



THE NEWSLETTER

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SYMBIOSIS SCHOOL
FOR LIBERAL ARTS

THE NEWSLETTER

EDITOR'S NOTE

ADITI VAIDYANATHAN & NEHA PILLAI

Greetings from The Newsletter Team!

We welcome you to our first issue of Volume VII. This issue marks the beginning of a renewed spirit at SSLA, as we are transitioning back to an offline space. Since the beginning of this academic year, The Third Floor has been thriving with enthusiasm, and our team has aimed to capture this essence in this issue. Taking forward the 'Alumni Conversations' segment, do check out our interview with Batch 2020's Valedictorian, Anaga Krishna on page 18. Don't miss out on the illustrations, curated by our own design team!

We'd like to thank our team for their continuous efforts in putting this issue together, and Ananya Dutta for her valuable feedback. We'd also like to take this opportunity to thank the Co-Heads of Volume VI, Sarah Cherian and Ira Deshmukh, for placing their faith in us to take the newsletter forward.

We hope you enjoy reading this issue as much as we enjoyed working on it!

With love,
Aditi and Neha



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LIVING THE COLLEGE EXPERIENCE: TRANSITION TO OFFLINE COLLEGE

Written by Anushri Shah, Edited by Mredul Sarsar

SSLA finally reopened its doors for a complete offline mode of education from 25th July 2022 with the Academic Year (2022-2023) and Covid-19 guidelines in place. Students, faculty and administrative staff were back on campus with renewed enthusiasm as they looked forward to offline interactions and activities.

The entire college anticipated arriving on campus, full of excitement and emotions. The long-needed interactions with friends, faculty and the welcoming community of the college provided a sense of belonging, inclusivity and exploration. Many students' cultural shifts, anxieties and anticipatory feelings were curtailed by finding solace in new and old friends along with faculty. Sneha Rath (Batch 2025) expressed, "At first I was anxious and it was overwhelming to come here... but you find your way, you find your people."



Classes were once again filled with profuse discussions and the college corridors lighted up with spontaneous conversations across batches. A massively welcome shift occurred as interactions became flexible and were not limited to class timings.

Professors could also be approached directly to clear doubts or engage in discussions, and group assignments could be completed efficiently.

Adapting to the offline mode after two years of the pandemic caused particular challenges like connecting with people in real-time, focusing during two-hour classes at a stretch, adjusting to the offline assessment model, and the drastic change in routines. Ali Mahmud (Batch 2024) mentioned, "Recently, I gave my first written test... and I had written a lot more than I wrote in the past two years."

However, it made students look at the positive aspects of college life, with the physical presence of professors and fellow students as a motivating factor. Vishwajit Pathare (Batch 2023) added, "Teacher interactions are much easier offline and we can go up to them with questions... talk about problems. Online is a lot harder to talk."



The faculty could also efficiently teach and steer classes in specific directions based on the visual cues of students, thus stimulating in-depth and lively discussions. It was an exciting transition for the faculty as they could finally match faces to the voices they had heard in the online classes. Dr. Vaidyanatha Gundlupet conveyed, "Faculty, like me, depend a lot on the visual cues students provide and in online classes we took a call not to force students to put their videos on and it meant that faculty didn't have any kind of visual cues and it felt like I was lecturing to myself."

Conversations between students and faculty developed with a sense of affection and understanding.

The transitioning phase did not affect the way professors connected with their students. Instead, it revived the lost touch of teaching students in person.

Further, teaching methods and pedagogies had to be adapted for the offline mode, especially for content-heavy courses; the portions covered in the online mode had to be reduced to fit the offline environment. The overall structure, design and execution of session plans were similar to the online session plans with the addition of pre-pandemic pedagogical and evaluation tools.

The few months spent offline have made the faculty realise that the students got used to the online world time and needed to disengage from their devices. They encouraged building inter-batch bonds to conquer physical and digital fatigue. Socialisation would now become an aid for students to carry on learnings from their professors and seniors. Dr. Vasudev Menon, a professor, encourages the students to “experience the opportunity to engage with people on a face-to-face level.”

While difficulties were faced, these interactions enabled the SSLA community to transition into the offline college with a positive attitude. The community understood the importance of relaxing together and regaining energy after the mental and physical drain of adapting to the offline mode and day-to-day commitments.

Facilitating the creation of sweet memories and enjoying the little things in life with friends and professors was the much-awaited dream that every student carried with them; finally coming true.

NAMASTÉ ‘26!

Written by Harshita Jindal, Edited by Shaun Paul

As August descended, the gaze shifted towards the incoming batch of 2026. The halls of SSLA now overflow with an illuminating tactility of hope and anticipation.

For the first time post hoc [covid 19] a new batch has been familiarised with the third-floor community built over the years through the Orientation and Initiation Week. The Orientation and Initiation week was an experience that was overwhelming, not just for the students stepping into their first year, but also for the students and faculty responsible for making this a reality, the orientation committee. After weeks on end of dedicated and exciting preparations, the visuals of 'orientation week' and 'induction week' had become a tangible reality.



The ball was set in motion from the 28th of August 2022, continuing on until the 3rd of September 2022. The week revolved around introducing the students to the faculty, the programme structure, rules & regulations and the various activities within the college space. The goal was not only to have a hospitable environment but also to maintain a lively atmosphere that stimulated social interaction. One could witness the kindling of new friendships and enthusiasm surfacing from conversations and interactions with the batch. Even the volunteers who helped manage this event had similar testimonies of the fruitful associations and transition of events. One of them shared, “The SSLA zest we were told about ever so often, came to life during this time”.

Overall, this portion of welcoming the incoming batch was more of a formal affair as it included discussions surrounding sensitive topics, such as gender sensitisation, mental health, and domains revolving around appropriate workplace/college behaviour. Along with this, alumni interactions, sessions for parents, and administrative procedures were explored.



This week opened the gates of SSLA to its novel thinkers, lifting the spirits of the entire organisation by experiencing a glimpse of offline orientations after the time spent looped in virtual existence over the past years.

