

2nd year
Proposal for a Personal Blog; Blog Posts

NOTE: Your proposal for a blog will determine the topic for your assignments for the rest of the term. The blog entries, social media “posts,” shooting script, and video will all be connected to the topic you choose for your blog.

Write a proposal for a personal, non-commercial blog on a topic of your choice. You must include the title of your proposed blog, a brief description of its proposed topic or content, how that topic/content is unique, why the topic is sustainable over time, who your audience will be (in detail, drawing on what you have learned about reading audience earlier in the course), and why your proposed topic is culturally or socially significant. Write in an engaging, non-academic, non-argumentative style. Make sure you cite any sources in-text. You must also include them in a reference list at the end of your proposal.

You will be creating a WordPress account and posting blog entries there. WordPress is PUBLIC, so you need to be comfortable writing posts for public viewing.

Your job is to convince us that:

- Your topic is engaging and interesting. (What is your topic? Why is it interesting?)
- Your topic or perspective or approach has an aspect, quality, or twist that is unique (What is unique or different from what’s out there now? Show that you’ve done research into popular blogs on similar topics. This research is necessary to convince us that your topic, perspective, or approach will be unique.)
- Your topic is sustainable over time. (What examples of future posts can you give us to show its sustainability? What is the scope of your topic?)
- You know your expected audience. (Who do you expect will read your blog posts? What is your audience’s profile? Draw on what you’ve learned about audience profiles in earlier modules. I am looking for more than “Anyone who likes chocolate” for a blog about cooking with chocolate, for instance.)
- You have thought about the cultural or social significance of your topic and can describe that significance.

Make us interested and enthusiastic about your blog.

Maximum length: 3 double-spaced pages in 12-point Times New Roman (or a similar font) with 1 inch margins, plus a References section. The maximum length does not include the References section.

References section: Use MLA, Chicago, or APA style guidelines. All are available online. At a minimum, you must include the author/corporation name, title of specific blog entry or page, title of blog or page, and URL for online entries. For offline entries, see the specific style guidelines. You will lose marks if you merely include the URL without other identifying information.

Blog Posts Assignment

Create a WordPress blog account on the topic you proposed earlier this term, and post three blog entries during Weeks 5, 6, and 7. (See the schedule in the syllabus for the exact dates)

Each entry should:

- Be titled engagingly
- Contain an idea that you develop in an interesting way
- Be written in a style appropriate for the subject and the expected audience
- Be illustrated with a relevant, captioned photograph. If you did not take the photo yourself, you must credit the photographer or site where you found it
- Contain reflection or analysis
- Include a link and a reference to another blog or article that's related to your topic
- Include credits or acknowledgements of any sources you used for research or ideas
- Be posted to WordPress on or before the due date unless you have the instructor's approval to not publish.

NOTES:

1. Because your work will be published, you need to choose a topic that you're comfortable sharing with the public. If you have a valid reason for not wanting to publish online, then please contact your instructor as soon as possible to explain your rationale.

2. Your entries must meet York University's non-discrimination policies and guidelines for student behaviour.

3. Your work must be new and previously unpublished.

Blog Proposal

A Punk's Guide to Positivity

It's safe to say that times are tough, especially when you're a minority. Fascist governments moving into power (Fogel, 2018), social media slamming us with the newest (usually tragic) breaking news, internment camps sprouting up south of the border, and impending political change looming over us up in the Great White North. So how are we supposed to face this without falling victim to self-deprecation and depressive thoughts? What's the solution to a world that seems determined to beat us down at every step? Let me suggest the newest and punkest solution: radical optimism. According to Guillermo del Toro, it's the number one form of rebellion in our current world (del Toro, 2019), and my blog will show how to implement it in your life.

Radical Optimism is a sort of "Smile Despite It All" approach to dealing with life, but in less of an 'ignore your problems' and more of an 'embrace the good parts'. For my blog, I'll be exploring how to apply this technique to your life and my experiences doing the same. Furthermore, I'll analyze the effects on my own mental health, and how it can help you too. This may just sound like your typical positivity blog, and perhaps the 'radical' part is not as big a spin as it should be. The twist here is that Radical Optimism has deep ties in the Anarcho-Punk (Anarchist Punk) movement, a philosophy of powering through for your best interest and the interest of your community, and in turn supporting the world at large through your own expression and fulfilment (Avery-Natale 2016, 50). Each week will be a new story from my life, some new problem, and how I combatted it with radical positivity and a 'Punk Attitude'. Like clothing for example: how does dressing the way you want empower you—and the people around you—to be positive?

