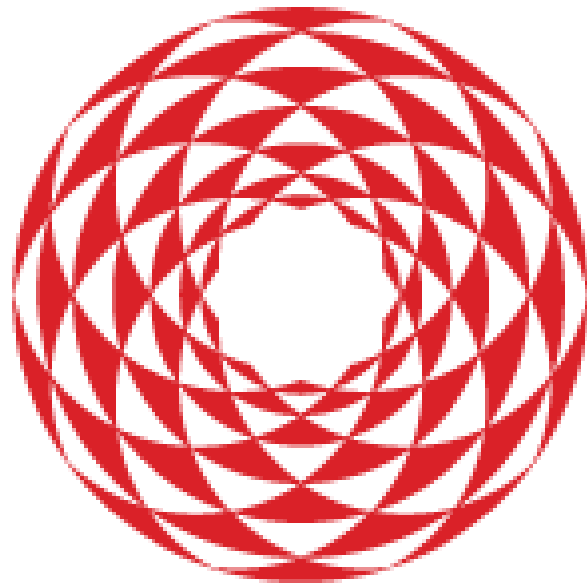


# Sociology & Anthropology Handbook



**ASHOKA**  
UNIVERSITY

GUIDELINES FOR STUDENTS

Monsoon 2019

# Department of Sociology & Anthropology

## Sociology & Anthropology at Ashoka

The undergraduate programme in Sociology and Anthropology (SOA) at Ashoka University is designed for students interested in cultivating an intellectually rigorous understanding of diverse social worlds and processes as they emerge, stabilise, transform and dissolve all around us.

The Department acknowledges the unique relationship between sociology and social anthropology as it has developed and flourished in India. While our faculty is actively engaged in long-term fieldwork and ethnographic research across a range of subjects and sites, as a collective, we emphasise the critical empiricism, theoretical engagement and comparative approach central to our best disciplinary traditions. In doing so, we constantly work at and move between multiple scales and modes of analysis: across the 'micro' and the 'macro', the 'general' and the 'particular', the 'local' and the 'global', the 'social' and the 'technical', the 'material' and 'abstract', and the 'qualitative' and 'quantitative'.

Our research and pedagogical practices also open up numerous possibilities for interdisciplinary explorations with students and scholars in allied fields of social thought and inquiry, including, history, economics, political science, psychology, philosophy, linguistics, environmental studies, computer science, planning and design, natural sciences, arts and aesthetics, law and media. This makes Sociology and Anthropology at once among the most grounded and fluid disciplines in the contemporary university.

### **The Undergraduate Major in Sociology and Anthropology**

The Sociology and Anthropology Major at Ashoka will train future scholars and professionals to be engaged observers, attentive readers, clear writers, and rigorous social analysts. Over the course of their study, our students will develop a critical awareness of changing social values and practices, the capacity to think relationally, and the skills to draw out vital but often invisible connections. In this way, they will learn how to describe and explain complex social processes. Above all, we are convinced that our students will engage with the world and come to inhabit it in ways that open up new possibilities for shaping shared futures. These possibilities are at the heart of what we think it means to nurture an anthropological imagination.

SOA Majors must complete 12 courses in the discipline to graduate with a B.A. in Sociology and Anthropology. All students will take 6 (out of a set of 8) compulsory courses specially designed to introduce them to the "core" fields of the discipline: key concepts and themes that are at the centre of both classical and contemporary work in Sociology and Anthropology. Building on and out from these courses, Majors will then select a series of 6 electives from a wide range of course offerings. All SOA courses, both cores and electives,

will create space for students to explore their own, individual interests and questions, but the electives are especially intended to give advanced undergraduates a sense of the breadth of the discipline and the frontiers of anthropological research. The set of core courses also includes a hands-on Research Methods course that all Majors will take in their third year. Instead of confining the Sociology and Anthropology of India to a single course, the study of India and South Asia will be woven in throughout the curriculum and critical themes (such as caste, hierarchy and stratification) will be explored in multiple and interrelated courses.

### **The Eight Core Courses:**

SOA 1101: **Sociology and the Making of Concepts** is our 'Gateway Course' and may be taken in the first or second year at Ashoka. It is compulsory for all SOA Majors, who must complete this course by the end of the second year.

In addition, Majors are required to take at least 4 of the following 6 courses. Most Majors will complete this set of courses in their second year, but they can be taken in any order depending on student interest and course sequencing in a given year. Students have the option and are encouraged to take all 6 courses in this set should they wish to do so.