The following days explored induction week, coined as 'SAATH: SSLA's 7th Cultural and Sports Initiation Week.' This week was lively, filled with amusing activities taken up by the clubs and cells. From the 5th of September 2022 to the 12th of September 2022, this seven-day event had everything, right from cultural events to sports. For the initial two days, The Third Floor witnessed multiple performances from the Dance Club, Karaoke Club, Comedy club, 'It Could Be Verse', Bandemonium and the Natak Society. During these presentations, a sense of belonging filled the walls of the common area. Students gathered around, singing and dancing along to the beats, conversing with one another and carrying forth the pneuma of SSLA.



Students described this moment as "entertaining", "embodiment of the true essence of college", and much more. Apart from the performances and stalls set up by various clubs, 'Games night' and 'Socials' were organised after-hours as informal

gatherings for Batch 2026. These sessions not only acted as opportunities for the Batch of 2026 to acquaint themselves with one another, but also familiarise themselves with the senior batches and learn about life in Pune. Entertaining activities, snacks, beverages, music, and dances enwrap the ethos of those nights.

The latter half of the week and the final fraction of welcoming the incoming batch was with the mixed batch sports tournament, which was a perfect escape for athletes from various batches to get together whilst doing what they love. An array of sports, including Fustal, Basketball, Volleyball and kho kho, were arranged. This was a truly remarkable end to SAATH. The energy encompassing the sports arena was exuberant and, in a way, gave the entire college a chance to re-engage and rekindle.

AZADI KA AMRIT MAHOTSAV: INDEPENDENCE DAY CELEBRATIONS AT SSLA

Written by Chiranshie Vyas Edited by Ananya Chaure

On 15th August this year, India celebrated 75 years of her independence from colonial rule. 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav' is a 75-week long celebration that commemorates the glorious history of its people, culture and achievements. Honouring this spirit, SSLA organised an intra-campus 'Sports Gala' at the New Viman Nagar Campus on the 8th and 9th of August. The sports competitions included Volleyball, Basketball and Futsal. While the Basketball and Volleyball matches were cancelled due to heavy rains, students didn't let this dampen their spirits. The strong turnout created a rigorous sporting atmosphere, which was fuelled by a competitive spirit. The men's final futsal match was played between SLS-P and SSLA, and after a tense game,



Illustrated by Madhumitha Lokanandan

SLS-P emerged as the winner with a score of 5-0. The girl's final futsal match was played by SLS-P and SSLA Team-A, where the SSLA girls triumphed with a score of 2-0. Overall, the event was a success, and the hard work and participation of the students were what mattered the most.



Continuing in this vein, SSLA was honoured to host this year's Independence Day celebrations at the New Viman Nagar Campus in the Ground floor Dome Area. The event's Chief Guest was Dr. Shashikala Gurpur, Dean, Faculty of Law, SIU, Director, SLS-P and the Guest of Honour was Prof. Shivali Lawale, Director, SSIS. The celebration was attended by SSLA, SLS-P and SSIS students, faculty, and non-teaching staff. The event started at 8:30 am with the unfurling of the national flag by the Chief Guest, accompanied by a rendition of the national anthem. SSLA's Events

Coordinator, Mallika Mehta, welcomed the audience with a passionate speech highlighting how we got "the freedom to do something" because of the freedom fighters that brought us the "freedom from something". She further traced how the meaning of 'freedom' has changed over time.



After the powerful address, the stage was given to the performers. The Dance Club kicked off the cultural programme with a moving performance with a mix of contemporary and semi-classical dance styles on the songs 'Teri Mitti' and 'Ae Watan'. When asked, Gauri Dhote (Batch 2025), a member of the dance team, said that it was nice to perform on Independence Day - it was an experience that was different from other occasions.



Then, the students of SLS-P took over the stage and put up a dramatic performance in the form of a skit. The skit was a dialogue between a father and a son on India's progress, 75 years after independence, with a poignant point about how anger and injustice are passed down from generation to generation. Lastly, SSLA's Music Club performed a medley of songs in different regional languages. Siddharth Salkar (Batch 2023), the head of the Music Club, said: "The idea behind including regional songs was to showcase the diversity of India and to show inclusivity in our performance."

During the latter part of the celebrations, the Chief Guest and the Guest of Honour were felicitated by Dr Anita Patankar, Director, SSLA.

AN ESSENTIAL ARROW IN THE RESEARCHER'S QUIVER – SPATIAL MAPS

Written by Abhinav Viswaroop, Edited by Idika Joshi

Every student graduating from SSLA would leave with a quiver- full of skill sets that they may use to shoot down problems in their future endeavours. An important skill amongst those is research methodology. In the field of research, students always rely upon a methodology that best answers their research question. Therefore, it becomes vital to have an acute awareness of the various methods. Through a two-day workshop organised by the Research Cell, held at the college premises on the 27th and 28th of August, 2022, a group of students and faculty were newly introduced to one such essential method known as 'Spatial Mapping'.



The workshop was conducted by Prof. Anuj Daga, an assistant professor at the School of Environment & Architecture in Mumbai. In addition to being an architect and writer, he is a curator of visual arts projects as well as architecture and design exhibitions.

The first day of the workshop was geared towards orienting the attendees towards the idea of space.

Prof. Daga walked the attendees through the history of maps and cartography, tracing the various traditions in which the world has been perceived. Through discussions of historical examples, the idea of a map as a representation of a physical, lived space arose, along with the different ways in which that space is represented on a flat sheet of paper.

At the end of the first day's session, the students were tasked with mapping a place they frequented. Not dissimilar to the framing of a research question, they first agreed on the phenomena to observe and listed the specific parameters relevant to their question. The students chose to cover the Datta Mandir Chowk in Viman Nagar, where they observed a portion of the street's patterns in a specified time window, with their attention turned towards the activity surrounding street-food vendors.

On the second day of the workshop, the students presented their observations and collated their data. Prof. Daga then guided them to the next step of spatialising the data. This involved the tracing of maps, sketching, and creation of pictograms. The students then attempted to derive inferences from the spatial map they had just made, with Prof. Daga directing the students' attention towards thinking about interrelationships and interdependencies amongst the categories of data. One observation made by the students was the increased density of vendors on opposite ends of the street, which they deduced from their knowledge of the lighting required for shops, among others.



