



THE VOICE

Vol 32 Issue 39 - 2024-10-04

Minds We Meet

Interviewing Students Like You!

Cities in Six

Bruges, Belgium

Find Your Voice

But Speak Softly

Plus:

*DIY Peking Duck Recipe
Turning up the Heat
and much more!*



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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 Asked and Answered?

Karl Low



This week, we start off with a short interview with a student in Nova Scotia who's done everything from avionics to massage, and who still considers herself a new student. She gives us some insight into how she studies best and also some really solid advice for new students.

We also have a Cities in Six, this time looking at Bruges, Belgium, a UNESCO World Heritage site that's a major tourist destination. So rather than fight with the crowds, you can just experience it through pictures.

And we're rounding it out this week with some sage advice in our [blue rare] column. It's a good read.

However, if you're reading this, you may be wondering about what's going on with AUSU. Fair enough. What I can tell you is that last Thursday I sent them a set of questions, with several of them about the internals of AUSU Council through all this, and then three of them that I think are the ones that really matter to you, the students.

The first was in response to the statement that AUSU was seeking a change in direction, and I asked "What is the direction AUSU Council felt it was important to change

from, and what is the direction AUSU Council would like to change to?"

The second student focussed question was "How does AUSU Council feel this change will enable them to better support students?"

And the final one, "There are many accomplished AUSU members (past and present) out there. Where should AUSU members go if they are interested in submitting their own application to become the new Executive Director?"

Unfortunately, there may be some sensitivity issues with the answers I was provided; I'm in the process of verifying that now, but I think I can at least share that the gist of the answers was "Trust us, we're doing what's in the best interests of students, and we'll be letting people know in future."

If that doesn't seem like enough of an answer for you, then consider writing governance@ausu.org and let them know you'll be attending the next AUSU Council Meeting on Tuesday, October 8, at 3:00pm MDT. The agenda seems relatively light, so it should be a short meeting, and Council always has a question-and-answer period at the end where all attendees are invited to speak and ask Council any questions they might have.

The start of October is important for another reason as well, as it's the start of the AUSU Awards season. If you haven't already, be sure to check out their [Awards and Bursaries](#) page with various awards that can recognize your contribution to your community or AU, and bursaries for if you might be in need.

But if you can't find anything that fits at AUSU, check out our Scholarship of the Week. We also have recipes, inspirational articles, advice for how to improve your interview game, and more! Enjoy the read!

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

MINDS WE MEET



The Voice Magazine recently had a chance to chat with Christine Bulk (she/her), a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology and Women's and Gender Studies student located in Truro, Nova Scotia.

Christine acknowledged, "I would like to begin by acknowledging that in Nova Scotia we are in Mi'kma'ki (MEEG-MA-GEE), the traditional (or ancestral) territory of the Mi'kmaq people. I also acknowledge that people of African descent have been in Nova Scotia for over 400 years, and I honor and offer gratitude to those ancestors of African descent who came before us to this land."

On a personal note, Christine let us know, "I am a mature student but have been through a variety of careers. From avionics technician to massage therapist. I have decided to complete my Bachelor of Arts degree that I started in the 90's. I was born and raised in BC and now reside in Nova Scotia, where I've been for the past 12 years."

She had some great study tips for fellow AU students. "I study best in the mornings when the air is fresh and I can have either some tea or coffee, because coffee later in the day

does not help me sleep. I like a warm, quiet, out of the way place where I don't have to put books away."

She also had some sound advice for new and/or prospective students. "I feel like I am still a new student so all I can say is if your resources are not available yet keep looking around myAU and learn what's available to you, learn what apps and software to get going now before the course starts like Moodle, and text-to-speech."

When she is not busy studying, Christine likes to "run with friends, hike in the woods, and watch TV and movies with her husband." She also enjoys reading. "I have read a lot of books from fiction to nonfiction, but autobiography and memoirs are my favorite. I enjoy learning about other people's lives in other countries. Sometimes a novel can be set so well in a country so different from Canada."

As for her experience with online learning so far? She enjoys "learning in your own comfortable environment and mostly on your own time." She continued, "I dislike the lack of people interaction, hearing and seeing in real time."

The Voice Magazine asked Christine which famous person, past or present, she would like to have lunch with, and why. She chose "Nelson Mandela, to learn how to persevere and keep fitting what is right." And the lunch? It "would be South African High Tea."

As for her most valuable lesson learned in life? She mentioned “that there will be high times and low times and without one we wouldn’t know the other.” Best of luck, Christine!

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!



Cities in Six: Bruges, Belgium

Barbara Lehtiniemi

Visual, virtual visiting—six photos at a time

Bruges is a beautiful and well-preserved city of about 120,000 in the northwest of Belgium. There were settlements in the area during the Bronze and Iron Ages, and a fort was built on the site in the 9th century. Its proximity to the coast made the city an important and prosperous centre of trade. The modern North Sea port of Zeebrugge is a few kilometres to the north of Bruges.