- SOA 2101: **State, Stateless Societies and the Problems of Power**
- SOA 2102: **Gift, Commodity and the Exchange of Value**
- SOA 2103: **Magic, Science, Religion**
- SOA 2104: **Kin, Friends and Enemies**
- SOA 2105: **Language, Signs and the Problems of Representation**
- SOA 2106: **Nature's Futures**

SOA 3101: **Anthropology's Methods** is a research methods course specially designed for our Majors. Although there is no thesis requirement for the 3<sup>rd</sup> years, all students will learn research and proposal-writing skills in this course. Students planning to stay on for a fourth year to complete an Advanced Major in Sociology and Anthropology will use this course to develop proposals for their thesis fieldwork and research projects.

### **Electives**

Electives will emerge from and deepen student engagement with the concepts and approaches developed in the core courses while drawing on diverse faculty and student interests. Electives will be designed as advanced undergraduate seminar courses.

Majors will take a total of 6 electives, of which at least 4 must be 3000-level courses. 2 courses can be chosen from the remaining 2000-level 'cores' or from the electives on offer.

The elective course offerings will change from year to year, but the list below provides a sense of the range and depth of the electives that our faculty members have taught in the past and are excited to develop and teach in future semesters at Ashoka.

- Language and Power in South Asia
- Visuality, Power, and Truth
- Being Human: Anthropology and the Anthropocene
- The Right to Water
- Political Ecology and Modes of Resistance
- Agrarian Worlds
- Cities, Villages, and What Lies Between
- The Anthropology of 'Remoteness': Highlands, Islands and Rainforests
- Questioning Development
- What is Globalisation?
- Work, Labour, Industry
- Market Ethnographies
- Fiscal Anthropology
- Nationalism, Ethnicity, Violence
- Freedom and Sovereignty
- Hierarchy
- Local Bureaucracies and the Everyday State
- Trajectories of Capital
- The Cultural Politics of Space, Place and Time
- Borders and Crossings
- Travel, Mobility and Identity
- Gender, Sexuality and The Body
- War and Media
- Cybersociality
- Data, Algorithms and the Anthropology of Numbers
- The Anthropology of Dreams
- Islam and Anthropology
- The Secular and the Sacral
- Medicine and Society
- Anthropology of Mental Health
- Anthropology, Archive and History
- Anthropology and Allied Arts
- Anthropology and Philosophy
- Statistics for Sociologists

## Transitioning into the New System

The new curriculum has been designed to ensure that rising third years can complete their requirements smoothly under the new rubric. The course requirements for the third years **remain the same as when they started** (see below) and the new courses have been mapped against the previous course titles (i.e. they are course equivalents). The following matrix highlights the courses that can be taken to fulfil corresponding requirements under the old and new systems:

Course Titles under old system	Course Titles under new system
Introduction to Sociology and Anthropology	Sociology and the Making of Concepts
Social Theory 1	State, stateless societies and the problems of power
Social Theory 2	Gift, commodity and the exchange of value
Research Methods in Anthropology	Anthropology's methods

## Requirements (Old and New)

### Majors in Sociology and Anthropology

#### New Requirements: Class of 2021 and 2022 (Rising First and Second Years) and 4<sup>th</sup> Years

Each student will take a total of 12 courses towards their major. For completing a major in Sociology and Anthropology, one must take the following courses (1+4+1 required courses and 4+2 electives):

- **SOA 1101**: Sociology and the Making of Concepts (to be completed by the end of 2<sup>nd</sup> year)
- Any four of the following 2000-level core courses:
  - **SOA 2101**: State, Stateless Societies and the Problems of Power
  - **SOA 2102**: Gift, Commodity and the Exchange of Value
  - **SOA 2103**: Magic, Science, Religion
  - **SOA 2104**: Kin, Friends and Enemies
  - **SOA 2105**: Language, Signs and the Problems of Representation
  - **SOA 2106**: Nature's Futures
- **SOA 3101**: Anthropology's Methods (Must be taken in the third year)
- Four 3000 level electives in SOA
- Any other two courses in SOA (selected from the two remaining core courses or the electives)

### Old Requirements: Class of 2020 (Rising Third Years)

Each student will take a total of 12 courses towards their major. For completing a major in Sociology and Anthropology, one must take the following courses (3 required courses and 3+6 electives):

- Introduction to Sociology and Anthropology **or** Sociology and the Making of Concepts
- Social Theory I **or** State, stateless societies and the problems of power
- Research Methods in Anthropology **or** Anthropology's methods
- Any three 300(0)/400(0) level electives in SOA
- Any six 200(0) or higher level courses in SOA