The workshop was of great value to the students as they were presented with the opportunity to learn the theoretical aspects and put them to practise. True to the interdisciplinary spirit of SSLA, the workshop invoked examples and applications from varied sources such as geography, human psychology, advertising, public policy, aesthetics, design and more. The word 'space' is often used here in the college in the context of social sciences, and this workshop provided a set of tools to dissect this space and understand the workings of the different components and the interplays between them.

A CIRCLE OF TRUST: SHARING CIRCLES BY THE QUEER QREW

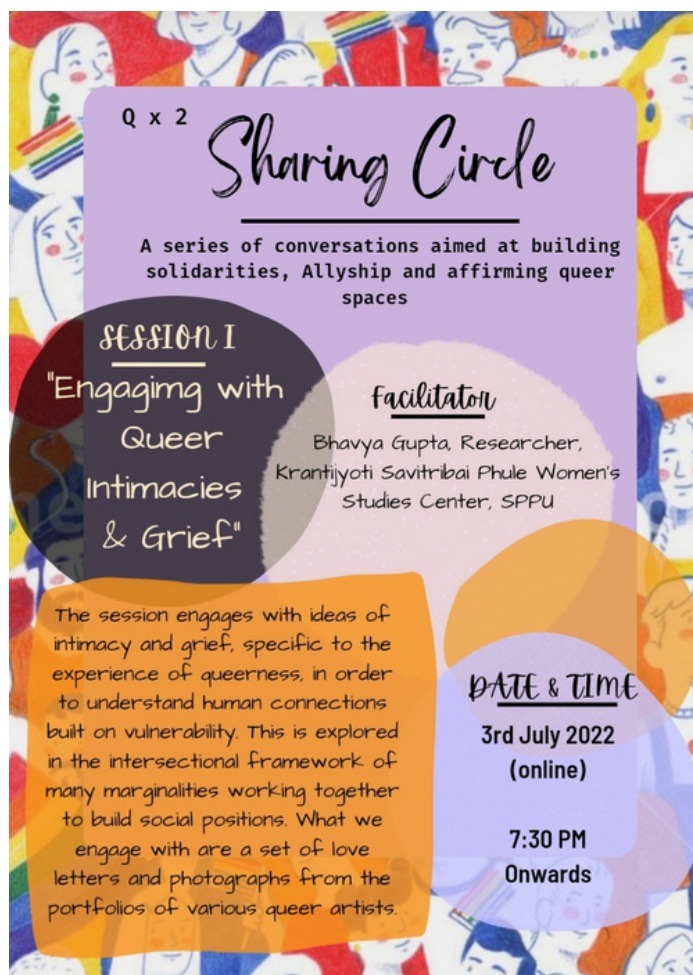
Written by A. Sanjana Rao, Edited by Rhea Khanna

A year-round dialogue series 'Sharing Circles' was introduced by The Queer Qrew at SSLA to kickstart the new academic year. Its goal is to establish a place where people may exchange thoughts, experiences, reactions, and opinions while bearing witness to the pursuit of growth and learning.

The Queer Qrew materialised the traditional concept of a 'Sharing Circle' into a space, where vulnerabilities are shared and welcomed with warmth and empathy. To achieve this, the Qrew has planned a series of events, including conferences, public forums, informal check-ins,



Illustrated by Madhumitha Lokanandan



lectures, and performances. 'Sharing Circles' began with online sessions, while gradually moving to an offline setting for participants to enjoy in-person interactions. In the first session of this series, researcher Bhavya Gupta from the Krantijyoti Savitribai Phule Women's Studies Centre led the discussion on 'Engaging with Queer Intimacies and Grief'. It entailed examining 11 Ways To Love by Dhrubo Jyoti, an epistolary tale of queerness and resilience. Gupta provided the session a framework by critically examining analytical categories and how they interact with gender and sexuality. There was a feeling of trust and solidarity. One attendee remarked how even though she could not stay for the entire session, she truly enjoyed reading Dhrubo Jyoti's collection of letters. Everyone was able to express their opinions boldly as well, especially when it came to the exercise of spatially mapping urban Calcutta through the affections of frightened youths and tenderfoot lovers.

Last but not least, the caste-conscious discussion during the session was essential to the growth of our individual engagements with queerness and identity. Thus, with this introspective 'Sharing

Circle', the Queer Qrew intended to create avenues where we may nurture allies, critical thinking, and queer-affirming surroundings.

CROSSINGS: THE SOCIETY FOR CULTURE AND CRITICALITY

Written by Aniriddhi Mistry, Edited by Shreya Iyer

The Society for Culture and Criticality's publication *Watermarks*, investigates how water's presence, excess, or absence influences various spaces, people, and cultural products. It sought to understand how this element shaped habit and form through the study of fluid knowledge systems, lifestyles, and practices that interact with water. This was an investigation into the pedagogies of water cultures and recorded associations with the maritime.

event were Dr. Abdul Kalam Azad, Sharanya Manivannan and Swarup Bhattacharya and SSLA visiting faculty Dr. Radhika Seshan.



Illustrated by Angad Malhi

Dr Seshan's lecture traced the historical contours of spatial representations through maps. She identified distinct representations of water from the Buddhist maritime world, Jain imagery, inscriptional materials, and so on to point to shifts in perceptions of waters over time regarding their vilification and reverence. She also contextualised these mapping ideals through the materials involved in the movement itself like ships, trade routes, and map detailing. Finally, she discussed the modes of interaction in the sea.

Following this, Dr Azad discussed the Miya community's epistemic violence and how their poetry became a tool of resistance and resilience—beginning with colonial oppression policies, apartheid systems of division, settling on river islands and river bank areas, state and physical violence that was inflicted on the marginalised communities, the negative impact of climate change, and the state's use of the fault line to contest citizenship. Dr Azad provided insight into the evolution and assertion of Miya identity over time, drawing on Kazi Neel, Khabir Ahmed, Shalim Hussain, and Rehna Sultana.

