



**ASHOKA**  
UNIVERSITY

# **Department of Media Studies**

**Student Handbook  
Academic Year 2021-22**

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## Overview

What is Media? How do we understand it, practice it and learn from it? In a globalized, digitally convergent world, lines that divided information, education and entertainment have blurred. A 21<sup>st</sup> century Media Studies department creates room to separate the lines, only to merge them together again. For example- Is film political? Is social media truly democratized? Is journalism still gatekeeping? How do Artificial Intelligence and machine learning blur human capacity, and impact the information landscape? How do we understand the effect of our varied media consumption patterns on cultural, social and political behaviour? How does a new generation of media practitioners bring critical thinking to bear on content creation?

These essential questions are the leitmotif of Ashoka's Media Studies Department.



## Objectives

Building media literacy in an age of rapid technological advancement and globalized politics is fundamental. Our students are encouraged to understand the link between active citizenship and media consumption in democracy.

Through a range of courses these questions are navigated via class discussion, analysis and fieldwork, and empower students to enter different fields of communications and media- whether as practitioners or scholars.

**Ashoka University's Media Studies programme will reflect critically on several key questions.**

- **What storytelling looks like in the digital age**
- **What research methods are crucial to understanding media effects in society**
- **How technology has changed journalism and news consumption**
- **What is the politics of seeing and representation in cinematic cultures**

Our department is committed to promoting media content that is ethical, responsible, credible, contextual, and respectful of diversity of background and belief.

The Media Studies department is set apart from others in its pedagogical approach. Our motto is learning by doing.

## Media Studies Courses

Media studies students learn through their own field experiences and classroom discussions. Students are encouraged to produce different forms of media products- articles, film shorts, photo essays, web stories and qualitative research projects assessing media effects on society.

### Degree Requirements

Minor and Interdisciplinary Major requirements - Students must complete six courses in Media Studies. Only two mandatory requirements apply: ONE gateway 1000-level course - **MS 1201 Media, Culture and Society** - is mandatory, and the completion of at least one course from each level.

Concentration requirements- Students must complete four courses in Media Studies. One gateway 1000-level course - **MS 1201 Media, Culture and Society** - is mandatory. Students are free to choose their remaining three courses from the department's wide range of electives. The department encourages students to choose one course at each level.

### A) One Mandatory Course

One 1000-level gateway course - **MS 1201 Media, Culture and Society** - is mandatory for all aspiring Media Studies students. This course provides a broad-based understanding in communications and media theories and their practical applications in the real world.

- For the Academic year 2021-2022, this course will be offered in the Spring '22 semester.
- All students pursuing a Minor and Interdisciplinary Major in Media Studies are required to do at least one course at each learning level- 1000, 2000, 3000. (For those who wish to explore other streams, the mandatory course will fulfil this 1000-level requirement).
- Students who have already taken Media, Culture and Society in the past (either as a Foundation course or regular course) need not repeat this course in Spring'22.

### B) Electives

Students are free to choose the rest of their courses from a range of electives at introductory, intermediate and advanced levels. Our courses are curated across different streams of the media – journalism, film studies, communications research and content production. They are taught on a regular basis, allowing our students maximum choice and range.

Journalism-based courses replicate newsrooms and editorial meetings. Through a well-equipped Media Lab, students gain hands on experience working with audio-visual technologies and learn in live broadcast situations. Writing courses produce OpenAxis.com, an analytical news and current affairs magazine run entirely by students under faculty supervision, on WordPress.

Film-based courses contribute to the growing multidisciplinary spirit of Liberal Arts at Ashoka University. Students study film theory and the history of world cinema and major cinematic movements. They take deep dives into India's cinema landscape- its big budgets and its social messaging. In an ethos of excess how do we understand film as a medium, as practice, and as a space of representation.

