

ashoka
UNIVERSITY

ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES HANDBOOK

GUIDELINES FOR STUDENTS

AY 2025-26

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Department of Environmental Studies

Introduction

The environmental challenges facing us today are unprecedented. Fundamental changes in the earth's climate and oceans threaten basic survival. Forests and grasslands are shrinking, rivers and aquifers are drying up, and cities are collapsing into chaos. Meanwhile millions of people still lack adequate food, water, energy and shelter. More than ever before, the planet needs scholars, thinkers, planners and activists who can bridge environmental knowledge and stewardship to help find solutions to the environmental crises with a focus on the human dimensions of environmental issues.

The Environmental Studies Department provides the concepts, methods and modes of analysis to understand and address this range of critical issues. By offering rigorous training that combines classroom teaching with field research, and by bringing together the humanities, social and natural sciences, the department equips students with the intellectual and practical resources for achieving social and ecological justice. The department's faculty members work on a variety of subjects—from wildlife conservation to sustainable food systems, urban planning to air pollution, rivers and river islands to mountain ecologies, disasters and vulnerabilities to genetically modified crops, collective action and environmental movements. They approach environmental issues from a range of disciplinary perspectives—biology and ecology, cultural geography and history, sociology and anthropology. Their research draws on experimental methods, quantitative modelling, geographical information systems, field-based observation, ethnographic and archival methods. The department also has a PhD program with a small but dedicated group of scholars investigating some exciting questions with innovative research methods. Cutting-edge, empirically rich, and theoretically rigorous inquiry and teaching is the hallmark of the Environmental Studies Department at Ashoka.

Faculty Members

Permanent Faculty

- [Amita Baviskar](#)
- [Divya Karnad](#)
- [Mahesh Rangarajan](#)
- [Manvi Sharma](#)
- [Meghna Agarwala](#)
- [Mitul Baruah](#) (Head of Department)
- [Mukul Sharma](#)

Visiting Faculty 2025-26

- [Akshay Surendra](#)
- [Ghazala Shahabuddin](#)
- [Asmita Kabra](#)

Honorary Fellow

- [Divya Panicker](#)

Key Contacts

- Head of the Department, Mitul Baruah: hod.es@ashoka.edu.in
- Department Manager, Uttkarsha: uttkarsha@ashoka.edu.in
- Student Representative, Trigya Dhir: evs.rep@ashoka.edu.in

Requirements

Minor

To pursue a minor in Environmental Studies, one must complete **six courses** for a total of **24 credits** in Environmental Studies (code ES). Of the 6 required courses, at least 2 have to be in a different stream from what the student intends to focus on. That is, a student must take either 4 social sciences and humanities courses and 2 biophysical sciences courses, or 2 social sciences and humanities courses and 4 biophysical sciences courses. These may include courses offered by other departments that are cross-listed with EVS (there is no maximum limit on the number of cross-listed courses which can fulfil requirements). Courses listed as interdisciplinary can be counted towards either stream. To check which course falls under which stream, please refer to AMS.

Concentration

To pursue a concentration in Environmental Studies, one must complete any **four courses** for a total of **16 credits** in Environmental Studies (code ES) (this includes courses offered by the ES department and courses offered from other departments and cross-listed with ES).

Cross-listing Policy

The Department has **no limit** on the number of cross-listed courses (offered by a different department and cross-listed with ES) which can count towards the ES minor or concentration. (For example: If you wish to take four courses from the Sociology Department, which have been cross-listed with ES, all four of those courses will be counted towards your EVS minor.)

Maximum 4 credits from ISM will count towards Minor/ Concentration in Environmental Studies. ISM credits, wherever allowed, shall be counted in the elective courses credits category.

Fourth Year Thesis

Eligibility: Fourth Year Thesis students intending to write a thesis must have taken at least 6 courses offered by, or cross-listed with, EVS. They should also have taken at least one method course related to their field of interest.

Timeline: Students should identify a potential supervisor by December in Year 3 to discuss thesis prerequisites and draft a research proposal. The preliminary proposal (1000 words) should be submitted by 31 May. The final proposal to be presented at the start of Monsoon term, year 4. The summer between semesters 6 and 7 should be used for preliminary fieldwork. The thesis should be submitted by the beginning of April.

Guidelines: The final thesis should be between 10,000-15,000 words and cover 8 credits (4 each semester). The thesis will be evaluated by the faculty advisor and, potentially, another Ashoka faculty member.

Note: *Fourth Year Thesis in Environmental Studies is under review. As per National Education Policy (NEP, 2020) credit requirements for this will be revised and updated soon.*

Foundation Course in Environmental Studies

The undergraduate curriculum at Ashoka University includes a set of 9 mandatory Foundation Courses (FCs). The FCs are not formal gateways into the Major or Minor programmes, but distinctive courses that introduce students to the foundations of thought and various styles of thinking, and also to inter- and transdisciplinary approaches. The FC in Environmental Studies is one of them, offered by faculty from the Environmental Studies Department.

A statement of philosophy of the EVS FC & course objectives

Environmental issues are invariably about society and politics. At the heart of this FC is to examine and unpack human-environment relations by looking into historical, social, political, and ecological processes that shape these relations across scales. The course pays attention to biophysical complexities of the world, political economies of nature, social inequalities and injustices, and cultural associations that humans have established with their immediate and distant environments over time.

