-read” pile.

From one bookworm to another, this column will be underscoring and outlining various literary genres, authors, and recent reads and can serve as an introduction for those unfamiliar with these works, as a refresher for long-time aficionados, and maybe as an inspiration for readers to share their own suggested topics. Do you have a topic that you would like covered in this column? Feel free to contact me for an interview and a feature in an upcoming column.

Who

Following up on last week’s general overview of science fiction, this week’s column delves deeper into the genre. In particular, science fiction can be subdivided into two

main categories, namely hard science fiction and soft science fiction.

Soft science fiction is defined as texts that focus on what are known as “soft sciences.” These include political science, sociology, and psychology. These works often “deal with topics that do not comport with science as we understand it.”

In contrast, hard science fiction focuses on the “hard sciences,” such as astronomy, biology, and physics. In particular, this sub-genre “emphasizes scientific accuracy and precise technical detail as part of its world-building.”

It must also be noted that the science fiction genre can be further divided into additional sub-genres, such as space opera, space western, and dystopian science fiction. These will be discussed in-depth in a future column.

What

Some examples of soft science fiction include *Dune* by Frank Herbert and *The Hitchhiker’s Guide to the Galaxy* by Douglas Adams.

In addition, a well-known example of hard science fiction is *Foundation* by Isaac Asimov.

Where

These novels take place throughout the galaxy.

When

These works take place during the future.

Why

As discussed in last week's column, science fiction novels may be of interest to AU students for a variety of reasons, including a fascination with parallel universes and technology. However, one type of science fiction will not necessarily appeal to all readers of the genre. For example, soft science fiction may appeal to political science and psychology students who may be trying to make sense of their modern world, just as many of classic science fiction readers (and writers) were during the uncertain political climate of the 1950s and 1960s. In contrast, hard science fiction may appeal to AU students in STEM faculties, especially those taking math and physics courses. Indeed, these books' attention to scientific detail may prove very appealing to these types of readers.

How

AU's wide range of diverse courses make it easy to study this topic in depth. Courses related to science fiction sub-genres are available in a variety of disciplines, including one's that may fit into your Degree Works. (Always check with an AU counsellor to see if these particular courses fulfill your personal graduation requirements!)

AU students interested in learning more about this topic may enroll in PHYS 200: Introductory Physics I, a junior-level, three-credit course, which "provides an introduction to classical mechanics and includes a hands-on laboratory component." (No prerequisites are required for this course.) Happy reading!

Natalia Iwanek (she/they) is currently completing her Bachelor of Arts in English with a minor in Political Science at Athabasca University.

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[blue rare]A Higher Form of Life

Oliver-Moorcraft Sykes



There is nothing more miraculous than you, nothing more astonishing than me. The way we can hold our breath for such a long time, or peel an apple in a single long strip, or make music with our brains, our fingers, our breath. The way we can sometimes set aside our own needs, our own damage, our own pain to ease somebody else's; take somebody else into our arms, into our hearts. The way we can fall in love and be happy sometimes, even though we, alone in all creation, know we will someday die. At our best, there is nothing as impressive as us.

Unless, of course, it is the flowers that eat sunlight, or the birds that soar and tumble through the skies. Or the skies themselves, heavier than whales, carrying lakes and lightning in their bellies, nearly weightless but sometimes vaster than cities. Or the oceans that churn and swell beneath the skies, with their hidden treasures, fathomless depths, invisible miracles. Or all those fantastical eternities that burn and spin beyond the skies, bristling with eternal secrets way above our pay grade.

What a strange universe we live in: part haunted house, part slaughterhouse, part costume ball, part pageant. They say that the human brain is the only organ with the capacity to name itself. There's no question that the peculiar development of human consciousness, with its capacity for rational thought and self-reflection, is a razor sharp and bloodthirsty double-edged sword. On one hand, it allows us the ability to apprehend our world, as well as imagine an incalculable number of new ones. On the other hand, it enables us to create all kinds of deliberate and accidental mischief, makes us painfully aware of our own mortality, and encourages us to see ourselves as the measure of all things. That's textbook hubris, right there.

I went to the movies the other night, and it seemed to me that nearly all the trailers were for upcoming films depicting the end of the world. Environmental devastation, social collapse, alien invasion. These are things my dog is blissfully unconcerned with. Which of us is the higher form of life?

Perhaps human consciousness is simply an example of poor evolutionary design, like vestigial tails, or the fact that some species of sharks give birth to offspring that form their teeth *in utero*.

Still, there's no point moaning about it, is there? There's no returning to paradise, we can't uneat the apple. Whether it was bestowed upon us through the beneficence of kindly gods, or (like some poisoned fairy tale spinning wheel) given to us by the bad fairy at the feast, we are stuck with this singular "gift."