### **Majors in Politics and Society**

#### New Requirements: Class of 2021 and 2022 (Rising First and Second Years) and 4<sup>th</sup> Years

A student needs to take a total of sixteen courses, out of which one needs to take a minimum of eight courses in Sociology and Anthropology. Out of those eight courses, four courses are mandatory, while rest four will be electives (4 required courses and 2+2 electives). The courses from the Sociology and Anthropology department are:

- **SOA 1101:** Sociology and the Making of Concepts (to be completed by the end of 2<sup>nd</sup> year)
- **SOA 2101:** State, Stateless Societies and the Problems of Power
- **SOA 2102:** Gift, Commodity and the Exchange of Value
- **SOA 3101:** Anthropology's Methods (Must be taken in the third year)
- Any two 3000 level electives
- Any other two courses in SOA (selected from the remaining core courses or the electives)

#### Old Requirements: Class of 2020 (Rising Third Years)

A student needs to take a total of sixteen courses, out of which one needs to take a minimum of eight courses in Sociology and Anthropology. The required courses from the Sociology and Anthropology department are (3 required courses and 5 electives):

- Introduction to Sociology and Anthropology **or** Sociology and the Making of Concepts
- Social Theory I **or** State, stateless societies and the problems of power
- Social Theory II **or** Gift, commodity and the exchange of value
- Any other five courses in SOA

## Minors in Sociology and Anthropology:

### New Requirements: Class of 2021 and 2022 (Rising First and Second Years) and 4<sup>th</sup> Years

Each student will take a total of 6 courses towards the minor. For completing a minor, a student has to take the following courses (3 required courses and 3 electives):

- **SOA 1101:** Sociology and the Making of Concepts
- Any three of the below 2000 level core courses:
  - **SOA 2101:** State, Stateless Societies and the Problems of Power
  - **SOA 2102:** Gift, Commodity and the Exchange of Value
  - **SOA 2103:** Magic, Science, Religion
  - **SOA 2104:** Kin, Friends and Enemies
  - **SOA 2105:** Language, Signs and the Problems of Representation
  - **SOA 2106:** Nature's Futures
- Any two 3000 level electives in SOA

### Old Requirements: Class of 2020 (Rising Third Years)

Each student will take a total of 6 courses towards the minor. For completing a minor, a student has to take the following courses (1 required course and 1+4 electives):

- Introduction to Sociology and Anthropology or Sociology and the Making of Concepts
- One 300(0)/400(0) level elective
- Any other four courses in SOA

## Concentration in Sociology and Anthropology:

### New Requirements: Class of 2021 and 2022 (Rising First and Second Years) and 4<sup>th</sup> Years

Each student will take a total of 4 courses towards the concentration. For completing a concentration, a student has to take the following courses (1+ 2 required courses and 1 elective):

- **SOA 1101:** Sociology and the Making of Concepts
- Any two of the below core courses:
  - **SOA 2101:** State, Stateless Societies and the Problems of Power
  - **SOA 2102:** Gift, Commodity and the Exchange of Value
  - **SOA 2103:** Magic, Science, Religion
  - **SOA 2104:** Kin, Friends and Enemies
  - **SOA 2105:** Language, Signs and the Problems of Representation

- **SOA 2106:** Nature's Futures
- Any one 3000 level elective in SOA

### Old Requirements: Class of 2020 (Rising Third Years)

Each student will take a total of 4 courses towards the concentration. For completing a concentration, a student has to take one of the required course and 3 other electives (1 required course + 3 electives):

- Introduction to Sociology and Anthropology or Sociology and the Making of Concepts
- Any other three courses in SOA

### **Course Levels and Pre-requisites**

100, 200, 300 and 400 are equivalent to 1000, 2000, 3000 and 4000 course levels respectively. Generally, the 1000 and 2000 level courses are introductory courses, while the 3000 and 4000 level courses are advanced courses. The Department expects its Majors to complete 1101 and ideally the four required 2000 level core courses by the end of the second year. The 2000 level core courses have no pre-requisites. SOA 3101 Anthropology's Methods and the 3000 level electives will have pre-requisites for all cohorts.

### Rising First and Second Years

Anthropology's Methods can be taken only in your third year, after completion of all other required courses (1000 level and 2000 level core courses). Students are strongly advised to opt for electives in their third year after the completion of all 1000 level and 2000 level core courses. But, any student who would have completed 1101 and any two of the 2000 level core courses may opt for the 3000 level electives.

### Rising Third Years

Anthropology's Methods can be taken only in your third year, after completion of all other required courses. The pre-requisite for the 3000 level electives will be any two 200(0) or higher-level courses in SOA.

If a student from outside of the Department wishes to take any 3000-level elective, they will have to seek approval from the faculty member first. 1000 and 2000-level courses do not have pre-requisites and we welcome students from other Departments to take these courses subject to availability. In the event that any other course has pre-requisites, it will be communicated at the starting of the semester.