The contemporary world is beset with growing environmental problems – climate change, biodiversity loss, resource degradation, and environmental disasters are but a few examples of the planetary crisis facing us in the Anthropocene. This course looks at environmental challenges and their purported solutions holistically.

While different faculty may approach the FC differently, given their diverse disciplinary backgrounds, the strength of the course lies in its interdisciplinarity. In trying to make sense of the natural world and our relations with it, the course draws on different theoretical frameworks, philosophical traditions, and methodologies. This course not only equips students with a critical understanding of ecological processes and our place in it, but also aims at inculcating a sense of environmental ethics and care in them.

Course Objectives:

- To appreciate the diversity and complexity of ecosystems
- To gain a holistic understanding of the environment around us, including its biophysical and social elements
- To understand the historical, political-economic processes shaping environments
- To gain an in-depth understanding of multiple theoretical frameworks and perspectives on nature-society relations
- To be able to critically analyze some of the pressing environmental challenges of our time and their policy solutions
- To develop an interpretive frame that can be applied to understand and address a range of environmental problems
- To examine environmental issues by locating them within unequal power relations and social injustice
- To reflect on the connections between personal actions and planetary welfare
- To cultivate a sense of environmental citizenship

Course Description of Some EVS FCs

Please visit: <https://www.ashoka.edu.in/course-catalogue/>

Teaching Fellows and Teaching Assistants

Each Ashoka University undergraduate Foundation Course is taught by a professor aided by one or more **Teaching Fellows (TFs)**. An Ashoka University TF has a number of responsibilities in a Foundation Course:

- Whereas the course professor presides over the larger scheduled lecture sessions, the TF leads that course's weekly one-hour discussion sessions.
- The TF holds regular weekly office hours to meet with students and talk with them about their written and classroom work.
- The TF attends all the lecture sessions.
- TFs help the faculty with grading and other course-related tasks.

In many cases, major, minor and elective courses may also be assisted by TFs. Typically, the roles and responsibilities of these TFs are similar to those of Foundation Course TFs. However, the model of engagement may vary depending on the needs of the subject.

Some courses have **Teaching Assistants (TAs)**. A Teaching Assistant is typically a student in their 3rd or 4th UG year, (a rising 3rd year at the earliest), and **typically earns 2 credits for their Teaching Assistantship**. TAs have fewer responsibilities than TFs and are not required to teach Discussion Sessions; they typically support the instructor with activities such as the distribution of materials, the grading of quizzes (with answer keys), taking attendance or class communication. Like TFs, TAs may be expected to attend all the classes. No TAs hip credit can count towards Minor or Concentration credits.

Since the Environmental Studies Department offers 3-4 units of the EVS FC every semester, it requires a pool of TFs regularly. The department advertises these positions every year through the university website. You can send your application with updated CV and cover letter to environmentalstudies@ashoka.edu.in.

The Teaching Assistantship (TAs hip) selection process for the Environmental Studies department is facilitated in collaboration with the student representative. At the beginning of each semester, a Google Form is circulated by the Environmental Studies representative, allowing students to indicate their TAs hip preferences. The submitted preferences are then reviewed and shortlisted by faculty members. Selected students are subsequently informed and required to apply for the TAs hip on AMS. Final approval is granted by the respective faculty members overseeing the courses for which the students have been selected. For queries you can write to evs.rep@ashoka.edu.in.

Course Catalogue

Elective Courses, Monsoon 2025

Biophysical Sciences (BPS)

Animal Behaviour (ES-1191/ BIO-1191/ PSY-3112/ ES-6013), Manvi Sharma

Applied Ecology and Ecosystem Management (ES-2232), Ghazala Shahabuddin

GIS 1 (ES-2901), Meghna Agarwala

Remote Sensing (ES-3901/ PHY-3901), Meghna Agarwala

Introduction to R Programming (ES-2296), Akshay Surendra

Fantastic Plants and where we find them (and why) (ES-3171/ ES-6002), Akshay Surendra

Exploring Life in the Neighborhood Lab (BIO-1002/ ES-2301), Balaji Chattopadhyay

Ecology and Evolution (Lab) (BIO-3012/ ES-3301), Shivani, Imroze Khan

Ecology and Evolution (Lab) (BIO-3012/ ES-3301), Shivani, Imroze Khan

Ecology (BIO-3020/ BIO-6020/ ES-2101/ PHY-3020), Shivani

Social Science and Humanities (SSH)

1. **Twisting the Tiger's Tale** (ES-2138), Asmita Kabra
2. **Environment Justice** (ES-3443), Mukul Sharma
3. **Piecing Together Our Past: Archaeology, History and Science** (HIS-3160/ BIO-2216/ ES-3029), Nayanjot Kaur Lahiri
4. **Negotiating Nature in the Early Modern World** (HIS-3518/ ES-3221/ SOA-3164), Pratyay Nath
5. **Writing Archaeology** (HIS-5060/ ES-3013/ ES-5013/ HIS-4301), Kalyan Sekhar Chakraborty
6. **Art and Ecology in the Wake of Climate Change** (VA-2066/ ES-2038), Srinivas Adiya Mopidevi

