

Chocolate Chip Cookies — Cake Mix Style

1 Box Yellow Cake Mix
 1/2 c. Cooking Oil
 2 Tbsp. Water
 2 Eggs
 1 c. Chocolate Chips
 1/2 c. Chopped Nuts

Preheat oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit. Blend cake mix, oil, water and eggs. Stir in chocolate chips and nuts. Drop the blend from a teaspoon onto an ungreased cookie sheet. Bake for 10-12 minutes. Top of cookie will look pale. Cool on cookie sheet for one minute then remove to rack to finish cooling.

Source: Adam Rollins' Mother

Make tactful costume choices



Andrea Trierweiler

The argument that college students are too old to dress up for Halloween is pointless — honestly, it's just as fun now as it was when we were five. But since most of us have moved on from the days of dressing as Barbie, SpongeBob and Pikachu, it's important to think about the implications of certain costumes.

Halloween can be a fun time to dress up as dark creatures like vampires, ghosts and zombies, but sometimes people choose costumes of a darker nature. While we are free to express ourselves with how we dress, some costumes on the market are downright distasteful, making a joke out of diseases, disorders and domestic violence.

Popular this year are "Ebola protective kits," made up of hazmat suits, face shields, goggles, latex gloves, rubber boots and a respirator, which are selling for up to \$80, according to an Oct. 21 Washington Post article. This controversial costume pokes fun at the Ebola virus that currently is affecting thousands of people throughout western Africa.

While the paranoia about Ebola in the United States right now might seem excessive, leading to frequent off-hand jokes about the disease, nothing is funny about a virus that has killed more than 4,500 people, according to the Washington Post article. Paying \$80 for a costume that jokes about a deadly disease is ridiculous and insulting.

Another controversial costume that surfaced during past years was "Anna Rexia," a dress featuring a skeletal, feminine body shape and a measuring tape around the waist, according to an October 2013 Huffington Post article. This costume makes fun of the eating disorder anorexia nervosa and was so offensive that people petitioned for the costume to be removed from online stores during 2011, although they resurfaced last year, according to the Huffington Post article.

Of course, not everyone buys their costumes. Creating costumes can be one of the most fun parts of Halloween, but outfits made from scratch potentially can be the most offensive. Last Sunday on reddit, a user posted pictures of his friend dressed as Ray Rice, the Baltimore Ravens running back whose contract was terminated after a video of him punching his wife was posted online, according to an Oct. 21 New York Daily News article.

The photo featured a man wearing a Ravens jersey and carrying a blow-up doll to represent Janay Rice. Ray Rice was filmed dragging Janay out of an elevator after punching her until she was unconscious.

While costumes that mock current events are common each year, representations such as the Ray Rice costume are not appropriate, nor are they funny. Domestic violence is never a joke, even if the costume was. Some might argue Halloween is not meant to be taken so seriously, but that won't stop certain costumes from hurting people for whom sensitive topics hit close to home.

Consider your costume carefully. Halloween should remain a holiday that features witches and werewolves, but people should not use the festivities to make light of truly dark matters like Ebola, eating disorders, domestic violence or anything else that could be harmful or insensitive.

Adam Rollins is a senior communication major from St. Charles, Mo.

Andrea Trierweiler is a senior Romance language major from Columbia, Mo.

Let's talk about cookies



Adam Rollins

When the first brick and ceramic ovens were invented during the late 15th century, their makers said to themselves, "At long last, we may finally realize our dream of crafting small confections, pleasurable to the senses and sweetened with the finest sugarcane."

OK, I just made that up, but as far as most people are concerned, cookies have existed since the dawn of humankind and will continue to be baked and consumed in large quantities until the end of time. According to a history of cookies found at What's Cooking America's website, the ancestry of the modern cookie can be traced back to central and southeast Asia, where sugar first was cultivated. These early sweetcakes were spread by trade and conquest throughout the Middle East and Europe, perhaps the most delicious form of cultural imperialism to date. Teacakes, the grandfather of the modern butter cookie, sailed across the Atlantic Ocean with British settlers to the American colonies. There are many other kinds of cookies, but this lineage has become the most common throughout the United States, especially after meeting its soul mate, the chocolate chip.

The origin of the word "cookie" commonly is attributed to the Dutch word "koekje," which means "little cake." The common usage of the word in America probably was assimilated from Dutch immigrants as well, since the British more often refer to such confections as biscuits or cakes. Modern cookies are quite diverse in appearance and taste — and there are even categories for cookies based on how they are prepared, an odd taxonomy of desserts.

One category, the sandwich cookie, is kept strong by the raging popularity of the Oreo. Fun fact —

Oreos are basically a knockoff of Hydrox, which a smaller company, Sunshine Biscuits, came up with four years before Nabisco's leading cookie brand. It's a classic story of a big company using marketing power to push out a smaller competitor.