So why me? Why a second-year university student with no degree in psychology or anything of great merit? Because this is something that everyone can do, even me. Too many mindfulness/positivity blogs are out of touch, suggesting things like ‘eating more fresh food’ and ‘waking up earlier’ (Edberg, 2019)—I’d contrast that with the simple ‘eat three times a day’ and ‘strive for eight hours, wherever you can find it’. I get that Uni life is a mad dash every day, especially if you have to hold down a part-time job too, so this isn’t a full-scale rework of your entire life. This ‘cut out the suicide jokes’, this is ‘wear what you want to be confident’, this is ‘it’s a bad moment, not a bad day’.

And still, why me? I grew up with my own mental health struggles, and it’s extremely common in queer circles, and minority circles at large. Though I am mostly in remission, I was distraught to see that I only had the opportunity to do this because of my parent’s income, and there are so many people like me who can’t afford therapy. I know the LGBTQ+ circle in particular tends to wallow in itself; just check Tumblr’s online communities to see that depression jokes run rampant (and not ones that support growth). And as stated in the article “Gender and Race Online” by Lisa Nakamura, minority communities need a ‘safe space’ away from the negativity often perpetrated in their other online communities such as gaming or even a simple forum.

But it can’t come in the typical form for a positivity/mindfulness blog. “Positively Present” comes to mind, overwhelmed by too much text on a plain white background. This loses a younger, more modern audience as well as any neurodivergent people (ADHD, dyslexia, etc.), so any revamp needs to come in a newer, more original way that will stick out amongst the rest. Enter Punk’s Guide, where I’ll use expressive language and bright pictures, something to make it sink in more than what’s been done before.

So it's safe to say I'm mostly reaching out to the LGBTQ+ community, because as a member of it, I see the community frequently and I realize it's in desperate need of a mental-health hand ("The Gender Diaries Blog"). I'm expecting mostly people my age, anywhere between 16 and 30 or so, centering around 'school age' as a lot of my content will be focused on how to deal with the pressures of school on top of everything else in your life. I figure everyone coming to my blog will be Leftist, just because of the socialist-leaning themes of the Punk movement. As for the punk part, I actually don't expect it to be people who already identify as punk—we're going for more of a 'Baby's First Look at Personal-Anarchy'. In addition, there is a huge connect between the Queer community and neurodivergent community, being people with any sort of learning disability or mental illness, and as a person with ADHD, I will strive to make my content not only accessible, but even tailored to some of the inattention problems that I face in my day to day life.

This isn't 'tear down the government and set Parliament ablaze', it's that small revolution of looking at ads and realizing you don't need 'stuff' to feel good. It's wearing whatever the hell you want even if people stare. It's finding your found family and raising each other up. I'll analyze how this new way of thinking can bring out the best in people, why we need it, and what the world could be like if we were all a little more punk.

References

- Avery-Natale, Edward Anthony. *Ethics, Politics, and Anarcho-Punk Identifications: Punk and Anarchy in Philadelphia*. Lexington Books, 2016.
- del Toro, Guillermo. "Why Being Optimistic Is a Radical Choice." *Time*, 7 Feb. 2019, <https://time.com/5520554/guillermo-del-toro-radical-optimism/>.
- Edberg, Henrik. "20 Small Ways to Get Out of Your Comfort Zone." *The Positivity Blog – Practical Happiness Tips*, 18 Sept. 2019, <https://www.positivityblog.com/>.
- Fogel, Benjamin. "Fascism Has Arrived in Brazil – Jair Bolsonaro's Presidency Will Be Worse than You Think'." *The Independent*, Independent Digital News and Media, 29 Oct. 2018, <https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/jair-bolsonaro-brazil-election-results-president-fascism-far-right-fernando-haddad-a8606391.html>.
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- "Positively Present." *Positively Present*, <https://www.positivelypresent.com/>.
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- "Tumblr." *Tumblr*, <https://www.tumblr.com/>.