Elective Courses, Spring 2025

Biophysical Sciences (BPS)

1. **Statistical Models: It's elementary, dear Ashokan** (ES-3306/ BIO-3308/ BIO-6308/ ECO-3704), Manvi Sharma
2. **Ecological Methods and their Applications** (ES-2370 / BIO-2211), Manvi Sharma
3. **Mapping Environmental Change: Concepts and Skills** (ES-2110), M D Madhusudan
4. **Understanding Conflict and Cooperation over Natural Resources** (ES-2402), Divya Karnad

5. **Exploring Life in the Neighborhood Lab-** (BIO-1002/ ES-2301), Shivani Krishna & Kritika Garg
6. **Ecology** (BIO-3020/ BIO-6020/ ES-2101/ PHY-3020), Shivani Krishna
7. **Climate Change and Biotic Evolution** (BIO-3452/ BIO-4452/ ES-3191/ BIO-6431), Balaji Chattopadhyay

Social Science and Humanities (SSH)

1. **Environment and Social Exclusion** (ES-3435/ POL-3049/ SOA-3114), Mukul Sharma
2. **Conservation Policy in the Developing World** (ES-2002/ POL-2069/ SOA-2226), Ghazala Shahabuddin
3. **Cities, Ecology and Equity** (SOA-3207/ ES-3404), Amita Baviskar
4. **The Social Life of Water** (SOA-3131/ ES-3408/ POL-3109), Mitul Baruah
5. **Rethinking Development and Sustainability** (SOA-2243/ ES-2006), Mitul Baruah
6. **Nature and Nation** (HIS-3034/ ES-3020/ POL-3042/ SOA-3058), Mahesh Rangarajan
7. **Eat Like a Human: A Glimpse into Ancient Foodways** (HIS-3526/ ES-3223), Kalyan Sekhar Chakraborty
8. **Landscapes, Sports, and Modernity: A Global History of Mountains and Mountaineering** (HIS-3524/ ES-3224/ SOA-3105), Gaurav Churiwala Garg

Elective Courses, Monsoon 2024

Biophysical Sciences (BPS)

1. **Remote Sensing** (ES-3901/ PHY-3901/ CS-2383), Meghna Agarwala
2. **Economics of Biodiversity** (ES-3306), Manvi Sharma
3. **The Underwater World: An Introduction** (ES-2201/ BIO-2025), Divya Panicker
4. **Communication Strategies in the Wild** (ES-3201/ BIO-3021/ ES-6003), Divya Panicker
5. **Animal Behaviour** (ES-1191/ BIO-1191/ PSY-3112/ ES-6013), Manvi Sharma
6. **Ecology and Evolution (Lab)** (BIO-3012/ ES-3301), Shivani Krishna

Social Science and Humanities (SSH)

1. **Environmental Governance: Institutions, Policy, Politics** (ES-2434/ POL-2062), Mukul Sharma
2. **Coercion to Conviviality: Political Ecology of Conservation** (ES-2003/ SOA-2242), Sony R K
3. **Political Ecology of Food** (ES-2442/ SOA-2505/ POL-2125), Amita Baviskar
4. **Introduction to Ecocriticism: Climate Fiction** (ENG-3038/ ENG-5038/ ES-3701), Alexander Robert Phillips
5. **The Jungle, the Spade and the Book** (HIS-3218/ ES-3990), Nayanjot Kaur Lahiri

Elective Courses, Spring 2024

Biophysical Sciences (BPS)

1. **Statistical Models: It's elementary, dear Ashokan** (ES-3306/ BIO-3308/ BIO-6308/ ECO-3704), Manvi Sharma
2. **Science, Society and Sustainability** (ES-2106/ BIO-2106), Ghazala Shahabuddin
3. **Crafting a Low Carbon world: Challenges and Opportunities** (ES-2108), Anita Pinheiro
4. **Environments and Livelihoods** (ES-2311), Anita Pinheiro
5. **Communities and Ecosystems** (ES-3103/ BIO-3103/ BIO-6203), Sandeep Pulla
6. **Advanced Statistics: Strategies for dealing with Complex, Real-World Data** (ES-3902/ PSY-6101/ PSY-4162), Sandeep Pulla
7. **Exploring Life in the Neighbourhood Lab** (BIO-1002/ ES-2301), Imroze Khan, Shivani Krishna & Kritika Garg
8. **Ecology** (BIO-3020/ BIO-6020/ ES-2101/ PHY-3020), Shivani Krishna
9. **Climate Change and Biotic Evolution** (BIO-3452/ BIO-4452/ ES-3191/ BIO-6431), Balaji Chattopadhyay

Social Science and Humanities (SSH)

1. **Conservation Policy in the Developing World** (ES-2002/ POL-2069/ SOA-2226), Ghazala Shahabuddin
2. **Nature and Nation** (HIS-3034/ ES-3020/ POL-3042/ SOA-3058), Mahesh Rangarajan