## The Ashoka Scholars Program (4<sup>th</sup> year) in Sociology and Anthropology

The fourth year will give Majors an opportunity to pursue an independent, original and closely supervised research project, which will culminate in an undergraduate thesis. For obtaining an Advanced Diploma in Sociology and Anthropology, students need to submit a proposal in March. Detailed guidelines for the proposal will be shared with third years during the Monsoon semester. The following are the guidelines for those considering the Advanced Major in Sociology and Anthropology:

- The course, **Anthropology's Methods** will help prospective Advanced Majors to develop research proposals and plans. Fieldwork can be conducted over the summer between semesters 6 & 7 continuing into semester 7.
- In addition to working under the guidance of a faculty advisor, Advanced Majors will participate in a **Monsoon and Spring Thesis Workshop**, each for 4 credits. These will be intensive weekly sessions facilitated by different members of the faculty and will focus on critical aspects of the research process: framing questions, fieldwork methods, data analysis, working on annotated bibliographies, developing anthropological arguments, and ethnographic writing. Students will make regular presentations and share their writing with each other.
- 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.
- Fourth-years will also have the opportunity to gain experience as **Teaching Assistants** (with a minimum of 2 credits of Teaching Practicum).
- The ASP cohort will also organise (for 2 credits per student) an **annual Symposium** hosted by the department and conceptualised, curated and organised by the fourth-year students.
- To complete the required 32 credits, fourth-years will be able to take an **additional 3 departmental electives** to broaden and deepen their engagement with the discipline.

The Department also welcomes students who wish to stay on for a fourth year at Ashoka and utilise the Ashoka Scholars Programme (ASP) to complete a Concentration, Minor or Second Major Equivalent in Sociology and Anthropology as well as those fourth years keen to expand their intellectual exploration through our course offerings beyond formal requirements. In your fourth year, the new requirements for major, minor and concentration will apply. Graduating as a Major student from the Department is required in order to write a thesis with the Department.

## Year Advisors

To help you navigate through your journey with the Sociology and Anthropology Department at Ashoka University, we have decided to have year wise faculty advisors. They will help you understand the curriculum, requirements, course selection, etc throughout the year. The following are the faculty members that you can contact, depending on which year you are in:

**Rising First Years:** Prof. Mekhala Krishnamurthy

**Rising Second Years:** Prof. Ravindran Sriramachandran

**Rising Third Years:** Kathryn Collins Hardy

## Course offerings

### Monsoon 2019

The following courses are being offered by the department in Monsoon 2019

- 1) **SOA-1101 Sociology and the Making of Concepts** (Introduction to Sociology and Anthropology) (Required Course)  
Prof. Deepak Mehta
- 2) **SOA-2101 State, Stateless Societies and the Problems of Power** (Social Theory 1) (Required Course)  
Prof. B Swargajyoti Gohain
- 3) **SOA-2102 Gift, Commodity and the Exchange of Value** (Social Theory 2) (Required Course)  
Prof. Mekhala Krishnamurthy
- 4) **SOA-2104 Kin, Friends and Enemies** (Required Course)  
Prof. Kathryn Collins Hardy
- 5) **SOA-3201 Nationalism, Ethnicity, Violence** (Elective)  
Prof. Ravindran Sriramachandran
- 6) **SOA-3202 Borders and Crossings** (Elective)  
Prof. Swargajyoti Gohain

- 7) **SOA- 3203 Islam and Anthropology** (Elective)  
Prof. Aditi Saraf
- 8) **SOA-3204 Fiscal Anthropology** (Elective)  
Prof. Mekhala Krishnamurthy
- 9) **HIS 318/SOA-3501 Tarzan and Mowgli: A History of Colonial Culture** (Cross-listed Elective)  
Prof. Aparna Vaidik
- 10) **ES 306/SOA-3502 Decoding Genetically Modified Crops: The Global Politics of Agriculture and Biotechnology** (Cross-listed Elective)  
Prof. Aniket Aga

### Spring 2020 (Core courses)

- 1) **SOA- 1101 Sociology and the Making of Concepts** (Introduction to Sociology and Anthropology) (Required Course)
- 2) **SOA-2103 Magic, Science, Religion** (Required Course)
- 3) **SOA-2105 Language, Signs and the Problems of Representation** (Required Course)
- 4) **SOA-2106 Nature's Futures** (Required Course)
- 5) **SOA-3101 Anthropology's Methods** (Required Course)

### Frequently Asked Questions

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

**A:** Yes.

**Q: What are the pre-requisites for the 3000 level electives?**

**A:** The rising first and second years and the ASPs should have completed 1101 and any two of the 2000 level core courses. The rising third years should have completed any two 200/2000 or higher-level courses.