Bruges' medieval city centre is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The city has attracted tourists since the 1800s and now hosts around 8 million visitors per year. We visited Bruges on a day-trip from nearby Ghent, in August 2019.



Markt. The central square in Bruges is surrounded by many prominent buildings, including the Provincial Court, the Post building, and the Belfort. The series of step-gabled buildings in this photo are fronted with canopied restaurant patios.



"Fucking Bruges!" On the south side of the Markt square soars the Belfort, or bell tower. If you have watched the 2008 dark comedy-drama *In Bruges* with Colin Farrell and Brendan Gleeson (and if you haven't, you really should), this is THAT tower. Tourists can climb the 366 steps to the top of the 83-metre tower; entrance fee applies.



Venice of the North. Fleets of tour boats navigate Bruges' network of canals, providing tourists with a relaxing way to see much of the historic city centre. Unlike the bridge in this photo, some of the bridges over the canals are low enough that tourists need to duck their heads when their boat passes beneath them. (Bruges, or Brugge is Old Dutch for bridge.)



Christ's blood. Jammed between the 14th-century city hall and a chocolate shop is the Basilica of the Holy Blood. Originally a private chapel for the Duke of Flanders, the 12th-century chapel holds a vial containing a cloth said to be soaked with the blood of Jesus Christ. The bloody cloth was preserved by Joseph of Arimathea, and brought from Jerusalem to Bruges during the Second Crusade of 1147-49.



Madonna of Bruges. Our Lady of Bruges Roman Catholic church was constructed in stages from the 13th to 15th centuries. The church houses a famous marble sculpture of the Madonna and Child. That sculpture by Michelangelo was completed in 1506 and is the only one of his sculptures to leave Italy during Michelangelo's lifetime. This photo is of the church's nave (the sculpture is in a chapel in the southern aisle.)



The Golden Carp. A bowl of hearty fish soup at the Gouden Karpel. The restaurant and its attached fresh-fish market are on Vismarkt (fish market) square. Our decision to eat lunch early proved to be a wise one—by the time we left the restaurant, there was a line-up of would-be diners waiting for a table.

Travel note: The Bruges train station provides frequent rail service to and from Brussels, Ghent, Ostend, and Lille (France.) Local buses run between the train station and the centre of Bruges; it is only 20 minutes by foot. Brussels Airport is the nearest major international airport, and is about an hour away by train. Bruges is a major tourist magnet—arrive early in the day if making a day trip to the city, and book well in advance if staying overnight.

Barbara Lehtiniemi is a writer, photographer, and AU graduate (BGS 2018.) She lives on a windswept rural road in Eastern Ontario.

Scholarship of the Week

Digging up scholarship treasure for AU students.

Scholarship name: Patricia Trottier and Gwyn Morgan Student Essay Contest

Sponsored by: Manning Foundation for Democratic Education

Deadline: November 3, 2024

Potential payout: up to \$2500

Eligibility restriction: Applicants must be undergraduate students studying in Canada or Canadian students studying abroad, and must be attending school in the 2024/25 year.

What's required: An online application form along with an essay of 1500 to 2500 words addressing "a current political, cultural or economic topic of the author's choosing broadly consistent with the principles of free markets, democratic governance, individual liberty, reason, personal responsibility and freedom of conscience and expression. In the spirit of open inquiry and free expression the contest welcomes essays that challenge conventional orthodoxies."

Tips: Be sure to read the [Full Contest Details](#) for info on essay structure.

Where to get info: manningfoundation.org/2nd-annual-morgan-trottier-student-essay-contest/



Find Your Voice, But Speak Softly

Oliver Moorcraft-Sykes



I was in Manhattan a few days ago, walking down Lexington Avenue, when I spotted one of Elon Musk's new Cybertrucks stopped at an intersection. It looks even stupider and more bombastic in the real world than it does in the promotional images, which is really saying something. I was tempted to take out my phone and snap a picture, but the driver looked like he was really desperate for attention, and I just couldn't get into gratifying that. He had a look on his face that seemed to yell "Yes, bitches, I really am cool enough and wealthy enough to be driving this bad boy!" Perhaps there's some Tesla marketing material that promises ownership of this gimmicky toy will add crucial inches to your manhood. Anyway, it seemed to me he was looking pretty smug and pleased with himself and his status as an alpha male finance bro, or something along those lines. Then he got jammed in the intersection, and a cab driver behind him leaned on the horn and yelled "Move it, you dopey fuck!" Sometimes it's the little pleasures in life that elevate your day.

It got me thinking, though, about how important it is to each of us as human beings to proclaim our individualism and sense of identity. Most of us do it all the time, in one way or another. Through the styles of clothing we wear, for example. The books we read, the skills and interests we cultivate, the music we listen to, the experiences we seek out, the circle of friends we identify with, and so on.