3. **Anthropology of Disaster and Vulnerability** (SOA-2222/ ES-2439), Mitul Baruah
4. **The Social Life of Water** (SOA-3131/ ES-3408/ POL-3109), Mitul Baruah
5. **Cities, Ecology and Equity** (SOA-3207/ ES-3404), Amita Baviskar
6. **Environment and Social Exclusion** (ES-3435/ POL-3049/ SOA-3114), Mukul Sharma
7. **Landscapes, Sports, and Modernity: A Global History of Mountains and Mountaineering** (HIS-3524/ ES-3224/ SOA-3105), Gaurav Churiwala Garg
8. **Advanced Primer- Environmental Journalism** (MS-3901/ ES-3904), Tisha Srivastav

List of Courses Offered in Previous Semesters, Including Cross Listed Courses:

Biophysical Sciences

- Animal Behaviour (ES-1191/BIO-1191-1), Manvi Sharma (Monsoon 2022)
- Biostatistics and Bioinformatics (BIO-305/ BIO/ ES), Alok Bhattacharya (Monsoon 2019)
- Climate Change and Biotic Evolution (BIO-3452/ BIO-4452/ ES-3191/ BIO-6431), Balaji Chattopadhyay (Spring 2023)
- Computational/Mathematical Biology (BIO-3008/ BIO-6013/ CS-2370/ ES-4102/ PSY-3018), Somdatta Sinha (Spring 2020)
- Conservation in Practice (ES-2001-1), Divya Vasudev (Monsoon 2022, Monsoon 2021)
- Conservation of Wildlife Populations (ES-3102-1), Divya Vasudev (Spring 2022)
- Ecological Statistics (ES-2902/BIO-4018/BIO-6018-1), Divya Vasudev (Monsoon 2022, Monsoon 2021)
- Ecology (BIO-3020/ BIO-6020/ ES-2101/ PHY-3020), Shivani Krishna (Spring 2023, 2022, Monsoon 2020, Monsoon 2019)
- Ecology and Evolution (Lab) (BIO-3012/ ES-3301), Imroze Khan, Shivani Krishna (Monsoon 2022, Monsoon 2021, Spring 2021, Spring 2020, Monsoon 2019)
- Ecology: Ecosystems and Biodiversity – Ghazala Shahabuddin (Monsoon 2021)
- Evolutionary Biology (Theory) (BIO-2010/ BIO-6010/ ES-3101), Imroze Khan (Monsoon 2020, 2019, 2018)
- Exploring Life in the Neighborhood (Lab) (BIO-1002/ ES-2301), Imroze Khan, Shivani Krishna, Kritika Garg (Spring 2023, 2022, 2021, 2020, 2019, 2018)
- GIS1 (ES 1901), Meghna Agarwala, Manvi Sharma (Monsoon 2022, Monsoon 2021, Monsoon 2020)
- Introduction to GIS and Remote Sensing (ES-211), Meghna Agarwal (Spring 2019)
- Land Restoration and Ecological Resilience (ES-IS-3001-1), Meghna Agarwala (Spring 2022)
- Landscape Ecology (ES-2103-1), Divya Vasudev (Spring 2022)
- Methods in Ecology and Conservation Science (ES-3302/ BIO-3023/ BIO-4023/ BIO-6023-1), Meghna Agarwala, Shivani Krishna (earlier by Divya Karnad) (Spring 2022, 2021, 2020)
- Natural Resource Governance (ES-3431-1), Vijay Ramprasad (Spring 2022)

- Plant Biology (BIO-3453/ BIO-6453/ ES-4301), Sougata Roy (Spring 2020)
- Remote Sensing (ES-3901/PHY-3901-1), Meghna Agarwala (Monsoon 2022, Spring 2022, Spring 2021)
- Science, Everyday Life and Climate Change (ES-3412-1), Anshu Ogra (Spring 2022)
- Science, Society and Sustainability (ES-2106/ BIO-2106), Ghazala Shahabuddin (Spring 2023)
- Study design and statistical models: an essential toolbox for a researcher (ES-3305/ BIO-3305/ BIO-6305), Manvi Sharma (Spring 2023)
- Talking about Trees (ES-2403-1), Vijay Ramprasad (Spring 2022)