Sharanya Mannivannan began her session by discussing collective experiences, imaginations, and sentiments. She discussed her journey to extract the hidden snippets of information about the mysteries of water from folklore and the weight of representing these generational stories respectfully. Sharanya spoke about her conversations with indigenous groups in the United States, Australia, and Indonesia, among

A green event poster for 'Crossings'. At the top left, the word 'crossings' is written in white lowercase letters. To its right is the Society for Culture and Criticality logo, which is a black and white geometric pattern. Below the title, the date '2 July' is written in white. The poster lists two sessions for July 2nd: 11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. with Dr. Radhika Seshan, 'Representing Water, Re-presenting Water', and 5:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m. with Dr. Abdul Kalam Azad, 'Performing Resilience: Miya Poetry'. On July 3rd, there are two sessions: 12:00 p.m. - 1:30 p.m. with Sharanya Manivannan, 'Into the Waters: Magic and Myth', and 5:00 p.m. - 6:30 p.m. with Swarup Bhattacharya, 'Boat in Culture: Bengal Perspective'. Each session includes a small circular portrait of the speaker. At the bottom left, there is a logo for 'STANBROOK SCHOOL NEW DELHI'.

crossings

Society for Culture and Criticality

2 July

11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.
Dr. Radhika Seshan
Representing Water, Re-presenting Water

5:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.
Dr. Abdul Kalam Azad
Performing Resilience: Miya Poetry

3 July

12:00 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.
Sharanya Manivannan
Into the Waters: Magic and Myth

5:00 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.
Swarup Bhattacharya
Boat in Culture: Bengal Perspective

STANBROOK SCHOOL
NEW DELHI

On July 2nd and 3rd, 2022, the society held a two-day event called 'Crossings,' where distinguished speakers discussed water and its various representations. The keynote speakers for this

others, to reduce the risk of misrepresentation. Drawing from feminist readings of mythical tales, Mannivannan also discussed the feminisation of the mermaid's body and its origins in modern culture.

Swarup Bhattacharya's lecture was inspired by museums and the exploration cultures. He discussed the fear of lost traditions, their role in archival and preservation efforts, and the state's role in protecting such efforts. In discussing some of his work, he emphasised the changing landscapes of the river-dependent communities and their daily interactions with water bodies, including the introduction of technology and its impact on bhatiyali or river songs that can no longer be heard over the sound of the engines. Bhattacharya also demonstrated the art of boat-building to participants, using their designs as tools to display the traditional knowledge systems yet undiscovered by modern industries. Overall, the lectures were interesting, leaving the attendees with much to ponder over.

A NEW CLUB IN THE BLOCK

Written by S Sreeja, Edited by Bhavya Jha

The Fitness and Nutrition Club is a student initiative established at SSLA this year to guide people in their fitness journey, whilst educating them on the fundamentals of nutrition.

Hrishi Baney of Batch 2023, the club founder and managing director, detailed the club's inception with initial plans dating back to 2020. Although he developed the idea of the club in his first year, he put a pin on the idea due to restrictions of a pandemic. Baney highlighted the club's chief goal of "building a community of like-minded people, who feel safe expressing themselves," which was a difficult feat to achieve in an online setting. He remarked, "An online space doesn't provide oneself the space to be comfortably vulnerable enough, so the process restarted the second college started offline." Two years later, in the post-pandemic world, the Fitness and Nutrition

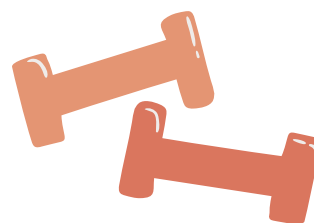
Club is fully functioning in an offline environment.



The club's core team is currently working on its publication and Instagram profile to encourage discussions and knowledge sharing within the community. Their Instagram Community Spotlight section provides members with a platform to share their past experiences and challenge their comfort zones. The club aims to equip them with the support and resources they require in their quest for fitness.

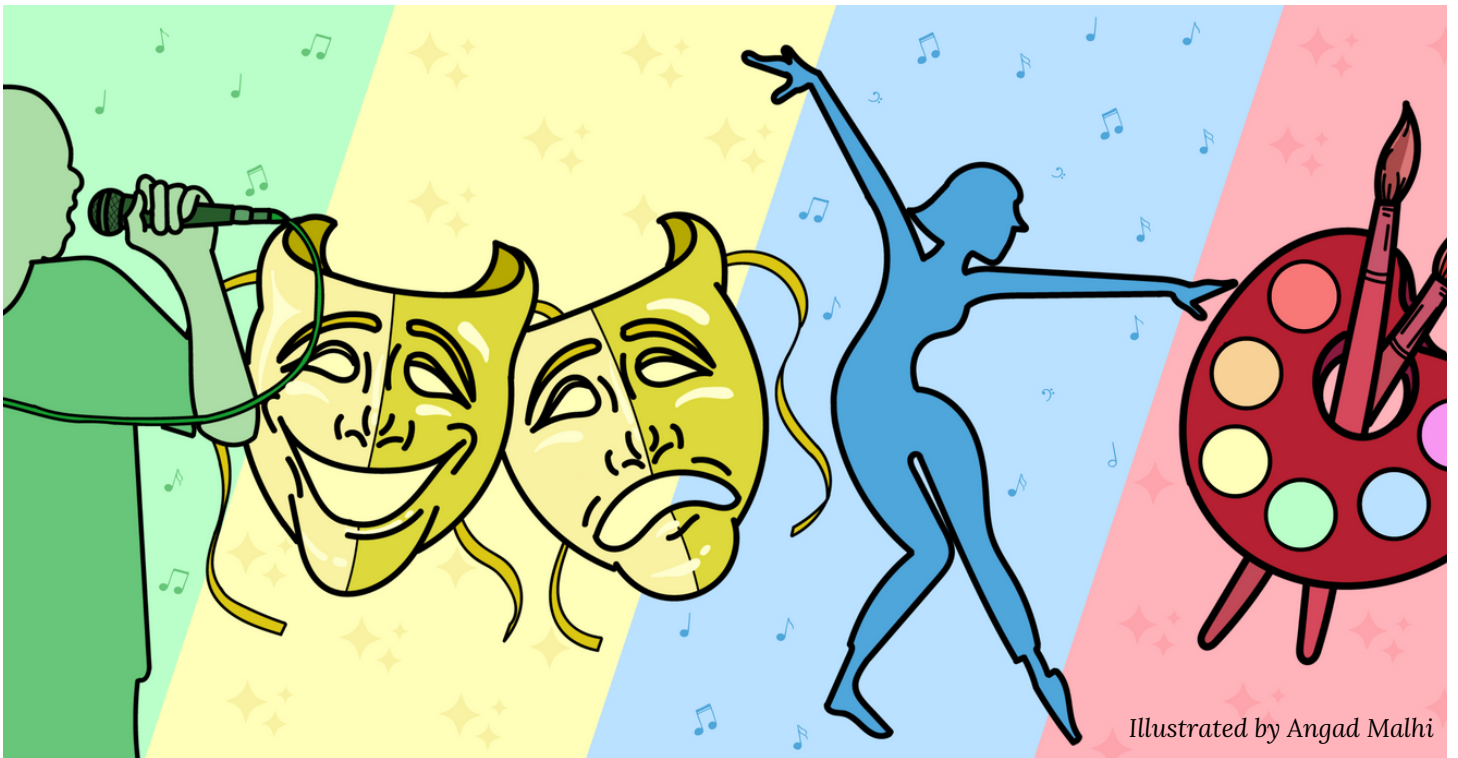
The club is planning several projects and events, ranging from future collaborations with the Symbiosis International University's Department of Sports Recreation and Wellness (SIU-DSRW) and SSLA's in-house sports magazine, The Overtime Tribune, to guest lectures conducted by seasoned influencers, nutritionists and personal trainers, and organising treks in and around Pune for the SSLA community.