Blog Posts: A Punk's Guide to Positivity

NOTE: In the actual online blog posts, the links lead to the referenced articles. Unfortunately, much of the formatting was lost in the transfer from online to Word.

See the original at: <https://punksguide.wordpress.com/2019/10/08/intro-to-punk/>

INTRO TO “PUNK”

Posted on [October 8, 2019](#) by [XXX](#)

I call myself a Punk.

Photo Credits to my friend who wishes to remain nameless, but is a Real One in my heart.

Now you've probably got your own ideas about what I mean by that: spiky hair, studded jacket—my dad seems to think 'Punk' means I'm some hooligan kid smashing beer bottles in back allies. But when I say I'm Punk, I'm not talking about the Sex Pistols or the Trans Punk symbol spray-painted on the back of my patched jacket. I'm talking about a way of life, and a mentality.

You see, Punk isn't just music or clothes; it's a belief system rooted in self-expression, and fighting for what you believe in. A blog called Songtrust (hyperlinked in the quote because it's Punk to cite your sources) defines Punk as

“enfolding a multiverse of misfits and skeptics into a kind of DIY nation.”

The misfits part of this is hugely important, as Punk is sort of... mainstream's dumpster, where you find everyone who doesn't fit into your typical nuclear family life. As a proud member of the Queer community, the Punk community means I can be loudly myself. To get another solid look at what it means to be

Punk, I took a read of a book called *Ethics, Politics, and Anarcho-Punk Identifications* by Edward Anthony Avery-Natale, where he outlined the origins and pillars of Punk, speaking to a culture of self-sustainability and peer support. After reading this, I came to a grand conclusion:

“Anything you do to fight for yourself or others is Punk Rock as hell.”

So where’s the rebellion? There’s gotta be some, if Punk is about standing out from the crowd as a misfit, and standing up for your rights. One of the mentalities Punk had seemed to adopted is an idea of Personal-Anarchy, whereby we

fight for our own best interest, and that of our community.

A huge way to do this is to put our mental health right at the top of our To-Do list. Because in a world where makeup ads target kids low on self esteem, where part time jobs pit you against your coworkers, and school drags you thin, the biggest, most rebellious, *punkest* step you can make is to stand up and demand your spot. And the best way to do this is through

Radical Optimism.

Radical optimism is looking at your life, and being positive No—Matter—What. No more self-deprecating jokes, no more complaining instead of working to make things better. If Punk is DIY culture, then radical optimism is a DIY on your outlook on life.

In my blog, I’m gonna throw you some tips on how to be Radically Positive and Radically Punk. We’re gonna DIY our positivity on our little multiverse of misfits and skeptics.

I think it’s pretty Punk Rock to take back your life.



COMMUNITY: A PUNK'S BEST FRIEND

Posted on [October 29, 2019](#) by XXX

“He who is unable to live in society, or who has no need because he is sufficient for himself, must be either a beast or a god.” -Aristotle

Snapshot into a night with 'the smackhouse', my group of close friends. Throw out the idea that you need a partner to have date night with; sometimes you just need a group of misfits and a ukulele.

I heard that quote for the first time when I was in Grade 12 religion class—surprise surprise, I was raised a Good Catholic Boy™. That comes out of left field for a lot of people; no one expects the kid with the huge Pride flag in his room who swears every other word to have been raised Catholic...

Maybe that's because I slid on right out of my church community the second I graduated high school. 'Jesus Loves Me' is contingent on a lot of things when you're raised in a *very* Christian suburb, and after 18 years of being what they wanted, I decided it was time to move on and see what else there was in the great wide world.

I found my new family, and I've been happily myself ever since.

We aren't meant to be alone, I guess that's what Aristotle was talking about. After skipping out of my suburb, I tried to go it alone. It didn't take long for depression to knock me off my feet, and remind me that life really isn't a solo act.

It was then that realized one of the founding statement of Punk:

We need community. We need friendship. We are not hermits in caves, or beasts, or Gods.

[Psychologytoday](#) (click the name to go see!), in partnership with author Carlin Flora, calls this 'friendfluence', the effect friends have on our everyday lives. I found my new community, by way of my school's Queer Service Group. I can't begin to tell you the power there is in finding people just like you, or at least

similar enough to get your jokes. 'Friendfluence' moulded me into who I am today, some strange amalgamation of each one of my friends.