Communications theory and research-based courses ask some fundamental questions- what is the history of human thought on media and technology? In what societal frameworks do some major thinkers emerge? These courses will also teach students how to formulate the right questions, and use research methods as a practical and important skill to understand audiences, social and behavioural change.

Our content creation courses are practical, and skill based. Students learn how to handle

media equipment and how to shoot and produce media material like podcasts or short video films.

They also learn video editing, lighting, still photography and behind the scenes production functions.

In the Ashoka spirit of interdisciplinary learning - many Media Studies courses are cross-listed with other departments.

### **Monsoon Semester 2021 courses:**

#### **1000 Level Courses**

**MS 1101** Introduction to News Writing — Neha Dixit

**MS 1001** Introduction to Audio-Visual Production — A.K. Ranjit

**MS 1411** Global Film History - The Silent Era to the 50s — Monia Acciari

**MS 1511 / PSY** Introduction to Communications Research Methods — Purnima Mehrotra

#### **2000 Level Courses**

**MS 2431** Understanding Bollywood — Shubhra Gupta

**MS 2811** Understanding Urban Poverty — Neha Dixit

**MS 2120** The Ashoka Conversation — Tisha Srivastav

**MS 2231** History of the Image/ Ways of Seeing — Maya Mirchandani and Tisha Srivastav

**MS 2342/ IR 2034** Media as Peace-building in South Asia — Maya Mirchandani

#### **3000 Level Courses**

**MS 3110 / CW 2013** Long form Writing — Siddhartha Dubey

**MS 3215 / PSY 3141** Communications Theory and Behavioural Change — Purnima Mehrotra

**MS 3459** Curating Global Film Cultures — Monia Acciari



## THE MEDIA LAB

Ashoka's well-equipped Media lab is the space for all our content creation courses. AK Ranjit, Director of the Media Lab is on hand for all queries regarding the lab's use and equipment.

.The media lab has production and post-production equipment

### Production Facilities

Broadcast HD Cameras,

DSLR Cameras

Live Production Control Room

Teleprompter

Lighting

Sound equipment

3-axis mobile gimble camera stabilizers

Camera sliders for pans and time-lapse

Post-Production Facilities

Apple Desktops with the latest versions of Adobe Creative

Cloud Database of stock music



## OTHER ACTIVITIES

The department regularly invites prominent journalists, film makers, authors, broadcasters, editors and media researchers for colloquium talks on their areas of expertise and research.

Several courses organise both guest lectures and regular field trips.

Students are also encouraged to conduct their own fieldwork for class assignments.



## PARTNERSHIPS:

The Media Studies Department engages in unique partnerships with Ashoka University's various research centres to create the possibility of collaborative research and production projects, and interdisciplinary media courses and material.

**Filmmaker's Companion-** A course curated in collaboration with Anupama Chopra and The Film Companion, an internet platform on film. Practitioners gave a series of 3- hour long lecture demonstrations on everything that goes into the making of a feature film.



**Workshop with Professor Ian Stewart on Environmental Communication:** Professor Iain Stewart, a member of UNESCO's International Geoscience Programme Scientific board, and is also Visiting Professor at Ashoka University's Department of Environmental Sciences. He is President of the Royal Scottish Geographical Society, Professor of Geoscience Communication at the University of Plymouth (UK), He anchored BBC's science programs, including the BAFTA-nominated Earth: The Power of the Planet (2007).



**Media Action Against Rape — A Joint Research Partnership with Ashoka and Bournemouth Universities in the lead and in collaboration with four other universities in India.** Along with UNESCO, we joined hands for a research and capacity building project funded by the Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF). The



two-year long study of how rape and sexual violence is reported in India mapped the journalistic challenges of reporting rape and sexual violence across India.