The student body is highly anticipating the freshly minted club's initiatives. Until then, their informative posts are available on their Instagram page @fitnessclub_ssla.



CLUB ENGAGEMENTS

Written by Aniriddhi Mistry, Edited by Shreya Iyer



The Dance Club: The Dance Club marked their presence this year during the SSLA Independence Day Event with a dance performance in two styles: contemporary and semi-classical. The club also held auditions for the dance crew; a professional-esque crew assembled to represent SSLA for dance competitions at inter-college fests. The primary round of the auditions for the crew ended with 20 people getting shortlisted, which was narrowed down to a final crew of 12, with the second round of auditions. According to the heads, Mihika Bansal (Batch 2024) and Aakanshaa Baruah (Batch 2024), the auditions were “extremely intense, competitive but also very fun”, as the dance crew had been formed after nearly two and a half years of lockdown.

The Orators' Club: The Orators' Club hosted an online club meeting on the 20th of August. This meeting comprised a club interaction with the newly appointed Head of the Club, Karen Mesquita (Batch 2025), along with an Independence Day-themed Just-A-Minute (JAM) session. The JAM session offered members a chance to voice their opinions on a plethora of questions such as "What thoughts do you

associate with Independence Day?" and "What memories do you associate with Independence Day?". Members of the club enthusiastically opened up and shared their thoughts with regard to these questions, resulting in the JAM session being a success.

Bandemonium: Bandemonium, the SSLA club for music enthusiasts, conducted a live performance in celebration of Independence Day. The performance featured the club head Siddharth Salkar (Batch 2023), the secretary Shivani Vaidya (Batch 2023), and a club member, Keth Nancy (Batch 2024). The club looks forward to performing at future events within SSLA and bringing back the music on the Third Floor!

Comedy Club: The SSLA Comedy Club looks to revive itself with the new academic year and has a number of events planned ahead. The club activities for this year commenced with a performance for the incoming batch of 2026 during 'SAATH: The Initiation week'. Additionally, the club also plans on putting up performances and acts at SSLA events, host open mic nights, stand-up and mimicry shows.

Karaoke Club: SSLA's Karaoke club is one where everyone belts out their favourite tunes, ultimately evolving as a safe space for students to bond over their favourite tunes. The club conducted a performance on September 5 at the 'SAATH: Initiation week' to help kick off the initiation week. They marked their presence at the Socials night, where students of Batch 2026 came together to sing along to popular tracks, thereby bringing out the true essence of the inter-batch culture.

Natak Society: SSLA's theatre club, the Natak Society has had a busy year thus far – Between the week of 2nd to the 8th of June, the club conducted an extensive course that delved into the intricacies of theatre. The workshop was titled 'Purde ke Peeche kya hai', which was led by SSLA faculty Dr. Suchetana Banerjee and well-known playwright and performer Ankur. The society also conducted a play reading event on the 24th of June, in collaboration with the Thought Project, a feminist organization that offers training and consultation services to schools, universities, and organizations on issues of gender.



Art Club: SSLA's Art Club set up a stall at the initiation week and welcomed the upcoming batch with body painting opportunities and hand-crafted friendship bracelets. The club members roped in the new batch to try their hand at painting as well, creating a lively atmosphere around the entire stall. The club also looks forward to the enthusiasm of the students for their participation in the various events they have in store for the rest of the semester, from a weekly chill-and-paint session on Saturdays, to a Diwali-oriented Rangoli competition.

CELL ENGAGEMENTS

Written by Mredul Sarsar

International Cell

The International cell engages in a myriad of activities including collaborations with international universities providing aid to outgoing students, and helping incoming students adjust to SSLA.

Through the months of June and July, SSLA conducted The Turning Program, in collaboration with Bournemouth University. This program focussed on the global need to prioritise mental health while bringing cultural perceptions together. The program included eight students from both universities visiting Chiplun, Maharashtra to conduct workshops, logging entries from Yerwada Mental Hospital and taking part in the Pune Police Psychological Wellbeing Project.

Research Cell

The Research cell conducted its fifth annual Research Workshop Series in July, that aimed to teach students across batches, the nuances of academic writing; the foundation of a Liberal Arts education. This series included lectures delivered by SSLA teaching staff and researchers at Monk Prayogshala, a not-for-profit academic research institution.