So, I wondered if I was being overly judgemental about the dude with the trendy, overpriced wheels. After all, I am not a car person. My threshold for a decent vehicle is something that is able to generate a certain amount of forward movement, and that can stop when required. Perhaps driving a Cybertruck is his way of telling the world who he is, in essence no different from wearing a Velvet Underground t-shirt or name dropping nouvelle vague film directors.

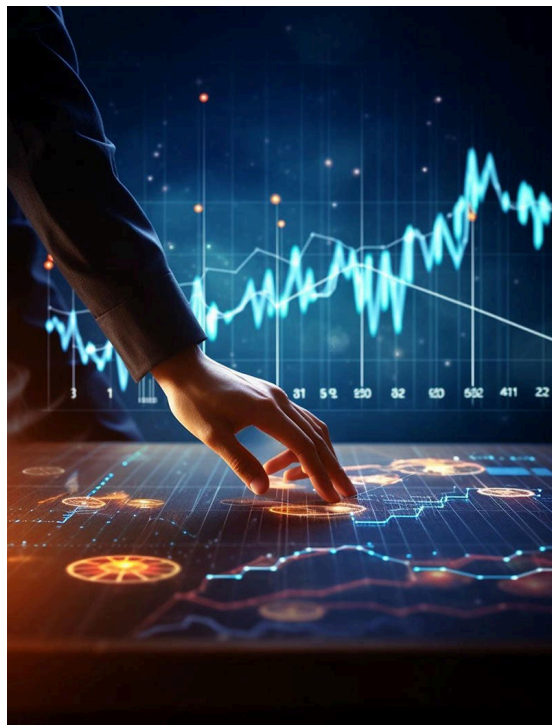
But then, seconds later, I came to my senses and decided that, nah, the guy's a douche nozzle.

True, who doesn't want to express some essential aspect of themselves to the world? Who doesn't want to be seen to be cool and smart and gifted, even when, or perhaps especially when, we don't feel it ourselves. We are forever being told that we are unique, that we are special, that we are capable of doing anything and having it all.

I suppose, in a way, this is good. Especially for those of us who have struggled to believe in our own worth. For others, though, it's just fuel for their arrogance and egocentrism. As a wise lady once told me, it's a wonderful thing to find your voice, but you don't need to scream in people's faces. Sometimes speaking softly and with humility makes the most memorable statement of all.

The Exciting Secret Behind Landing an Executive Role

Marie Well



To become a CMO or CEO of a big public company, we can have all the degrees, the pedigree, ten years of experience, etc., but we need something more. We must ace the interview and communicate like Angelina Jolie or some other incredible leader. We also need a plan. But more than all that, we need to learn the science behind acquiring a top role, which I've recently discovered and am about to share.

But first, I interviewed for two companies, so three interviews total, and one interview was like talking with a long-lost best friend. But I didn't get the one job and likely won't get the next. I'm often called "overqualified," and my leadership answers don't quite hit the mark. So, instead of feeling deflated, I took it to a scientific level, and it's the fast track to a CMO leadership role that'll shave years off trying to "figure it out as we go." I searched for a service specifically designed to train me to do better interviews, and the one I tried was [BigInterview.com](https://www.biginterview.com). This online resource of video lessons reveals the science of interviewing to help us secure even executive positions for

Fortune 500 global public companies.

As I keep hearing from potential employers that I'm too senior for the management roles but a better fit for a director role, I've been wondering about the Doctor of Business Administration, which will knock me out of the box as I will be overqualified for many roles. But wait! Remember? We set goals, and my goal is to fast-track to a big public company CMO role and then a CEO role. So, the Doctor of Business Administration still works. I should be happy that I am overqualified for management roles, as being too qualified might mean I'm qualified for a CMO role sooner than anticipated. However, to take the leap, we'd need to fast-track the required skills through continuous learning. One skill we'd need is accounting; another is project management, leadership, or management.

As a humorous side story, to land a career that pays well, I devised an initial strategy that I wanted us to all try. Namely, to go above and beyond the line of duty, I offered interviewers a gift that helps advance their company's bottom line: complimentary marketing videos. Grant Cardone tells his daughter to try out for every audition, if only for the experience. So, I aimed to hone my video design skills quickly by giving each interviewer a video ad that would otherwise cost \$800 if done by an agency or Fiverr professional. There is nothing wrong with sweetening the deal and leaving an impression. Then, I aimed to offer more videos for a fee on a contractual basis, if need be, so that I don't get super rocked by EI.

I just tried this video strategy out, and it bombed. Not only did I seem overqualified, but I also felt like a show-off. However, I think the CMO role might be more realistic than I thought. We often undersell ourselves. We could be on the verge of dying with little work experience for most of our lives and turn our health and opportunities around to where we suddenly are at the top of our field, still baffled about how we got there. Nothing is impossible!