Perhaps there *is* a benign purpose to homo sapiens' awareness. Maybe it is our role in the universe to observe and record its horrors, its beauty, its complexity in the way that only our brains can. Or perhaps we're here as comic relief. The jesters in the court, apocalyptic fools pratfalling our way into oblivion, making the gods laugh. Most likely, we are just an accident that, for better or worse, has been waiting forever to happen.

Covering the Foreign Interference Commission

Alek Golijanin



The Public Inquiry into Foreign Interference in Federal Electoral Processes and Democratic Institutions (The Commission) may end up being the single-most important democracy-orienting event of the 22nd century. The Commission intends to conduct a thorough assessment of interference by China, Russia and other foreign states or non-state actors, as they relate to the 2019 and 2021 federal elections. It will be no easy task for The Commission, but it is one that I was able to cover first-hand as an accredited member of the media.

The first phase will focus on the foreign interference that may have had an impact on the 2019 and 2021 federal elections. The Commission is also examining the flow of information within the federal government in relation to these issues and evaluating the actions taken in response. The second phase will focus on examining the capacity

of the various federal structures and governance processes to permit the Government of Canada to detect, deter and counter such interference.

The first five days of public hearings.

The first five days of public hearings included different government stakeholders including Ministers, federal department and agency heads, and other national security experts who were questioned by lawyer's representing different federal political parties, and the hearings set out some clear expectations. There were discussions about how ethnic Canadians may get targeted both in Canada and abroad, and details around current processes.

There was also discussion around the important role that "citizen understanding" and "diaspora communities" play in the grand scheme of protecting democratic institutions. However, there was no mention as to whether public safety stakeholders were prepared to name any other hostile states and how they may be trying to influence smaller-sized diaspora communities, which may lead these communities to wrongly believe that they are not at risk and make them even more vulnerable. But highlighting something like the top ten hostile states and sharing the different approaches that are being taking to gain control over ethnic Canadians, both in Canada and abroad, may be worth exploring.

One outcome from the first five days of public hearings that may have come as the biggest surprise had to do with an acknowledgement that members of our National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians, the highest security committee in Canada, not necessarily being required to have intensive background checks to sit on the Committee. It was suggested that just an "oath" to secrecy might be good enough.

In a perfect world, an oath to secrecy would be enough, but recent events that have played out have shown that even individuals with the highest background clearances have compromised Canada's national security by sharing secrets. However, will someone slip up and say something

they are not supposed to because their party does not win an election, or because they think it is necessary? These are the deep cut questions that promise to keep the highest levels of government up all night, because nothing is guaranteed anymore.

Thinking beyond the public inquiry and outside of our borders.

When Canada conducts public inquiries into different issues, the world takes note. The manner in which we conduct public inquiries is principled; we go after issues that other places would rather avoid, and we do it better than anyone. The Charbonneau Commission and the Cullen Commission are two examples of public inquiry outcomes that other countries leveraged as a template to strengthen their own democracies, including the likes of Australia. Although other countries are not leading with public inquiries to the extent that we happen to be, what is happening elsewhere still has ramifications for Canada.

The FBI may be the premiere police force in the world, but politicians in the U.S. have suggested that it may be time to abolish them. It has been suggested that it may be necessary to lay off 75% of FBI personnel and to move around the left-over officers to other three letter agencies like the DEA and HSI. As a result, Canada may have to further prioritize policing at the federal level, to make up for any uncertainty created if the FBI does cease to exist. Because the foiled plot that both the FBI and RCMP had worked together on to prevent an attack on an American by two Canadians connected to organized crime groups is bound to get harder.

Prior to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, it was unimaginable that ongoing military operations captured via satellite footage would get shared publicly and in real-time. Somehow it happened when U.S. President Joseph Biden's National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan came out sharing satellite footage of Russian military pile ups on the border of Eastern Ukraine, and that an invasion was imminent. That decision changed how the entire world viewed the war. Might a similar approach be required to get ahead of any potential interference related to our democratic institutions and avoid the harming different diaspora communities?

The stakes are high.

Major media publications have reported on some of the foreign interference and how other countries have attempted to subvert the integrity of our institutions and gain influence among government officials. Former Prime Minister Stephen Harper noted that national security far worse than Canadians can imagine, and the more that is learned the more that statement becomes true. Current B.C. Premier David Eby also made a similar comment about transnational crime and the varying degrees to which different sectors in the British Columbia were affected. And the above mentioned FBI and RCMP joint action found the funding for the attack by the two Canadians coming from overseas.

At the same time, the language being used between elected officials and by some national heroes towards different levels of government has normalized using words like "corrupt" and "sell out". For the first time ever, our immigrant roots and ethnic identities have started to get weaponized between us, questioning the commitment that elected representatives have to our country and to us. Nor does it help that there is a global recession and so much near-violence or outright violence on the other side of the ocean that has the potential to become so much worse. Such conflicts have the potential to create friction between different ethnic groups across Canada solely based on their ethnic connection to those places. It is a recipe for trouble.