Social Sciences

- Agrarian Worlds: Land, Culture and Power (ES-3401/ SOA-3224-1), Mitul Baruah (Spring 2022, 2019)
- Agriculture, Food and Sustainability (ES-2401/SOA-2502/POL-2022-1), Aniket Aga (Monsoon 2022, Monsoon 2020, Spring 2020, Spring 2019, Spring 2018)
- Battles over Nature: Towards a Global History of the Environment (HIS-406/ ES-303), Mahesh Rangarajan (Monsoon 2018)
- Being Human: Anthropology of the Anthropocene (SOA-306/ ES-204), Kathryn Collins Hardy (Monsoon 2018)
- Cities, Ecology and Equity (SOA-3207/ ES-3404), Amita Baviskar (Spring 2023, 2021, 2020)
- Constructing Natural & Anthropogenic Realities: Narratives of the Himalayas in Transition (ES-308/ SOA-218), Rinki Sarkar (Spring 2019)
- Decoding Genetically Modified Crops: The Global Politics of Agriculture and Biotechnology (ES-3411/ SOA-3502/ POL-3061/ BIO-3411), Aniket Aga (Spring 2023, Monsoon 2019)
- Eat Like a Human: A Glimpse into Ancient Foodways (HIS-3526/ES-3223), Kalyan Sekhar Chakraborty (Monsoon 2022)
- Ecological Echoes: Introduction to Reporting the Environment (MS-307/ ES-304), Tisha Srivastav (Monsoon 2018)
- Ecology and Unrest (ES-3406/ SOA-3503/ POL-3050), Aniket Aga (Spring 2023, 2020)
- Environment and Social Exclusion (ES-3435/ POL-3049/ SOA-3114), Mukul Sharma (Spring 2022, 2021, 2020)
- Environmental Economics (ECO-3700/ ES-3701), Prachi Singh (Monsoon 2020)
- Environmental Governance: Institutions, Policy, Politics (ES-2434/POL-2062-1), Mukul Sharma (Monsoon 2022, 2021)
- Gender and Land, Rivers, and Livelihoods (SOA-2220/ES-2292-1), Smita Jassal (Monsoon 2022)
- Indian Environmental Politics (ES-2433/POL-3052-1), Mukul Sharma (Monsoon 2022, Monsoon 2020)
- Introduction to Ecocriticism: Climate Fiction (ENG-3038/ ENG-5038/ ES-3701), Alexander Robert Phillips (Spring 2024, 2020)
- Introduction to Environmental Communication (MS-3801/ CW-2707/ ES-3903-1), Tisha Srivastav (Spring 2022)
- Nature and Nation (HIS-3034/ ES-3020/ POL-3042/ SOA-3058), Mahesh Rangarajan (Spring 2023, Monsoon 2020, 2019)

- Negotiating Nature in the Early Modern World (HIS-3518/ ES-3221-1), Pratyay Nath (Spring 2022)
Earlier this course was offered as “Environment and Empire in the Early Modern World” - Pratyay Nath (Spring 2021, 2020)
- Political Ecology and the Modes of Resistance (SOA-2203/ ES-2432/ POL-2071-1), Mitul Baruah (Spring 2022, 2021)
- Public International Law (IR-204/ ES-207), Joanna Korey, Lavanya Rajamani (Spring 2019, Spring 2018)
- Seminar in Ecocriticism: Conquests of Nature (ENG-320/ ES-306), Alexander Robert Phillips (Monsoon 2018)
- Studies in Literature and the Environment (ENG-214/ ES-212), Alexander Robert Phillips (Spring 2019)
- The Ashoka Conversation (MS-2120/ ES-2903), Tisha Srivastav (Monsoon 2021)
- The Right to Water (SOA-3212/ ES-3407), Mitul Baruah (Monsoon 2021, 2020, 2019, 2018)
- Understanding Conflict and Cooperation over Natural Resources (ES-2402), Divya Karnad (Monsoon 2022, 2021, 2020, 2019)

The Environmental Studies Fellowship

The Environmental Studies department offers a fellowship of **up to Rs 10,000** for original research in the field of environment and/or environment-society relations. This is offered twice a year: Winter Fellowship and Summer Fellowship. ES minors and concentrations will be given preference for consideration for this grant. The fellowship is advertised by the department usually in early December and early April for winter and summer breaks respectively. The email id for the grant is environmentalstudies@ashoka.edu.in.

Previous Recipients of the Fellowship Included:

- **Krishanu Kashyap (ASP 2023-24)** – Major: Sociology & Anthropology – Winter Fellowship 2024
Research Question - *“how to read and understand the life-worlds of Charuas, people who live in the chars (river islands of Assam), through the help of things that constitute the fluvial world—boats, embankments, and state infrastructure, among others”.*
Supervisor: Prof. Mitul Baruah
- **Ananya Samhita (UG-2025)** – Major: Physics Minor: EVS – Winter Fellowship 2024
Research Question - *“to investigate immediate and long-term repercussions of the oil spill originating from the Chennai Petroleum Corporation Ltd (CPCL) refinery unfolded amidst the intense flooding by Cyclone Michaung, on the health and income of over 20,000 residents, predominantly inland fishers from eight villages along the Buckingham Canal, Ennore Creek, and the Kosasthalaiyar River in North Chennai”.*
Supervisor: Prof. Bikram Phookun
- **Nimra Jeelani (UG-2025)** – Major: English Minor: Political Science – Winter Fellowship 2024
Research Question - *“to comprehensively investigate the impact of the Sonipat landfill on the local community, children, ecology, and water resources. The primary question centers on understanding the multifaceted repercussions of the landfill's presence”.*
Supervisor:
- **Ishika (UG-2023)** – Major: Political Science Minor: EVS – Summer Fellowship 2022
Research Question - *“I am arguing through this paper that marginalised communities on the basis of caste, class, income, etc. endure greater exposure to environmental contamination than the more privileged communities”.*
Supervisor: Prof. Aniket Aga
- **Soham S Kacker (UG-2022)** – Major: Biology Minor: EVS – Summer Fellowship 2022
Research Question - *“on the relative effects of dispersal-colonisation abilities versus habitat-dependent factors on the regeneration dynamics in degraded oak forests in Mukteshwar, Uttarakhand”.*
Supervisor: Prof. Ghazala Shahabuddin
- **Aishwarya Sunaad (UG -2021)** – Major: Sociology & Anthropology Minor: Economics – Winter Fellowship 2021
Research Question - *“explores the tenuous relationship between the upholding of cultural practices and the environment, particularly wildlife conservation, in the face of the Bellada Kuppe Mahadeshwara jaatre, a local festival that is celebrated annually in the Hedeyala range of the Bandipur National Park in a designated core area 7 kilometres inside the forest”.*
Supervisor: Prof. Mitul Baruah