REPORT THIS AD

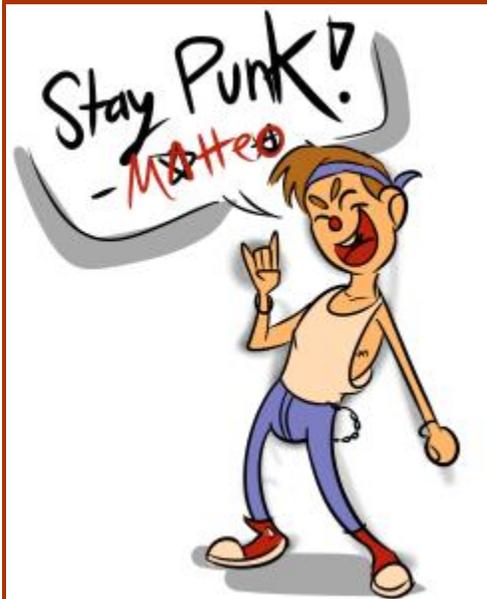
A proper, loving community shapes us into who we are meant to become.

Like I said on day 1, Punk is about your Band of Misfits. Me and my friends are a group of queer kids, we've all got... crosses to bear, pardon the Catholic joke. But there's strength in being able to go forth and pick your family, not settle for scraps. Personal Anarchy demands we put ourselves first, and that means surrounding yourself with only the best.

Yeah, it's scary as hell to stray from the path, but Radical Optimism believes in the idea that there are better things coming. If you're not satisfied, you can make your world better. And sometimes that just starts with saying hi to the guy whose jacket you like. Requesting an invite to a Discord server about your favourite book. Wandering into your school service group.

We deserve people like us, we deserve not to be alone.

I think that's pretty Punk Rock.



CLOTHING AND CONFIDENCE

Posted on [October 18, 2019](#) by [XXX](#)

Today I'm going to tell you why you should be dressing 'worse'...



A pic of my trusty red bandanna, hand-stitched/painted jacket, and one of my boots. Fun Fact: in old school

Doc Marten Lace Code, purple laces signal that I support Gay Rights!

REPORT THIS AD

For people unversed in the ‘Punk Scene’, one of the first things they think of isn’t radical optimism, but clothing: studded jackets, lots of chains, hair in huge spikes and dyed crazy colours. When I was a kid, I was absolutely IN LOVE with anyone I saw on the street dressed like that. Looking back, I wonder if it was all the pyramid spikes and plaid pants, or if it was just the confidence it takes to dress like that.

As a kid, I had one outfit: big hoodie, jeans. On repeat. Over and over. But when I was sixteen or so, I decided to tie a red bandanna around my forearm. My dad said it looked ugly. I thought it made me look ‘punk’, and it spiraled from there into homemade clothing and sticking anything shiny onto a jacket (ask me about my new pop-tab fashion, I’m gonna start a trend).

You see, clothes show who you are. Even this fashion blog (link in the quote ) is punk as hell for having their first tip for boosting your style be

” 1| Stop waiting – dress your best right now“

No hold ups, no waiting, no being scared of what people will think. My dad is a polo and khakis guy, and always has some... ‘opinions’ on what I’m wearing.

But I’m not dressing for him, I’m dressing for me.

I get that it’s not everyone’s jam—I’m not completely oblivious to people on the subway eyeing me. But if we’re being radically optimistic, if we’re being Punk and putting ourselves first, we have to learn not to care. As a big-hoodied-kid, my greatest fear was people judging me. And even now I sometimes look in the mirror and my anxiety rears up with:

‘people are going to stare at you if you wear this’.

But all you can do is put your chin up and know you can’t please everyone; the most important person you have to please is yourself, because that bastard’s been with you from day one and isn’t going away any time soon. If there’s anyone

who you need to prove yourself to, it's the person in the mirror. So put a bandanna around your arm, cut your own hair, wear clothes from your culture, smash gender roles. Radical optimism is staring into the face of every conservative bigot crinkling their nose, and asserting that the only opinion you care about is the one from the mirror.

“People are going to stare at you if you wear this.”

“I hope they do, because I look awesome today.”

I think that's pretty Punk Rock.



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