But with that online service, we can access video lessons on how to succeed at interviewing, resumes, job applications, securing executive roles, and so much more. Interviewing is a science,

especially when interviewing for the top role. (Does the Chief Technology Officer role sound enticing?) So, biginterview.com may be my ticket to becoming a CEO. And, if mine, why not ours—all of ours?

One thing holding me back from job interviews is my voice sounds too sweet. I previously researched where to acquire vocal training for CEO roles, and I emailed a lady voice coach, but she never got back. So, I hit a dead end. But dead ends are temporary, as nothing is truly impossible. So, yesterday, I located this neat app for vocal coaching. It's called Vocal Coach. It promises to make me sound more like a leader by December. So, I chose Angelina Jolie as the voice option I most want to emulate. Then, it did a voice assessment on me, and I currently sound like Selena Gomez, age 30 to 40 range, with a lover voice archetype. That's a far cry from Angelina Jolie in a CEO role.

The BigInterview.com service said I speak too slowly for a professional voice, too, so the voice coach app will teach me how to increase my speaking speed. The speed of the voice is relevant for us executive role seekers because CEOs deliver annual reports to the media, and it's critical that the CEO speak well to secure shareholder value. Speaking below the minimum speed of professionalism (or well above) makes listeners feel we are unprepared or, worse, a bit slow. A solution is to write out and practice verbalizing answers to questions to speed up (or slow down) the pace.

I also learned from these services how to overcome the issues of being perceived as overqualified. People might think something is wrong with us if we're applying for a role for which we're overqualified. Or they might think we'd get bored or leave as soon as something better crops up. And people may feel threatened if they think we're after their more senior roles. So, to prevent this, I've got to stop saying I had a perfect final grade in multivariate calculus, especially if it has little to do with the job description or if it's for a role below the director level. So, this means we need to sell our strengths but be cautious not to put anyone on the defensive.

So, whatever weakness any of us have with interviewing, from having a gap in our resume to having a disability or being LGBTQ, there is training available. BigInterview.com worked for me because it has video course lessons on what we should say. With the right interviewing skills, a CEO role or whatever position we desire is within our reach. As knowledge is power, and we are students acquiring knowledge at AU, we're on the fast track to unbelievable success. So, let's get them titles, tigers, and make everyone at AU a global executive!

AU-thentic Events Upcoming AU Related Events

AUSU Council Meeting

Tues, Oct 8, 6:00 pm MDT

Online

Hosted by AUSU

Contact governance@ausu.org for Zoom information and meeting package

MBA for Executives Webinar

Tues, Oct 8, 10:00 to 11:00 am MDT

Online

Hosted by AU Faculty of Business

www.athabascau.ca/news/events/mba-for-executives-webinar-20241008

RSVP through above link

Library Chat

Tues, Oct 8, 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

Developing Your Research webinar series: Intro to Citation Management with Zotero

Tues, Oct 8, 1:00 to 2:00 pm MDT

Online

Hosted by AU Library and Write Site

www.athabascau.ca/news/events/academic-research-intro-to-citation-management-with-zotero

Register through above link

Library Chat

Thur, Oct 10, 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

All events are free unless otherwise noted.



DIY Peking Duck Recipe

Cassandra Wang



Peking duck has its roots in Imperial Chinese cuisine. For myself, I grew up eating this only on special occasions with family and friends of family at renowned restaurants. Typically, the dish is known for its crispy, lacquered duck skin and tender duck breast meat. It is served with pancakes, sweet hoisin sauce, and fresh veggies. The duck wrap dates back to the Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368) and its flavor is as rich as its lengthy history. Traditionally this is a difficult dish to prepare as it requires the chef to air-dry the duck to achieve its crispy skin, followed by roasting the bird in a closed or hung oven. This method achieves the perfect golden-brown skin that is the centerpiece for its pairing with cucumbers, scallions, sweet hoisin, and a thin crepe exterior.

When family guests visit from abroad, a way to truly honor and treat the guests is to take them out for dinner and order this exotic dish. For myself, I was simply craving the complex flavors of this dish and looked up a lazy-man's edition of Peking Duck Wrap. For my method, I chose to purchase the pre-barbecued duck

from a Chinese grocery store's ready-to-eat section. However, I included my grandparents' recipe for Roasting Peking Duck at home. Just don't be surprised if it doesn't turn out perfectly the first time since the roasting process is quite complex.