Application Forms for Research Funds are appended below

Department of Environmental Studies, Ashoka University

Winter Fellowship 2024-25

Department of Environmental Studies, Ashoka University

Name:

Year:

Roll No.:

Major:

Minor:

Advisor:

[Please note that advisor must be Ashoka faculty who has agreed to guide you on this project]

Total Budget:

Funds sought from EVS (Limit INR 10,000):

Locations of research:

Dates for research project (must begin after end of the Monsoon term, and a major portion should be completed before start of Spring term 2025):

1. Describe your research project. [500 words or less]
2. Discuss your research methodologies. What evidence will you need to collect to answer your research question? How will you go about collecting and analysing this evidence? [500 words or less]
3. Detailed budget including break ups of travel, lodging, research infrastructure, and any other significant expense.

I understand that:

- Projects may not be fully funded.
- Candidates must secure requisite approvals and permits for the research before they conduct fieldwork and confirm the same with their supervisor.
- Receipts must be preserved and will be asked for.
- Reports of research undertaken and data analysis will be due on March 31, 2025.

Signature:

Date:

Summer Fellowship 2024-25**Department of Environmental Studies, Ashoka University****Name:****Year:****Roll No.:****Major:****Minor:****Advisor:**

[Please note that advisor must be Ashoka faculty who has agreed to guide you on this project]

Total Budget:

Funds sought from EVS (Limit INR 10,000):

Locations of research:

Dates for research project (must begin after end of the Spring term, and a major portion should be completed before 30th June 2025):

1. Describe your research project. [500 words or less]
2. Discuss your research methodologies. What evidence will you need to collect to answer your research question? How will you go about collecting and analysing this evidence? [500 words or less]
3. Detailed budget including break ups of travel, lodging, research infrastructure, and any other significant expense.

I understand that:

- Projects may not be fully funded.
- Candidates must secure requisite approvals and permits for the research before they conduct fieldwork and confirm the same with their supervisor.
- Receipts must be preserved and will be asked for.
- Reports of research undertaken and data analysis will be due on October 15, 2025.

Signature:**Date:**

Colloquiums & Events

The Department of Environmental Studies regularly hosts conferences, colloquiums, book talks and student seminars inviting exemplary researchers & scholars from around the world. Below is a glimpse into some events organised by the department in the recent past.

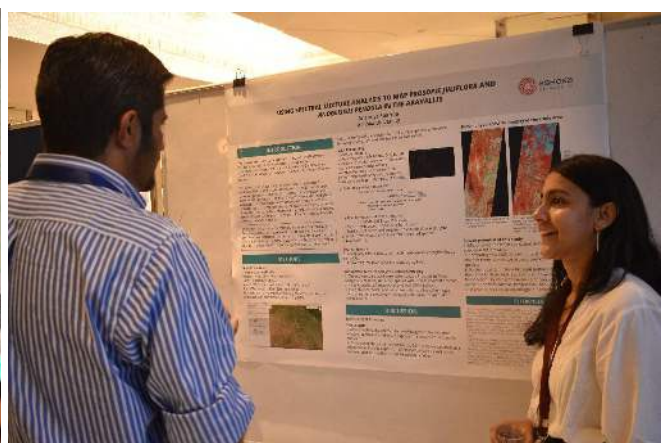
Recent Conferences

NASA's South Asia Regional Initiative (SARI) Meeting, April 9-11, 2024:

Ashoka University co-hosted this meeting fostering collaborative discussions on regional environmental sustainability. The event brought together academics, practitioners and policymakers to address critical issues like climate change, water resources, and disaster management.

This event was organised by Prof. Meghna Agarwala. For more details on the event, please visit the following link:

<https://www.ashoka.edu.in/ashoka-university-co-hosts-nasas-south-asia-regional-initiative-sari-meeting-2>
/



International Conference on River Islands: “Redefining the Anthropocene”, Oct 16-17, 2023:

Prof. Mitul Baruah from Ashoka University hosted the above international conference in collaboration with IIT Kharagpur and the Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR). As the first-ever international conference on river islands, this event remains historic, and Ashoka University is proud to have organised such an important event.

The two-day conference brought together young researchers, established scholars, and practitioners from across disciplines and geographies, covering a wide range of river systems from South Asia and beyond. Prof. Somak Raychaudhury, Vice-Chancellor, Ashoka University, formally inaugurated the event followed by a thought-provoking inaugural speech by Prof. Kuntala Lahiri-Dutt from The Australian National University. Her talk was titled, “Why and How are River Islands Redefining the Anthropocene.” There were two keynote lectures. On Day 1, Jonathan Pugh, Professor of Island Studies, Newcastle University, delivered a keynote titled, “Negating Islands: Non-Relational Geographies.” The keynote on Day 2 was delivered by eminent historian Arupjyoti Saikia, Professor, IIT Guwahati. The title of his talk was: “Profits, Distress and Speculation: Assam’s River Islands in the Age of Colonialism.”