## FACULTY



**Maya Mirchandani**

**Head of Department, Media Studies**

**Assistant Professor, Department of Media Studies**

*PG Diploma in Social Communications Media, Sophia College Mumbai*

*PG Diploma in World Politics, London School of Economics*

*Member, International Press Institute, Vienna*



**Vaiju Naravane (On Sabbatical)**

**Professor, Department of Media Studies**

*Fellow of the World Press Institute, Saint Paul, Minnesota*



**Tisha Srivastav**

**Assistant Professor, Department of Media Studies**

*M.A. School of Oriental & African Studies, University of London*



**A K Ranjit**

**Director, Media Lab, Department of Media Studies**

*MBA (IS), Sikkim Manipal University*



**Siddhartha Dubey**

**Visiting Faculty, Department of Media Studies**

*M.S. Journalism, Columbia University*



**Neha Dixit**

**Visiting Faculty, Department of Media Studies**

*PG Diploma, Mass Communications Research Centre, Jamia Millia Islamia University*

*Fellow, World Press Institute*



**Purnima Mehrotra**

**Visiting Faculty, Department of Media Studies**

*PhD in Communication, University of Kentucky, USA*



**Monia Acciari**

**Visiting Faculty, Department of Media Studies**

*Associate Professor, De Montfort University (UK)*

*PhD, University of Manchester, U.K.; MA, Film Studies University of Bologna, Italy*

*MA, New Media Management, IED, Italy*



**Shubhra Gupta**

**Visiting Faculty, Department of Media Studies**

*PG Diploma in Social Communications Media, Sophia College Mumbai*

*Film critic and columnist with The Indian Express*



**Rajendra Tewari**

**Department Manager, Department of Media Studies**

*MBA (Marketing & IT), Uttarakhand Technical University; Course on Energy Economics, Environment and Policy, Asian Development Bank Institute, Japan*



**Dipanita Malik**

**Student Representative, Department of Media Studies**

*Dipanita is a third-year undergraduate student, pursuing a minor in Media Studies. She is the founding President of Ashoka Media, Film and Communications Society, a students' led Academic Society of the Department.*

## TESTIMONIALS

### FROM THE INDUSTRY

*“Ashoka University runs a fine journalism programme even at the Under-Graduate level. Their students who have interned at [thewire.in](http://thewire.in) were remarkable and contributed thoroughly researched pieces on complex subjects. In addition, their Media Lab has on occasion, provided us exceptional faculty video interviews on demonetisation, elections or civic protests.”*



**Siddharth Varadarajan, Founder Editor-in-chief, Thewire.in, former Editor, The**

**Hindu**



*“I was immensely impressed by the students I met at Ashoka. Both in the classroom/ studio environment and during the lecture I delivered there was an energy, enthusiasm and infectious curiosity among all of them. And they clearly sensed their good fortune at being on a course boosted by strong teaching and excellent facilities and they weren't about to waste that opportunity”*

**Julian Worricker, Radio and TV journalist and anchor, BBC, London**



## **STUDENT TESTIMONIALS**

*“My first media course taught me how to write like a journalist and basically unlearn academic writing. Being in Ashoka, I was constantly balancing between journalistic writing and academic writing. So I guess it taught me to think about one topic in two different ways. I also took the multimedia courses (journalism + broadcast) which taught me to be self-sufficient. So now, when I go out to report, I don’t necessarily need a camera person. I can shoot by myself, and if required, edit as well... It also made me more confident to ask questions. No matter how stupid. Whether I’m asking my senior editor or someone I don’t know at all for a story. “*

**- Taran Deol, Sub-editor, *The Print***

*“The media courses at Ashoka University are designed to acquaint an aspiring journalist with different forms of media. With each course, I became more familiar with the ethics and practices of journalism along with understanding how different forms of media can help disseminate types of information. Thanks to these courses, I can write both short and long pieces, create short films, face the camera with ease and play with data. But most importantly, each course taught me to question the status quo, as with such holistic knowledge comes the great responsibility of asking the right questions.”*