Ingredients:

For the Duck:

- 1 whole Peking duck (can be store-bought or homemade)
- 1 tablespoon five-spice powder
- Salt to taste

For the Wrap:

- 4 large flour tortillas or Chinese pancakes
- ½ cup hoisin sauce
- 1 cucumber, julienned
- 1 bunch scallions, julienned
- Fresh cilantro (optional)
- 1 tablespoon sesame oil (optional)

For Homemade Peking Duck (optional):

- 1 whole duck
- 2 tablespoons honey
- 2 tablespoons soy sauce
- 2 tablespoons rice vinegar
- 1 tablespoon Shaoxing wine or dry sherry
- 1 tablespoon five-spice powder
- 1 tablespoon sesame oil



**Instructions:*****Step 1: Preparing the Duck (Traditional Method)***

If you're feeling adventurous, prepare the duck at home:

1. **Clean the Duck:** Remove any excess fat from the duck and pat it dry.
2. **Boil Water and Prepare Glaze:** In a pot, bring water to a boil. In a separate bowl, mix honey, soy sauce, rice vinegar, Shaoxing wine, and sesame oil to create a glaze.
3. **Glaze the Duck:** Using a ladle, pour the boiling water over the duck to tighten its skin. Pat the duck dry, then brush the glaze all over.
4. **Air-Dry the Duck:** Hang the duck or place it in a cool, ventilated area to air-dry for 6-8 hours. This helps achieve the signature crispy skin.
5. **Roast the Duck:** Preheat the oven to 375°F (190°C). Rub the duck with five-spice powder and salt, then roast the duck on a rack in a roasting pan for 1.5-2 hours, or until the skin is crispy and golden brown.

Step 2: Preparing Store-Bought Peking Duck

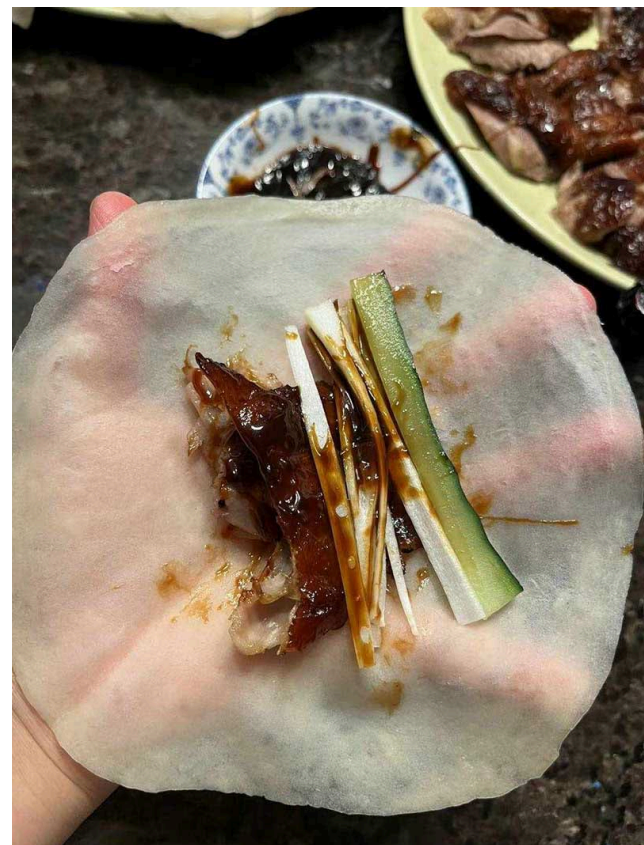
1. **Reheat the Duck:** If you've bought a pre-cooked Peking duck, follow the packaging instructions to reheat it, usually in an oven at 350°F (175°C) for 15-20 minutes.
2. **Slice the Meat:** Once the duck is heated, slice the skin and meat thinly.

Step 3: Assemble the Wrap

1. **Prepare the Wraps:** Warm the tortillas or pancakes briefly on a hot skillet or in the microwave for a few seconds to make them pliable.
2. **Spread the Sauce:** Spread about 1-2 tablespoons of hoisin sauce over each wrap.
3. **Add Vegetables:** Lay the julienned cucumbers and scallions across the center of the wrap. Add a few sprigs of fresh cilantro if desired.
4. **Layer the Duck:** Place a generous portion of the sliced duck (both skin and meat) over the vegetables.
5. **Roll the Wrap:** Fold in the sides and roll the tortilla tightly, ensuring all the ingredients are securely wrapped.

Step 4: Serve

Serve the Peking duck wraps immediately while warm, with extra hoisin sauce on the side for dipping. You can also drizzle a little sesame oil inside the wrap for added richness.



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

Beyond Literary Landscapes

Isaac Asimov

Nat Writes



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

This week’s column focuses on science fiction writer Isaac Asimov.

In particular, [Asimov was a US](#) “author and biochemist, a highly successful and prolific writer of science fiction

and of science books for the layperson.”

He was born on January 2, 1920, in Petrovichi, Russia and died April 6, 1992, in New York, New York.

What

Some of Asimov’s well-known works include *Foundation*, *I, Robot*, and *Bicentennial Man*. He is also known for his series, such as the *Greater Foundation* series and *The Robot* series.

In addition to his fiction novels, novellas, and short stories, Asimov was also known for his non-fiction essays. A prolific writer, he authored over 500 texts during his lifetime.