For more information on the conference, please visit the following links:

<https://www.ashoka.edu.in/river-islands-redefining-the-anthropocene/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6ThF0tIVdAU>



ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES COLLOQUIUM SERIES

MONSOON 2025

**15
SEP****POLITICS AND RESISTANCE OF COAL IN AUSTRALIA AND INDIA;
CLIMATE JUSTICE ACTIVISM IN THE GLOBAL NORTH AND SOUTH****RUCHIRA TALUKDAR**CO-FOUNDER & DIRECTOR, SAPNA SOUTH ASIAN CLIMATE SOLIDARITY
6-7 PM | [ZOOM LINK](#)**24
SEP****THE COUP IN NATURE'S GOVERNANCE: THE CENTRALISATION
OF INDIAN WILDLIFE CONSERVATION IN THE 1970S****BISWAJIT SARMAH**ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, INDIAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY, PALAKKAD
6-7 PM | [ZOOM LINK](#)**30
OCT****SCIENCE TO POLICY FOR CONSERVING LARGE CARNIVORES****YADVENDRADEV JHALA**INSA-SENIOR SCIENTIST & CONSERVATIONIST
6-7 PM | [ZOOM LINK](#)**14
NOV****THE HIMALAYAN CRISIS OF BEING A MOUNTAIN****MAHARAJ K. PANDIT**PROFESSOR & CEO, INSTITUTION OF EMINENCE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF DELHI
6-7 PM | [ZOOM LINK](#)**25
NOV****PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT AND CITIZEN SCIENCE FOR BIODIVERSITY****SUHEL QUADER**SENIOR SCIENTIST, NATURE CONSERVATION FOUNDATION
1:30-3 PM | AC 04-005Contact us : environmentalstudies@ashoka.edu.in

The following posters give a glimpse into the colloquiums organised by the department in the recent past.



 **DEPARTMENT OF
ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES
SPRING COLLOQUIUM SERIES
2025**

February 4, 6:30 PM
Camille Frazier, Clarkson University
Narrating and Navigating Transformation through Food Networks in Bengaluru and California

February 19, 6:30 PM
Alejandro Camargo, Universidad del Norte
On sediment: geological archives and the biography of rivers

March 4, 6:30 PM
Jessica Dempsey & Audrey Irvine-Broque, University of British Columbia
Financial stability: for or against biodiverse ecosystems?

March 28, 1:45 PM (co-hosted with Biology Department)
Rohini Balakrishnan, Indian Institute of Science
Acoustic communication in crickets

April 2, 6:30 PM
Gustav Cederlöf, Gothenburg university
Degrowth in the dark: Revolution, energy transition, and Cuba's national blackouts

April 17, 1:45 PM
Pankaj Sekhsaria, Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay
Ignoring science, undermining resilience, creating vulnerability: The story of the mega-infrastructure project in Great Nicobar Island

PAINTING BY SARTAJ GHUMAN



- The talk on "Plant-animal mutualism in a changing world" by Prof. Shivani Jadeja, Krea University, held on Wednesday, 13 September 2023.
- The talk on "The Great Conservation Tragedy? A critical reflection of neo-protectionism in relation to the '30x30' global biodiversity framework" by Prof. (Dr.) Bram Büscher, Wageningen University, held on Tuesday, 19 September 2023.
- The talk on "Tracking the Illegal Trade in Wildlife" by Ms. Uttara Mendiratta, Program Head - Counter Wildlife Trafficking, Wildlife Conservation Society, WCS-India, held on Thursday, 26 October 2023.
- The talk on "Threatening Dystopias: Development, Adaptation, and Climate Justice" by Professor Kasia Paprocki, London School of Economics and Political Science, held on Friday, 17 November 2023.

The Department of Environmental Studies, Ashoka University
invites you to

EVS COLLOQUIUM SERIES

SPRING 2023

10th February, 7:30 - 9:00pm

Slow Disaster: Political Ecology of Hazards and Everyday Life in the Brahmaputra Valley, Assam

Mitul Baruah, Ashoka University

23rd February, 6:30 - 8:00pm

Marine Mammal Behavioral Ecology and Conservation Behavior

Mridula Srinivasan, Director, Marine Mammal and Turtle Division, Southeast Fisheries Science Center, NOAA

2nd March, 6:30 - 8:00pm

Exile Ecologies: Reconceptualizing the Displacement-Environment Nexus

Anwesha Dutta, Senior Researcher, CMI, Bergen

15th March, 1:30 - 2:45pm

Five Decades Among Tigers: A Pragmatist's Journey

Ullas Karanth, Conservation zoologist and a leading tiger expert

21st March, 6:30 - 8:00pm

Rainforest Etiquette in a World Gone Mad

Suprabha Seshan, Gurukula Botanical Sanctuary

4th April, 6:30 - 8:00pm

Biomimetics of Living and Dead Color-producing Systems for Sustainable Manufacture

Vinod Kumar Saranathan, Krea University

Student Testimonials

"The Environmental Studies department has enriched my understanding of how the environment, economy, politics, and society are deeply interconnected. The courses offered provide a nuanced perspective that is vital in today's era of climate change, offering knowledge that transcends any single career path."

