

Nikhit Agrawal

Apt #204, 3301 S Canfield Ave
Los Angeles, CA 90034, USA
nikhit@ucla.edu
<https://nikhitagrwal.com/>

EDUCATION

University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA)

Ph.D., Anthropology, June 2025

University of Delhi

MA, Sociology, November 2018

Indian Institute of Technology Delhi

BTech., Computer Science & Engineering, October 2015

GRANTS, SCHOLARSHIPS, AND ACADEMIC AWARDS

Eric R. Wolf Prize for paper titled, “When more-than-human meshwork “talk back”: Infrapolitics in an Indian tech-entrepreneurial sustainability program.” Prize awarded to best graduate student paper that integrates political economy and bold political action into the analysis of social life by Society for the Anthropology of Work, American Anthropological Association, 2024.

Wenner-Gren Foundation Dissertation Fieldwork Grant, 2023.

Dorothy Jewell Graduate Student Travel Award, UCLA Department of Anthropology, 2023.

Robert B. Edgerton Endowed Graduate Student Award, UCLA Department of Anthropology, 2023.

Summer Research Fellowship, Navin and Pratima Doshi Chair of Indian Studies, UCLA, 2023.

Nominated twice in consecutive years by Department of Anthropology for the UCLA College’s Charles E. and Sue K. Young Graduate Student Fellowship Award, 2023 and 2022.

Graduate Summer Research Mentorship Fellowship, UCLA Division of Graduate Education, 2022 and 2021.

UCLA International Institute Fieldwork Fellowship, 2022.

Sambhi Summer Research Fellowship, Center for India and South Asia, UCLA, 2020.

Merit-cum-Means Scholarship, Indian Institute of Technology Delhi, 2011-12.

PUBLICATIONS

Peer-Reviewed Articles

2024. “Violent Sustainability: Blitzscale and counteraccounting in an Indian agtech start-Up.” *Economic Anthropology*. <https://doi.org/10.1002/sea2.12333>.

Under Review since May 2024. *Journal of Peasant Studies*. “Infranarratives of climate change: the case of rice stubble-burning prevention to mitigate air pollution in Delhi.”

Under Review since September 2024. *Critique of Anthropology*. “When more-than-human meshwork “talk back”: Infrapolitics in an Indian tech-entrepreneurial sustainability program.”

2017. “Mobilization in Vidarbha: A Comparative Study.” *Economic and Political Weekly* 52(39): 46-53. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/26698515>.

Public Scholarship

2021. “State of Rural and Agrarian India Report 2020: Rethinking Productivity and Populism through Alternative Approaches,” (co-authored with Richa Kumar, PS Vijayshankar, and AR Vasavi) Chennai: *Notion Press*. (translated and published in multiple Indian languages). <http://www.ruralagrarianstudies.org/state-of-rural-and-agrarian-india-report-2020/>

2021. “As agribusinesses proliferate, who is talking about sustainability of Indian agriculture?,” *India in Transition*, Center for the Advanced Study of India, University of Pennsylvania, December 20. <https://casi.sas.upenn.edu/iit/nikhitekumaragrawal>

2021. “Reform for farmers needs to look at more than mere efficiency of agriculture markets,” (co-authored with Richa Kumar) *The Indian Express*, January 5. <https://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/farm-laws-controversy-narendra-modi-farmers-protest-7132953/> (translated in Hindi and published in *Trolley Times*, a farmers’ protest publication, March 31, 2021. <https://trolleytimes.com/2021/03/31/कृषि-सुधार-कानून-कैसे-हो/>)

2020. “Why experts believe the new agricultural laws are beneficial – but farmers don’t,” *Scroll.in*, December 22. <https://scroll.in/article/981944/why-experts-believe-the-new-agricultural-laws-are-beneficial-but-farmers-dont>

2020. “Neither Govt nor protesting farmers recognize challenge of depleting natural resources and climate crisis,” (co-authored with Richa Kumar, PS Vijayshankar, AR Vasavi) *The Indian Express*, December 7. <https://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/in-farm-debate-a-green-reality-check-7094384/>

2020. “India hopes digital tech will save its floundering farm sector – but it’s working without evidence,” *Scroll.in*, September 20. <https://scroll.in/article/973544/india-hopes-digital-tech-will-save-its-floundering-farm-sector-but-is-working-without-evidence>