A great deal of his works have been turned into popular films and television series.

Where

Many of Asimov’s works take place in distant planets and galaxies.

When

These texts are mainly set in the distant future.

Why

Asimov’s works may appeal to AU students who enjoy predominantly hard science fiction (as well as those who enjoy soft science fiction), and those who enjoy subjects, such as physics, astrophysics, astronomy, and mathematics.

How

AU’s wide range of diverse courses make it easy to study this topic in depth. Courses related to the works of Isaac Asimov 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 [ENGL 387: Writing Speculative Fiction](#), a senior-level, three-credit course, which “develops speculative fiction (SF)

writing skills through a combination of strategic study and writing activity.” (Please note that this course requires [ENGL 381](#): Creative Writing in Prose and professor approval as prerequisites.) In addition, students may also consider [ASTR 495](#): Astronomy and Astrophysics Projects I, a senior-level, three-credit course, which “is for students who wish to carry out projects in astronomy and/or astrophysics, or to obtain formal recognition, through this course, of related skills and training they have received on the job by applying them to a new project.” (Note that this course requires “[a]t least 15 credits (at least 9 at the senior level) in astronomy, mathematics, geology, chemistry, or physics, and permission of the Course Coordinator,” as well as a project proposal). Happy reading!

Fly on the Wall: Turning up the Heat On the Psychology of Climate Change, Part I

Jason Sullivan



Like delicate bromeliads insufficiently misted in a dry climate, wilted and desolate and displeased as they gaze out from a sunny windowsill, we humans bear a suffering countenance on a warming planet. Unlike flora and fauna in nature, however, heat impacts us in a psychological, as well as physiological, arena. Contesting dire predictions about the future of our species and faced with myriad mental and digital images of a world on fire, requires that we press our academic emergency response abilities into purpose. Critical thought must never be extinguished, if we are to make good on the promise of university studies.

Just as the phrase *you kill me* implies a disturbing or humorous statement made by an Other, the deathly impacts of a heat wave carry corollary complaints, griping and neurosis. This is nothing new, but what has changed is the perception that something unnatural is at work anytime a day

becomes sunny and hot. Likewise, a summer rainstorm carries the sighing caveat that, like a forlorn, lovelorn teen receiving a hug from a bestie, we needed it. After all, we collectively are told that “a 1 degree increase in temperature is associated with a 0.9% increase in mental health-related morbidity”. By such a metric each moment of increasing warmth as the dawn sun bakes its way across the earth outside our door is not an invitation to frolic, but a warning of impending doom. The clock seems to be ticking on our demise right where a sunny expanse of summer possibility held sway.

Reality, though it can feel like it bites, more reasonably can be seen as a consistent nibble—especially when every degree of heat counts as another footstep toward the swaying rope of the climate gallows. An anxiety-ridden existence, if ever there was. Yet, despite ongoing forest fire tragedies, comparatively few Canadians literally live within dog-walking distance of a forest that could burn down their homes. Our ongoing sense of impending danger is more due to media scare tactics designed to increase viewership and thereby advertising profits than to warn of literal impending danger.

Even global heat records, though serious, are a bit tough to put in full perspective given the wavering fluctuations hard to quantify in the ice and sediment record. While we may be in the hottest of possible times, scientists are at pains to point out that “there are no detailed temperature records extending back 100,000 years, so we don't know for sure.” In many places temperature records only go back 50 years and, where studies occur, “bottom currents and burrowing organisms can mix the sediment, blurring any short-term temperature spikes. For another, the timeline for each record is not known precisely, so when multiple records are averaged together to estimate past global temperature, fine-scale fluctuations can be cancelled out. Because of this, paleoclimate scientists are reluctant to compare the long-term record of past temperature with short-term extremes.” In any case, the results of burning fossil fuels are basically permanent. For centuries to come, what we've done will result in a warmer climate. Yet the facts and data aren't what causes such concern per se; our psychological state of climate anxiety taps into something deeper in the darkest recesses of our humanity

So, while the facts of fluctuations through the eons are hard to pin down, the consequences of climate anxiety are very real. Even at the best of times we abide in a twitchy and nerve-wracked mammalian mental warzone, simply owing to the natural risk aversion baked into our brains. But now, due to the many floods, typhoons, tornadoes, and hurricanes we see on our screens, we can't easily parse out the reality of our individual lives from the collective royal *we* of our species as a whole. Plus, we want to show we care and have normal empathy; only a sociopath would turn a blind eye to the climate misery of others, right? So our best intentions and instinctual risk aversion leave us in an ironic fix in terms of mental health. Just as we feel more and more emotionally bonded within a global village of bipeds is when we most need a healthy reality check about the relative affluence, comfort, and safety of our First World Problem-laced lives. Empathy is not, after all, positive if it reduces us to a me-too sense of calamity and panic.