- **Kavita Sunil, the Founding Batch**
Senior Program Analyst, BRAC International

"The EVS department at Ashoka introduced me to a much broader definition of the environment than I had previously known. From a narrow ecological focus I was introduced to anthropological, economic and ethical perspectives which gave me a more holistic understanding of conservation challenges. The department gave an education, but also provided inspiration, opportunity, a vibrant network of friends and colleagues, and supported my work through the EVS summer research grant. The faculty at the department was a constant source of inspiration, and I continue to work with some of them on research and conservation projects today."

- **Soham S Kacker, ASP 23**
Curator of Living Collections, The Geoffrey Bawa Trust, Bentota, Sri Lanka

"With a passion for working in the environmental sector since before I joined Ashoka, I was engaged with the EVS department since my very first year of undergraduate studies. The diverse range of course offerings enabled me to explore various aspects of the environmental field, helping me identify the areas I enjoy the most and would like to pursue as a career. Additionally, the outstanding faculty has been an invaluable resource not only for academic inquiries but also for career guidance. Professors Mitul Baruah and Mukul Sharma, in particular, have been especially approachable and supportive in offering advice."

- **Sanyukta Singh, ASP 24**
Masters of Environmental Studies candidate, University of Pennsylvania

“The best part of the EVS department is the wide range of professors. You have ecologists, historians, sociologists, biologists—all sewn together by the common thread of the environment. Engaging with this department has been a holistic learning experience, and, in my opinion, should feature somewhere in every Ashokan’s journey.”

- **Ishan Shanavas (ASP 2024-25)**

“The Environmental Studies programme at Ashoka offers a unique interdisciplinary approach, blending sciences and humanities. The approachable faculty, engaged in fascinating work, fostered curiosity and critical thinking. The mandatory Foundation Course introduces students across all majors to EVS, emphasizing its universal relevance. It reshaped my understanding of 'nature' and 'environment,' blurring boundaries and inspiring me to ask deeper questions about our relationship with the natural world.”

- **Twisha Sangwan (Student Representative, EVS, UG- 2026)**

“I feel so lucky to be learning under the EVS department at Ashoka. The professors are not only brilliant, but equally approachable. Getting to learn from them is a once in a lifetime opportunity. I don’t think there’s anywhere else you’d find an environmental studies department so nuanced and interdisciplinary in their perspectives. A minor, or even a concentration in the subject, leaves you with a thorough grasp on several lenses through which you can view the environment, be it socio-political or ecological.”

- **Anika Urs (UG- 2026)**

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Is the 1000/2000/3000-level system equivalent to the 100/200/300-level system?

A: Yes.

Q: Is it mandatory to complete the 2000-level core course requirement by the end of the second year?

A: It is not mandatory, but we strongly recommend that you do so, since 3000-level electives require at least two of the 2000-level courses as prerequisites and you will get much more from these courses if you have already taken the set of 2000-level courses.

Q: What is the policy on cross-listed courses?

A: The Department has no limit on the number of cross-listed courses (offered by a different department and cross-listed with ES) which can count towards the ES minor or concentration. (For example: If you wish to take four courses from the Sociology Department, which have been cross-listed with ES, all four of those courses will be counted towards your EVS minor.)

Q: Can I write a thesis in the third year?

A: No. As per NEP only fourth year Honours with research students can write a thesis with the department.

Q: I'm going on a semester abroad. Can I substitute the required courses with a summer abroad course?

A: The specific course along with its detailed syllabus will need to be shared with the Department's HoD, and a decision will be taken on a case-by-case basis.

Q: I am interested in TAing. How should I proceed?

A: The Department notifies students of TAship positions at the beginning of the semester and calls for applications through a centralized form. Only third-year students, Fourth year students, and MLS students are eligible to apply. Among the eligible, Fourth year and MLS students are prioritised since TAing is a graduation requirement for these degrees.

Q: Whom should I contact for further queries?

A: You can email the Student Representative or for further queries the Department Manager or the HoD:

Student Representative, Trigya Dhir	evs.rep@ashoka.edu.in
Department Manager, Uttkarsha	uttkarsha@ashoka.edu.in
Head of the Department, Mitul Baruah	hod.es@ashoka.edu.in

Q: I am confused about which 2000-level (or 3000-level) courses to opt for. Is there someone I can talk to?

A: You may consult the course descriptions provided on the AMS or may reach out to your peers or seniors who have already taken courses you may be interested in. Feel free to reach out to the Student Representative (evs.rep@ashoka.edu.in). You can also consult your university-assigned academic advisor.

Q: Is there a definitive order that courses have to be taken?

A: While there is no strict order of courses to fulfil your EVS minor/concentration requirements, we recommend that you take the 1000-level course first, followed by the 2000-level courses. This will not only ensure that you have fulfilled the prerequisites for the 3000-level electives, but you will get much more

from the advanced elective courses when you take them.

After reading this Handbook, if any queries remain, please contact the Student Representative at evs.rep@ashoka.edu.in