Regardless of how anyone feels about any single political party or any single politician, each and every one of them deserve to be insulated from exposure to the different harms that come as a result of the role they play in determining our country's trajectory, and to have the opportunity

to attain our country's highest office. And be free from foreign interference, domestic interference, and complex crimes.

Alek Golijanin is an AU alum who considers himself a gentleman first, a scholar second, and a combat sports fanatic third. In that order.

Student Sizzle — AU's Hot Social Media Topics

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

Facebook:



Desktop recommendations for taking a ProctorU exam. A student has asked about the desk setup for a ProctorU exam. Other students have advised that a secondary keyboard might not be allowed, and Bluetooth is disabled for external devices. However, a Bluetooth mouse and keyboard seem to be acceptable. They also recommend that pictures and other objects be moved off the desktop, and any objects in front of the computer may need to be removed. At the start of the exam, it is suggested to shut down the computer to remove background programs. Another student suggests creating a separate user on the computer, as ProctorU runs a script that may not be reverted prior computer settings after the exam.

to

Reddit:

Are AU accounting courses difficult? A student inquires if accounting courses offered by AU are difficult. Other students have recommended YouTube channels such as Edspira for learning accounting online. They suggest that learning accounting online through Pearson's textbooks, quizzes, and assignments is much harder than learning it at a physical university. However, one student found an accounting professor from a physical university as a tutor and watched Tony Bell's YouTube videos. This student mentioned that the course needed to be supplemented with external learning resources.

Twitter:

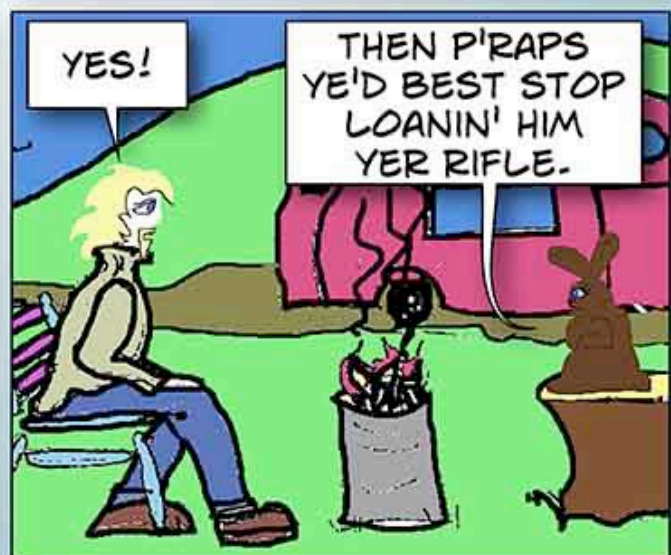
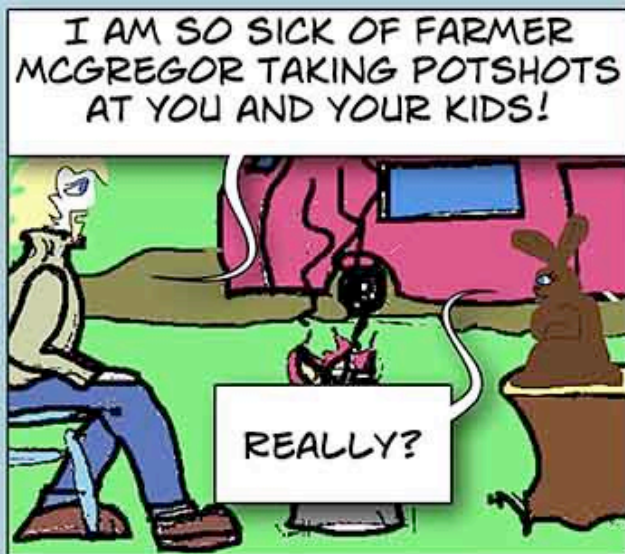
Nominate your inspiration for an honorary degree! [@athabascau](#) write, "Every year, #AthabascaU honours inspiring people who've demonstrated outstanding contributions to their disciplines or to society at large. Nominations for AU honorary degree recipients are open until March 11! <https://athau.ca/4c5dbco>."

How to find articles that don't link to PDFs. [@aulibarchives](#) posts, "Not sure how to find an article that does not have a pdf linked? Find out: <https://libguides.athabascau.ca/researchprocess/access> #AULibrary."

Health and dental plan for grad students with pre-existing conditions. [@augsa](#) posts, "Good news, AUGSA students! Our optional Health & Dental Plan includes coverage for pre-existing conditions, ensuring everyone gets the care they need. Visit <http://augsa.com> to learn more and enroll. Your well-being is one of our top priority!"

Poet Maeve
Loan of a Rifle

Wanda Waterman



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