Seeing how we aren't all equally affected in society and on the planet can be truly empowering. The best we can do is to not join in the melee of climate fear and loathing. Studies show that those dealing with real crises, rather than the larger existential fear about the future that has been part of modernity since the first nuclear bombs were dropped, have negative psychosocial outcomes that we mirror to our peril. “The severity and duration of mental disorders following natural disasters may be increased by psychosocial stressors such as personal and financial loss and forced migration, by vulnerabilities such as pre-existing mental disorders and low social support, and by insufficient mental health care.”

Here at AU, we tend to live far from destitution, certainly removed from the literal homelessness of those we see if we help out at our local food bank. In my time in such a role I was amazed at the caring and generous encounters I had and the way in which many food bank clients embraced the concept of university education. For them the dream of a higher education, and life calling, was not so reducible to cynical and snide remarks about a diploma being merely a sheet of paper. For the truly impoverished in our society education and betterment is a luxury worth hoping for, not one that comes a distant third behind take-home income and maintenance of social status. If I'd just wallowed at home and made the problems of others my own, without realizing that their problems were different than mine, I'd have been no help at all.

To our underprivileged Canadian peers climate dangers are far more directly felt than by doom scrolling through a series of melodramatic memes about the end of the world: “individuals with lower socioeconomic status have a higher exposure to extreme heat and air pollution, are at increased risk of social isolation and discrimination, and have a higher risk of mental disorders, while individuals with higher socioeconomic status may be better protected against

environmental stressors, experience less social adversity, and have lower barriers to access healthcare.”

Other calamities ensue as our climate warms:

“The prevalence of substance use may be higher among individuals experiencing forced migration in camp settings, which are characterized by significant psychosocial challenges, compared to community settings...the stress of social isolation and discrimination may be increased for migrants in neighbourhoods with a lower proportion of individuals of similar origin, which is associated with an increased risk of psychosis.”

Apparently, if we find ourselves a cultural, ethnic, or ideological minority in our given distance education setting, we may come to see ourselves as outsiders literally to the whole planet! But how can it be that we denizens of planet earth see our world as so irremediably uncomfortable? Is humanity going crazy while making the planet insane? Perhaps something deeper is going on that reflects something in our human psyche, something that a social science education can uncover. A positive assessment and review and personal action plan can only augment a better state of mental health as we move into the future. 🏠

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The Formula for the Incredible to Occur During Tragic Times

Marie Well



Sometimes, we go through ten years or more of extreme anxiety and chronic fatigue or other tragic circumstances, like I did. The key is to keep trying during these times, throwing stuff at the wall, learning new skills, and doing all we can to care for ourselves and others. If we put in the effort, then out of the blue, our circumstances can do a 360, where we suddenly are cured of our ailments and on the path to an overwhelming victory. Reading, developing our hobbies and passions, and working on our health and spirituality are all tools for overcoming. And great things happen when we enter the overcoming phase, which we inevitably will.

For example, I don't tend to listen to music with lyrics, as I am sensitive to the words and want to hear only uplifting lyrics. A loved one wrote this incredible song, and he is so positive and inspiring that he is rapidly becoming a micro-

influencer with some influential and famous people on social media. So, we're going to have his songs produced. We'll then market and sell them on music platforms. I've found the singer and musician, and if I get a tax credit within the next few months, I'll use part of it to pay the singer for her music and vocals. My loved one's songs are at a much more advanced level of wisdom than I possess and can make a person feel amazing! The songs are inspirational to me. I'll then put them on Spotify and Apple Music and market the album in Cineplex and the theatres. The music is premised on love for everyone. After all, love is the purpose of life.

Also, I have always wanted to create a course. A decade ago, I auditioned to make a course for LinkedIn Learning (Lynda.com). At that time, I was physically sick frequently and anxiety-riddled, unable to hold a job for nearly a decade. I only had a few skills outside of a camera and some podcasting abilities, mainly because I couldn't afford essential software and courses. And I was devastated when Lynda.com rejected me. But today, I applied to create a LinkedIn Learning course; fingers are crossed! My portfolio is a thousand times better and includes AI video production.

It's strange, but for over a decade, I had read books on video production, done video work through a university TV station, and attended a national film board workshop. Still, I couldn't create a video on my own. However, it all gelled with some one-on-one video training from a former colleague and from a digital marketing certificate course that taught producing for YouTube. This exposure helped me take my video skills to the next level. In about a week, it just gelled. And ChatGPT helped, too. So, I learned that when we keep trying to learn new skills that excite us, even if we have hardly a budget, a particular point occurs in life if we persist, where it all gels. Then, we gain a significantly higher level of mastery at hyper speed.