On the 18th and 19th of July, the Annual Research Workshop Series welcomed Dr. Kumud Bhansali, an economic anthropologist whose lectures introduced students to an alternative academic writing process; one that can help students re-imagine their own writing processes creatively. The lectures included discussions on Close readings, free writing processes and data analysis that aid understanding of content or text under observation.

On 20th July, Dr. Sandip Ravindra facilitated a lecture that focused on time management and 'self-management' particularly for undergraduate students' research. This lecture was particularly

important for SSLA students given their requirement of a Seminar Paper and a Dissertation as it broke down an ideal research process that requires multiple skills and an objective outlook on the researcher's part. The lecture also included discussions on Cognitive Behavioural Therapy and various mental restrictions that hinder the research process.

On 22nd July, Dr. Vaidyanatha Gundlupet conducted an online lecture on the APA (American Psychological Association) citation format, its essential components and practices. This lecture familiarised students with citation particulars, research resources and also introduced tips to organise the academic writing process better.

Ms Sarah Rezaei, a junior research assistant at Monk Prayogshala also conducted a session on 'Introduction to Survey Research' with an emphasis on item development and construction. She also spoke about common interviewing practices and ethical considerations involved in the process, including the importance of data collection in survey research. Other lectures within the series included, discussions on Research Communication and Presentation, along with Research Ethics and Dashboarding data in Excel.

Admissions Cell

The Admissions Cell at SSLA recently welcomed the incoming batch of 2026, with the annual online interaction on 'Understanding Liberal Arts and Liberal Arts at SSLA'. The cell also set up pop-up stalls at university fairs like JBCN Schools University Connect Fair at JBCN International School Mumbai, and at other schools like Victorious Kids, Kharadi and Orchid School, Baner.

The cell also actively participated in the PIWAT(Personal Interaction & Writing Ability Test) process, a crucial component of the Admissions process, as representatives of the student body. On the 5th of September, the career cell set up a stall to introduce the cell and its workings to the newly inducted Batch of 2026.

Career Cell

The Career Cell at SSLA often conducts workshops and lectures on soft-skill development, organisational behaviours, resume building, and interviewing practices. On the 6th of September, SSLA's Career Cell, in collaboration with Deakin University, organised a guest lecture by Dr. Christopher Scanlon titled 'Video masterclass on Pitching your stories and ideas effectively with video' and Dr. Micaela Spiers titles 'Design Thinking in Business'.

WebsITe Cell

SSLA's most recent addition is that of the WebsITe Cell at SSLA. As an amalgamation of the Website team and the IT Cell, it works to maintain the college website in every aspect, including content, back-end technical support and overall design. The Cell's co-heads, Atiriya Narayan (Batch 2024) and Aarushi Sharma (Batch 2024) act as liaisons between the administration at SSLA and the faculties-in-charge, Dr. Sulakshana Sen and Dr. Kishori Kasat. Along with these responsibilities, they also lead a comprehensive team of capable designers, content writers and a technical team. The Cell aims to design a user-friendly interface and maintain the college website while keeping up with technological advancements and the various events within the college space!

Apart from being responsible for the primary communication channel for the college, the Cell also looks to engage students in Information Technology (IT) and increase digital literacy, by organising events and seminars. The Cell collectively plans to work to showcase the SSLA spirit and personality on the website, which details the true essence of this college.

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENTS

Written by Idika Joshi

GUNREET MARWAH

Batch 2025

Gunreet Marwah of Batch 2025 was selected for the Migration Studies Summer School organised by The Department of Political Science at the University of Bari, Italy. This year, the course took place from July 18 to 23, 2022. The Migration Studies Summer School focused on contemporary migration issues and integration policies and provided in-depth knowledge of the dynamics of migration flow with an interdisciplinary perspective and offers skills useful in migration management. Among the 27 seats that were globally offered for this course, only 15 students received scholarships and Gunreet was one of them!



Gunreet Marwah
(Batch 2025)

SRUTHI

VENKATRAMAN

Batch 2024

Sruthi Venkatraman was featured on *The Empowerment Zone*, a podcast by Dr. Ramona Houston. This podcast focuses on empowering African-Americans, Latinos and communities of people of colour. The podcast includes perspectives on building economic, political, educational and social power; advocating for health, philanthropy and service; championing racial and social justice; critically analysing current events, etc.

The episode titled 'The Power of Voting From Abroad' has Sruthi Venkatraman, a member of the Democrats Abroad Global Youth Caucus, addressing how voting is the backbone of a democracy, and why voting at the grassroots level empowers a community.



Sruthi Venkatraman
(Batch 2024)

FACULTY ACHIEVEMENTS

Written by Diptanshu Mitra, Edited by Neha Dadke

DR. MANJARI JONNALAGADDA

Dr. Jonnalagadda has published a research article 'Identifying Signatures of Natural Selection in Indian Population', which was written in collaboration with the faculty and students from the University of Toronto. She conceptualised this research article and approached Dr. Esteban J. Parra to work together on this project. The study group is a tribal population in Maharashtra, and Dr. Jonnalagadda was responsible for the collection of data. This research article is inspired by a similar study that was conducted in 2017, where they looked at pigmentation phenotype. This study expanded the purview of the study to include the entire genome. The study's objective was to understand the reasons for the diversity of the Indian population, and answer questions about our disease profile. A surprising observation made was the close ties between genes and mental health. Begun in late 2020, it took the researchers 15 months to collect and analyse the data. They published the article on August 4, 2022.



Dr. Manjari Jonnalagadda



Dr. Barry Rodrigue

DR. BARRY RODRIGUE

Dr. Rodrigue's article titled 'The Children of Climate Change and Their Search for Meaning' was published in the Routledge published book, *Science Religion and Deep Time*. The article explores how climate change has affected several aspects of human culture, including the phenomenon of 'social grooming.' Dr. Rodrigue explains that the presence of endorphins aids human development insofar as it allows a certain synthesis of experiences. Endorphins' essential function is in the facilitation of closer bonds in humans and animal species. Dr. Rodrigue has also edited six other articles published in the same journal.