2020. “Some Key Questions That Need to Be Answered About the Three Agriculture Ordinances,” *The Wire*, June 24. <https://thewire.in/agriculture/agriculture-ordinances-key-questions>

2018. “India Should Recognize That Manual Scavenging is Akin to Slavery,” *The Wire*, July 18. <https://thewire.in/caste/india-should-recognise-that-manual-scavenging-is-akin-to-slavery>

2018. “India's Future Growth Track Hinges on Supreme Court's Aadhaar Ruling,” *The Wire*, June 1. <https://thewire.in/tech/indias-future-growth-track-hinges-on-supreme-courts-aadhaar-ruling>

2018. “Why India's Oppressed Lack a United Voice,” *The Wire*, January 3. <https://thewire.in/agriculture/indias-subjugated-lack-united-voice>

INVITED TALKS AND LECTURES

Q&A session with students on Violent sustainability. School Guest Lecture in the course titled, Anthropology of the Environment. University of Southern California. November 2024.

Analyzing the impact of agtech start-ups in Indian agriculture. School Research Seminar. Christ University, Bengaluru, India. November 2022.

India's rural and agrarian economy today. Panel Discussion. Center for Development Studies. Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, India, June 2021.

Agtech in India: technology, start-ups, and development. Undergraduate course lecture. Indian Institute of Technology Delhi, India, December 2020.

CONFERENCE AND WORKSHOP PRESENTATIONS

Violent Sustainability and Agtech in India. Impact Hau? Ethnographic Critiques of Sustainable Finance Conference, Bertinoro, Italy, May 2024.

Paddy stubble management to prevent Delhi's air pollution: rethinking modernization amid climate change in Indian agriculture. Managing Sustainable Transitions Conference, Institute of Rural Management, Gujarat, India, November 2023.

The interplay of private capital and techno-fixes: an ethnographic study of agtech firms in India. Annual Conference on South Asia, University of Wisconsin-Madison, USA, November 2023.

Counter-accounting in the age of techno-fixes: an ethnographic study of agtech firms and their sustainability narratives. Annual Conference, Society for Social Studies of Science, Honolulu, USA, November 2023.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Associate instructor

SocGen 5 Human Biology & Society

Teaching associate to Hannah Landecker and Bharat Venkat, Winter 2025, UCLA.

SocGen 131 Data, Artificial Intelligence, and Algorithms in the Biosciences

Teaching associate to Christopher Kelty, Fall 2024, UCLA.

Assistant instructor

Anthro 140 Anthropology of Social Systems

Teaching assistant to Yunxiang Yan, Winter 2022, UCLA.

Anthro 3 Culture and Society

Teaching assistant to Janani Kalyanaraman, Fall 2021, UCLA.

Anthro 133 Anthropology of Food

Teaching assistant to Akhil Gupta, Spring 2021, UCLA.

Anthro 3 Culture and Society

Teaching assistant to Yunxiang Yan, Winter 2021, UCLA.

Anthro 3 Culture and Society
Teaching assistant to Jessica Cattelino, Fall 2020, UCLA.

NON-TEACHING PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Graduate Student Researcher to Jessica Cattelino
Center for the Study of Women, Spring 2022, UCLA.

Associate to the Chief Minister, Government of Haryana
Ashoka University, 2018-19, India.

Research Associate to Richa Kumar
Department of Science & Technology – Center for Policy Research
Indian Institute of Technology Delhi, 2015-16, India.

SERVICE

Institutional Service

Contributing Editor, Cultural Anthropology, USA, 2024-26.

Organizing committee member, Fifth Annual Graduate Interdisciplinary Conference on South Asia
Center for India and South Asia, UCLA, 2020.

Student Representative, Admissions Committee, Department of Anthropology, UCLA, 2019-20.

Core team member, Network of Rural and Agrarian Studies, India.
<http://www.ruralagrarianstudies.org/>

Community Service

Co-founder, ZealGrit Social Welfare Foundation, India, 2023. <https://www.zealgrit.org/>

Coordinator, Public Lecture Series titled “Democracy, Development, and Justice, ” Indian Institute of
Technology Delhi, India, 2014-15.

Student Volunteer, The Society for the Promotion of Indian Classical Music And Culture Amongst
Youth. Board for Recreational and Creative Activities (BRCA), Indian Institute of Technology Delhi,
India, 2011-13. Received “Best Fresher Award” for this volunteering work from the BRCA.