Additionally, I saw in the Philosophy of Science book how Galileo and Newton transformed the scientific paradigm. I've got some insights that could generate a new scientific paradigm that is grossly overlooked, and I submitted my ideas for publication in an online magazine. It relates to my observations and philosophy on motion parallax. Last night, ChatGPT told me that virtual reality and augmented reality hold the key to measuring motion parallax phenomena, and it advised me on tools and coordinate systems. Getting a Doctor of Business Administration degree may give me the credibility to advance these theories in academic literature.

However, today, an ad popped up for a Chief Marketing Officer certificate with Kellogg School, a top US Ivy League School, so I aim to take that first if I can figure out how to afford it. It'll take me closer to the goal of a CMO role, perhaps within five years. Also, I've moved to the second round of interviews for an exciting career that pays \$140,000 a year in a director position. These things appear out of nowhere and can do similarly for all of us, no matter where we are today, regardless of disability or circumstances.

I want to stop here and advise us that only four years ago, I was recovering from a nearly ten-year stint of unemployment due to extreme nausea from chronic fatigue and severe, prolonged anxiety attacks. Many of us may have situations such as this. So, I'm in shock and disbelief that things are unfolding as positively as they suddenly are.

Therefore, I want to share the critical ingredients for this success so that any of us with conditions like mine might do the same. I emphasize the following: 1. spiritual, religious, and ethical development; 2. the Marriage Foundation's views on unconditional love (which helped me enormously), 3. continuous learning and massive amounts of reading, 4. heavy exercise, 5. extreme diet, 6. constantly applying for careers, even when it seems hopeless, as a higher income opens incredible professional development opportunities, and 7. big impossible goals and dreams.

If we want to try this or a similar formula, we may flourish incredibly, too, assuming I have the variables accurately assessed, which I think I do.

Just keep throwing stuff at the wall until something sticks. We can make all our dreams come true, and when we get close to God or, for atheists, unconditional love for all, incredible things skyrocket. At least, that's my experience, and I think it applies to everyone. We've all got missions, and I believe the successful completion of those missions stems from unconditional love.

And if we're young, know that often our best works happen later in life. Just keep learning and trying, and it will all culminate in our missions accomplished. There is something to say about the experience and the wisdom that evolves from facing trauma and setbacks with nothing but a heart full of love! We've all got potential, even in our 90s and on the verge of dying, for nothing is impossible, arguably by following the correct formulae for unbelievable success! And we've all got what it takes to shine for all eternity; that light is who we are: souls of pure, unconditional love.

Student Sizzle — AU's Hot Social Media Topics

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

Facebook:

How was the testing site for the exam? A student asks Calgarians about their experience writing exams at testing sites. One student found writing the exam through the University of Calgary seamless. Another student wrote at Cochrane library, which cost \$20 or \$25 and was less stressful than ProctorU or determining a campus location while paying for parking.

Reddit:

Complete a course within three weeks? A student asks if COMM 243 can be completed within two to three weeks. Other students confirm this may be possible.

Twitter:

Attention psychology students! [@aulibarchives](https://twitter.com/aulibarchives) posts, "Are you a new Psychology student in need of help using the library? Check out our new Psychology Research Guide for all the help you need: https://libguides.athabascau.ca/psychology_guide."

Tech innovators discuss Truth and Reconciliation. @AthabascaU posts, "Linea Xaysana (Master of Counselling '24) and Twylla Soosay (MSc Information Systems) joined @RealTalkRJ to discuss truth and reconciliation, sharing how tradition and technology shape their work and lives. <https://athau.ca/4gKjleA>."



"Passing the Baton: Welcoming the 2024-2025 AUSU Executive Committee"

AUSU UPDATE

April 12, 2024



Passing the Baton:
Welcoming the 2024-2025 AUSU
Executive Committee

The Athabasca University Students' Union (AUSU) would like to thank our outgoing 2023-2024 Executive Committee, including President Naju Syed, VP External Manmeet Kaur, VP Finance and Administration Chantel Groening (formerly Bradley), and VP Community and Wellness Natalia Iwanek. Their commitment and dedication to student success have helped guide our organization and enhance the student experience at Athabasca University (AU) over the past year. To celebrate and reflect with them, check out the latest AUSU Open Mic Podcast, "[Episode 86: AUSU Executives Wrap Up Their Term.](#)" This episode explores the wins and personal growth experienced

by your outgoing student executive leaders.

With the upcoming AUSU Council changeover meeting on April 18th, we are thrilled to [welcome the incoming 2024-2025 AUSU Executive Committee](#). Chantel Groening will be moving to the role of President, having served the past year as your VP Finance and Administration. Jan Lehmann will step into the role of VP External, eager to forge strong partnerships and advocate for our students on a provincial and federal level. Diana Ramirez, your new VP Finance and Administration, will help ensure the organization is fiscally responsible and managed effectively. And, Olivia Shepherd will take on the VP Community and Wellness role, committed to fostering a supportive and healthy learning environment for all AU students.

We are excited to see the new heights this dynamic team will reach and look forward to a year of growth, achievement, and student advocacy!

Provided by

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