DR. RICHA MINOCHA

Dr. Minocha's research article 'Women's Spirituality as a measure of Deep Time and Social Ecology' was published as a chapter in the book, *Science, Religion and Deep Time*. Using Big History as a model, the article deliberates upon the challenges of development. The main focus of her article is on the several close interlinkages between nature and religion, social development and loss, and spirituality versus material contexts. The case studies in her research are based on several villages of Himachal Pradesh. The study found that with globalisation, the conservation of local spaces and traditional sense of time has been eroded. An important point the paper makes is that modernisation and development projects must be closely monitored and well executed otherwise states run the risk of resurfacing caste and gender differences as has been seen in Himachal Pradesh. The article also genders the contexts of developmental challenges, particularly for rural communities and women.



Dr. Richa Minocha

SSLA at The Migration Conference 2022

Written by Abhinav Viswaroop, and Edited by Idika Joshi

The Migration Conference (TMC) is an academic peer-reviewed event held annually, covering aspects of migration policy, law, employment, refugees, culture, and more. This year's conference was hosted by Mohammed V University in Rabat, Morocco, with some sessions being held online as well. SSLA was one of the partner institutions for the conference with a number of students and faculty also taking part through the online mode.



Dr. Sulakshana Sen

Dr Sulakshana Sen was the moderator for a panel discussion on 'Money, Merit and the Making of a Migrant in India'. The sharp increase in international migration for education and employment, along with the internal migration have come under the spotlight during the post-pandemic world. The socio-economic and aspirational factors causing these movements were explored in this panel.





**Dr. Priyadashini
Karve**

Dr Priyadarshini Karve was one among three speakers for a panel discussion on 'Climate Change, Conflict, and Displacement in India'. This panel brought to light the environmental factors that cause displacements of people, and the challenges faced by governments in making effective policies for such issues.



**Dr. Shweta Sinha
Deshpande**

Dr Shweta Sinha Deshpande, who is also among the conference's Scientific Review Committee, was the moderator for a panel discussion on 'Indian Diaspora: Shaping cultures, perceptions, and patterns of mobility'. The panel focussed on the motivations of the Indian migrants, and their persisting linkages to their ancestral roots which lead them to sending money back home. Thus, the broader culture of migration was situated in the context of India's socio-economic development.

Students, both graduated and presently studying, presented papers at the event. Kuhelika Bisht, Aena Asif and Isha Banerjee of Batch 2022, along with Nayanika Shome of Batch 2023,

presented a paper on 'Accommodating Cosmopolitan Renegotiations: Re-examining traditional norms of mobility in transnational migration'.



**Kuhelika Bisht (Batch 2022),
Aena Asif (Batch 2022), Isha Banerjee (Batch 2022),
Nayanika Shome (Batch 2023)**

Parvathi Vijay of Batch 2024, presented on 'The Paradox of Human Rights: A case study of the Rohingya Muslim refugee crisis'. Avinash Koul, a Ph.D student here at SSLA, presented on 'Exploring Social Capital Among the Non-Displaced Kashmiri Pandits in Kashmir, India'.



**Parvathi Vijay
(Batch 2024)**



**Avinash Koul
(PhD Student)**

Speaking about the experience of presenting, Nayanika said, on behalf of her team, that the experience was enjoyable and very useful, as it gave them the opportunity to interact with scholars and students from around the world who are studying similar subjects. They received encouragement to further pursue their research endeavours. On a similar note, Parvathi spoke of her experience as being one filled with fear at the initial moments due to the presence of an esteemed panel, but the journey was fun-filled and pleasant leaving her with immense satisfaction.

TNT TALKS: ANAGA KRISHNA (BATCH 2020)

Written by Mahika Jagtiani, Edited by Smrithika Rongali

What were the reasons that led you to choose SSLA for your undergraduate studies?

Anaga: SSLA happens to be one of the only International Relations programmes at the undergraduate level in the country and that's why I chose it. I also wanted to study in America after I graduated, and I knew that American masters programmes accept four-year degrees more seriously, so I thought it would be better to do that.

What was the impact of SSLA on your academic development and your future prospects post-SSLA?

Anaga: I think SSLA was pretty unique in the sense that there was a lot of emphasis on writing and presenting. Most colleges, especially the ones my friends went to like Xaviers, didn't care about plagiarism, the quality of writing, or the quality of sourcing and citations. I definitely learned all those things at SSLA. There's no way I could do what I'm doing in my Master's programme right now without SSLA. So I would say that the most impact SSLA had in my development was in writing. We also had several group presentations, so it taught me how to establish my point of view. Even in regular classes, you have to interact even if you don't really feel like answering, especially with the marks allotted for class participation and I think that was important as well. Also, the internship report, the COP, dissertation and seminar- having four big written projects that we had to do shows you how to write in different styles. It had a huge impact, thanks to the emphasis SSLA laid on writing and presenting academic writing.

How did the SSLA ecosystem benefit your personal evolutions?

Anaga: It was nice to have a smaller class size. The entire college was under 500 people and our batch was just 100 people, so you could get to



**Anaga Krishna
Batch 2020**

know everyone pretty well. It was nice that we were able to form a close community and we all knew each other. I also like that there were so many different options for courses, so I was able to choose what I wanted and that increased my interest in IR and helped me grow as a person. Although I did not want to take up a lot of the mandatory courses, I ended up learning a lot that I wouldn't have learned otherwise. I became more confident as a speaker and as a writer. I also became really good at doing things spontaneously because as you know, in SSLA, we have six to seven subjects every semester and you get used to doing things at the last minute. That's invaluable! I also learnt how to be more social, how to adapt my conversations depending on who I'm talking to and got closer to faculty as well because they were all willing to chat with students informally.

How did you balance your extra curricular activities with your college commitments?

Anaga: I played table tennis and football a lot. I was also part of the International Cell and the Sports Council for a while. I helped out with conferences, on and off, as well. Mostly, I prioritised college commitments, basically my

academics over most things because I did my internships and other activities over the summer. During the year, I didn't really do anything besides my academics and sometimes sports, but that was just for my enjoyment. I wouldn't consider that as something that consumed my time.