Speaking of big companies and marketing, let's talk about a kind of cookie you get for free and sometimes — or perhaps often — do not want. Browser cookies are little bits of information that websites store on your computer for various purposes. They can store your preferences and past activity on a particular website, which is how online stores remember what you have in your shopping cart if you leave the site and then come back. When you re-enter the website, it checks your computer for any relevant cookies and loads the appropriate information.

Browser cookies also have a more sinister purpose. Companies such as Facebook can and do use cookies to track users' long-term online activity. That information is sold to advertisers, who use it to send you advertisements based on your browsing history. Some people see this as an invasion of privacy, since cookies are sneaky and don't draw much attention to themselves. However, all the cookies on your computer — good or bad — are in your control.

So what's the relation between delicious oven-baked bites of heaven and somewhat suspicious browsing data? Irony and quirky programming humor, that's what. Think of it like walking into a friend's house, where you're greeted with "Hi, here's a cookie!" That's what early Internet programmers probably were thinking of when they came up with the idea of friendly little data packets. Of course, some big companies are trying to trick you into swallowing a bitter knockoff of those familiar chocolate chip data cookies, so remember to always lick your cookies as a taste test before taking a bite.

Did that analogy become rather strange or difficult to interpret? Don't worry about it — have a cookie!

AROUND THE QUAD

Where do you go for a quiet place to study?

I study in my room. I tend to be too social in the library.

Jojo Weatherspoon
Senior



I stay in my room. People at the library talk and distract me.

Kayleigh Wood
Sophomore



If home gets distracting, I rent a study room or find a secluded corner in the library.

Nathan Stuertz
Junior



My apartment. There's no particular place [on campus].

Daniel Titus
Senior



Finding the perfect silence is a challenge



Conor Gearin

Once, while working on the third floor of the library this semester, I finally had found my way while planning a 15-page paper when a group of students sat in the chairs next to me and began talking at dining hall volume. I wanted to throw the essay anthology on my desk at them or perhaps beg a librarian to escort them to Pickler Memorial Library's dungeon — what better use for the large basement than to detain noisy patrons? But after a moment I began thinking more reflectively about my desire for absolute silence. Is this expectation reasonable or natural?

I have thought of nature as a place to find peace and quiet. But this turns

out to be a mistaken perception. Anyone who has walked through Missouri's forests this time of year knows they are full of woodpeckers drumming, blue jays shrieking and autumn winds rustling dry leaves.

Squirrels in particular have an impressive repertoire of disruptive effects. I often have thought a sizable herd of deer was approaching me on a trail only to find a single squirrel crashing through dry leaves. A disturbed squirrel rushes up a tree and barks shrilly at the human who bothered it. From a distance, one might hear a squirrel making a woodpecker-like trill call, or leaping onto a platform of leaves on a neighboring tree's canopy.

Even if natural areas offer lower volumes of sound, the utter silence I sometimes wish for does not seem to be natural. In that case, is the silence I seek socially constructed?

Part of my frustration with the students in the library was that I felt they had broken an unwritten social contract. It goes something like this — talk and laugh all you want in residence hall lounges and even the library café, but leave the upper floors of the library in

peace. There were plenty of other places on campus to work on group projects, chat with friends or call home, but they had chosen a space set aside for a kind of silence that borders on sacred.

But perhaps I am being unreasonable in the degree of silence I want. It is like trying to cool a substance to absolute zero. You never can reach perfect quiet.

Strangely, I am against ways of achieving silence by other means, such as noise-cancelling headphones and earplugs. While they seem to offer a solution to the problem of eliminating unwanted environmental noise, I worry that they unplug someone so completely from one's surroundings that one loses touch with the world. By putting on shades and blasting music with earphones while walking across campus, students can avoid all interference from others.

But they also risk losing the small but meaningful interactions in public and natural spaces that make our lives interesting. Headphones and sunglasses blur details like the weather and progress on construction projects around town that allow us to differentiate one day from the next.

In an ideal world, I would be able to move between clearly-defined boundaries of quiet and noise, private and public. That world will never exist. Roommates return during the wee hours of the morning, friends step into study lounges to catch up and iPods run out of energy right when a gaggle of preschoolers begins playing tag around the tree in the park you thought would be secluded.

Even disruptions in the library can have a positive side. Taking a small break to move somewhere else can help restore one's sanity during a long, solitary study session.

Ordering the students that were bothering me to leave the library or to be quiet would have been Scrooge-like. Developing my ability to work amid interruptions without headphones would help me live more peacefully in the world in the long run.

During this event, I put in headphones and cranked up some punk rock. One goal at a time — I had a big paper to write.

Conor Gearin is a senior biology and English major from St. Louis, Mo.