**- Amrita Singh, Feature Writer, *Business Standard***

*“Apart from being taught by renowned journalists and accomplished media persons, what was truly rewarding about the media studies major at Ashoka is how immersive it was. Beyond learning the basics of newswriting, reporting and audio-visual editing, almost every course had a hands-on module, which pushed students outside the campus to complete field reporting projects, whilst familiarizing them with what the life a journalist truly entails. The class also piqued my interest in public healthcare policy in India and now I work as a health correspondent for the Chandigarh bureau of the daily, Indian Express. .... Access to faculty members who are active professionals and have connections within the media world, also helped me land summer internships in prominent media houses. A summer internship with Indian Express eventually led to the job I currently have.”*

**-Chahat Rana, *The Caravan***

*“Two years into my job as a reporter and it still feels new to me. That's mostly because there's always something to learn and do better the next time you interview/ research/ write a story. Some of the most useful lessons in the media department were the ones that let you encounter that feeling firsthand, by going out to do a ground report or make a documentary film (courses taught to me by Neha Dixit, Vaiju Naravane and Hariharan Krishnan). I also encountered some of my sharpest critics during my media classes -- whether in the form of a call out on my privilege or on the quality of work -- and this is what probably helped the most. I wasn't used to this given the English department (where I completed my major) functioned very differently. But as a journalist you will be criticized by everybody (and seen as a nuisance by some too!). Take whatever negative feedback you get because it will sharpen your skills and keep you vigilant of your own work. Nothing is more important.”*

**-Simrin Sirur, Reporter, *The Print***

*“The Media Studies course at Ashoka University has been immensely beneficial in my career as a journalist. Right from the hand-on assignments to the media lab, the courses helped develop my understanding about all the types of media — from broadcast to print. When I'm on the field today, I keep going back to the lessons that were imparted in the classroom. They've been essential in shaping my fundamentals of reporting.”*

**-Angana Chakraborty, Reporter, *The Print***

*I am currently working at Dr. Reddy's Laboratories as a Learning and Development specialist. I took the course "Audio and Video Production" in my 4th year at Ashoka and only regret not taking it earlier. At the time of taking the course I looked at it as a hobby and never did it occur to me that I will be using audio and video editing skills in my job. However, I am grateful that because of the skills that I learnt in the course, I have moved a lot of the video production of the company (Communication from senior leaders mostly) internally, saving the company a significant amount of time and money as we don't have to depend on an external vendor now. Because of this, the Chairman appreciated me and called out Ashoka for the diverse skills that Ashoka teaches to their students. I just wanted to share that with you and I hope to see many more people take this course. Thanks for guiding me through this course.*

**-Naman Khandelwal, Learning and Development Specialist, Dr. Reddy's Laboratories**





## frequently asked QUESTIONS

- ***To pursue a minor or concentration in media Studies, which mandatory courses should a student complete?***

One 1000-level gateway course - **MS 1201 Media, Culture and Society** - is mandatory for all aspiring Media Studies students. This course provides a broad-based understanding in communications and media theories and their practical applications in our real world.

- For the Academic year 2021-2022, this course will be offered in the Spring '22 semester.
- All students pursuing a Minor and Interdisciplinary Major in the department are required to do at least one course at each learning level- 1000, 2000, 3000.
- Students who have pursued Media, Culture and Society in the past (either as a Foundation course or regular course) have, in effect, completed the requirement for the gateway course.

- ***How many courses do I have to take from every level if I am pursuing a minor or an Interdisciplinary Major?***

It is mandatory to complete **at least one course at each level**. This means, a student must take at least one 1000-level course, one 2000-level course, and one 3000-level course of their choice.

- ***Who will these revised rules apply to?***

This will come into effect from the upcoming Academic year 2021-2022, and will be a requisite for the UG 22 and ASP'22 graduating batches.

- ***When will the mandatory courses be offered?***

The mandatory course - MS 1201 Media, Culture and Society - for both UGs and ASPs will be offered by the Media Studies Department in the **Spring 2022 semester**.