During your time at SSLA, you had worked with the US government and pursued two internships with them. Could you talk about this experience a little more?

Anaga: For some context, I'm from India, but I'm a US citizen, just like my parents. I've been living in India for my whole life though. I was able to work with the US government because of my citizenship. I had applied to the US Department of State, which is the equivalent of India's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in my second year, and I got in. So during my summer between my second and third year, I worked in the recruitment office for the US Foreign Service in Washington DC. We raised awareness about the importance of the Foreign Service and why people from different backgrounds in America should join, like people of colour, women, etc. It was a great experience, with my coworkers being very supportive. My first internship, gratefully allowed me to get my second one, which was, again with the US government, but in Rome, Italy. I was selected to work in the emergency passport section in the US Embassy – which dealt with people who had their passports lost or stolen, when they were travelling in Rome or victims of a crime. We would help them do a background check and fill out forms and get a new passport, which the interns were responsible for printing. That was a great experience as well. I am interested in joining the US Foreign Service sometime in the future, and so it was good to spend time with American diplomats and foreign service officers in Rome.

How did these experiences shape you as a person?

Anaga: It made me more social and taught me

how to sell myself more. It's important to have experiences outside of college. I don't mean this in a bad way but I think people get really caught up in trying to make a good impression in college, like doing all these events and extracurriculars. But my piece of advice would be to also focus on external organizations like in a small internship or volunteer work. If you spend too much time, you will get too involved in college politics. Of course, do a couple of activities but don't focus all your efforts on your internal college activities. These experiences really helped me and I am grateful that I had the opportunity to do them. It doesn't mean that you have to go abroad but just try to work with organisations in Pune and not just Symbiosis. Basically, seeing that I could add value in different places made me a more confident speaker and presenter. It made me realise how day to day life works when you're not in college.

Could you tell us about what you're currently pursuing and what you've done since graduating? Is this what you envisioned doing while in your final year?

Anaga: Currently, I am doing a master's programme called Masters of Science in Foreign Service. It's not really scientific, they just call it science for fun. It's at Georgetown University in Washington, DC. I'm just starting my second year. I graduated college during COVID in 2020 so for a year, I was just interning. I did a teaching internship with Georgetown. I was helping with US foreign policy world politics classes. I was also studying economics at Johns Hopkins so I could prepare for my university applications.

Then I also did another internship with the University of Pennsylvania. I was doing research on think tanks and civil societies and that was very interesting. During the peak of the pandemic, I was also applying to college, mostly to Washington, London School of Economics and Oxford in the UK. I ended up coming to Georgetown and yes, this is what I envisioned doing. I really wanted to do a Masters pretty early on, I knew that for sure. Although I did want to

work for a couple of years in India or the US before doing my masters, I felt like the pandemic period did not provide me with many opportunities to put myself out there. That's why I decided to finish my masters off and then kind of look for jobs after COVID was over. That was a small bump in the road but I'm happy now and I'm enjoying my master's program. It's really great!

Back to SSLA, were there any offline traditions that you specifically enjoyed?

Anaga: Well, after playing football everyone used to go to juice. It's opposite Farmaish, near Konark Nagar. There were two juice shops- Famous Juice and Fresh Juice. People used to argue about which one they liked. We used to go there for Ganga Jamuna which is a Sweet Lime-Orange mixed juice and they had amazing oreo shakes, chocolate shakes, cold coffee, strawberry juice and mango juice. There was also New Rasoi close by where you get amazing parathas. I used to love eating paneer paratha there. We used to always go there. All of that was really fun! As for SSLA traditions, I, like my peers, definitely enjoyed sleeping in the library on the beanbag. Going to the canteen, chilling on the basketball and football courts, staying in the girls hostel, it was pretty fun. There's a lot of good memories but definitely juice, bunking core classes and sleeping at SSLA are some of the best things we did.

Is there anything you'd like to say to the future batches? Any advice, any warnings, anything would be helpful!

Anaga: Wow, that's a lot of pressure! Like I said, definitely do things outside of college as much as you can. It is really easy to get lost in the "Oh, I want to be in the council, in this cell and then five other cells, in 50 sports teams and a dance club." It's good to socialise but it's not really going to get you a lot, in terms of skills for the future. The environment is pretty insular and you're not getting opportunities to meet people outside. Try to do some volunteer work, even a virtual part-time internship, or virtual volunteering with the UN.

You can gain actual skills like report writing, article writing, presenting or making things using Excel, any basic practical skills. Another piece of advice would be 'don't discount the importance of anything'. For example, when I first came in, I thought, "Oh, what is Legal Awareness and Environmental Awareness? Why do I have to do all this boring stuff?". In the future, it's really useful, even if you don't think so right now. The fact that you did Legal Awareness, Fundamentals of IT and so on, looks good on your resume. People take it seriously, so just try to be as enthusiastic as you can, even about the core classes.

Lastly, were there any electives or courses that stood out for you or influenced you and your future decisions?

Anaga: Everything Vaidyanatha sir taught was really influential for me. It helped me have a broader view of the world and realise that not everything can be idealistic. At SSLA, everyone's very hippie and idealistic but I think his class really helped me understand the true nature of how the world is. I had US foreign policy with him, two research methodology classes with him. He was also my dissertation advisor. I don't think anything else was that influential.

I also had a really cool elective called Sports Psychology. I don't do anything related to Sports Psychology now, but it was really interesting. There were some languages, I took Spanish and French, that was really fun. I definitely recommend doing any language at SSLA and there's no pressure, you can do whatever you feel like since it's not graded very harshly. Ultimately, the job market is looking for people who understand finances and how the world economic system works. Nothing too complex but it has to be a solid foundation. So if you have the opportunity, take an elective which has economics. That's one thing I didn't do and I regret it now.

Choose an elective which has some science, economic or maths-related component, even if you may not like it. I would've liked it and it would have definitely made my resume look better. As cliché as it may sound, all my courses over my time at SSLA influenced where I am today.



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