**Q: Is it mandatory for majors to finish 1101 by the end of second year?**

**A:** Yes. Majors must complete this course by the end of their second year.

**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 core courses as pre-requisites and you will get much more from these courses if you have taken the set of 2000-level cores.

**Q: Will there be 2000 level electives?**

**A:** Under the new system, all electives currently offered will be 3000 level ones. Only the core courses are of 2000 level.

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

**A:** Cross-listed courses are those courses which arise out of a discipline different than SOA but are cross-listed with SOA. There is no limit on cross-listed courses. However, we recommend that you take only one cross-listed course in a semester. Cross-listed courses will typically only count towards 3000-level electives.

**Q: Do the pre-requisites also apply to the 3000 level cross-listed courses or summer courses?**

**A:** Yes.

**Q: Which courses are cross-listed with SOA in the Monsoon 2019 semester?**

**A:** The following is the list of the courses cross-listed with SOA:

- HIS-318/SOA-316/ENG-321/POL Tarzan and Mowgli by Prof. Aparna Vaidik
- ES 306/SOA-3502 Decoding Genetically Modified Crops by Prof. Aniket Aga

**Q: I took a course in Monsoon 2018 which was cross-listed with SOA. It is being offered again in 2019 but is not showing as cross-listed. Is this a problem?**

**A:** No. It is normal for courses to not be cross-listed with other departments in every semester that they're offered. If you took a course, which was cross-listed in the semester that you took it, it will count towards your degree. Please cross-check the course code of such courses in your LMS.

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

**A:** No. Only ASPs 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'm interested in TAing for the Monsoon semester. How should I proceed?**

**A:** Only ASP students are eligible to TA for courses. The Department notifies all ASPs of TA requirement in the beginning of the semester and calls for applications.

**Q: Whom should I contact for further queries?**

**A:** You can email the Student Representative **Reeva Dani** (reeva.dani\_ug20@ashoka.edu.in) and cc the Department Manager **Sonal Agarwal** (sonal.agarwal@ashoka.edu.in) for any queries.

**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 LMS or may reach out to your peers or seniors who have already taken courses you may be interested in. You can also consult your year advisor for seeking guidance.

**Q: I'm unsure whether I want to major in Sociology or in Politics and Society. Is there someone I can talk to?**

**A:** You can consult your year advisor for seeking guidance related to the discipline and the department.

**Rising First and Second Years and ASPs (New Requirements):**

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

**A:** We recommend that you take the 1000 level course first. Then take the core 2000 level core courses. This will not only ensure that you have fulfilled the pre-requisites for the 3000-level electives, but you will get much more from the advanced elective courses when you take them.

**Q: I have already done Social Theory I. Do I have to take 'State, Stateless Societies and the Problems of Power' to fulfill my requirements?**

**A:** If you have already completed Social Theory 1, you do not have to take 'State, Stateless Societies and the Problems of Power' since they are course equivalents. Also, remember that you are only required to take 4 out of the 6 2000-level core courses, although you are welcome and encouraged to take the full set of six.

**Q: Can I take 2000 level courses before the 1000 level introductory requirement?**

**A:** Yes, you can take the 2000 level core courses before the 1000 level courses, but we recommend that you take 1101 as your first course in SOA and then opt for 2000 level core courses.

**Q: Can I opt for 3000 level courses while taking 2000 level courses at the same time?**

**A:** Yes, you can, provided you fulfill the pre-requisite for 3000 level electives, which is 1101 and any two 2000 level courses.

**Rising Third Years (Old Requirements):**

**Q: I have already done Research Methods. Do I have to take Anthropology's methods given that the former was a 200(0)-level course?**

**A:** If you have already done Research Methods, you don't have to take Anthropology's Methods, since they are course equivalents.

**Q: I have already done Social Theory I. If I take 'State, Stateless societies and the Problems of Power', will it count as part of the six electives required?**

**A:** No, as the two are course equivalents.

**Q: Can the elective requirements be fulfilled by any 2000 or 3000 level courses?**

**A:** After fulfilling the required number of level-based requirements, you are free to take 2000 or 3000 level courses to fulfill your remaining requirements

**Q: Is Social Theory II (Gift, Commodity and the Exchange of Value) a requirement for a pure major?**

**A:** No, Social Theory II is not a required course for a pure Major or a Minor. It is, however, a required course for the Politics and Society Interdisciplinary Major. Pure Majors or Minors are welcome to take this course as an Elective.