



NEPAL FIELD PROGRAM · PROGRAM II

Environmental Filmmaking

Tell Stories That Matter

This is not a typical film program.

In Nepal, the most compelling stories are not staged — they are already happening. This program puts you in direct contact with them. You will learn to listen before you film, build trust before you direct, and develop a voice as a documentary filmmaker grounded in ethics and place.

This program is about developing your voice as a filmmaker while learning how to tell stories that are ethical, grounded, and real.

THREE-PART JOURNEY

I

Kathmandu

Kathmandu is a city where ancient and contemporary Nepal exist simultaneously. Hindu and Buddhist traditions are woven into the architecture, the daily rhythms, and the social fabric of the valley. The city's courtyards, markets, cremation ghats, and hilltop temples are sites of continuous human activity — each one a potential subject, each with its own story already in motion. Students begin here by developing the habits of the documentary filmmaker: moving slowly, observing before filming, and learning to identify the narrative beneath the surface of a place.

II

Nagarkot

Above the Kathmandu Valley, Nagarkot's farming communities have worked the same landscape for generations. The relationship between people and land here is intimate, visible, and ongoing — seasonal cycles of planting and harvest, traditional forest management, and everyday agricultural rhythms that rarely appear in global media. Students work alongside community members to understand these narratives from the inside, developing the trust and context needed to document them with accuracy and care.

III

Bardia

Bardia National Park is one of the least-visited wilderness areas in Nepal — far from the trekking circuits of the north, it offers a different kind of encounter with the natural world. Bengal tigers, rhinoceroses, elephants, and hundreds of bird species move through grasslands, riverine forest, and floodplain. The communities along the park boundary have complex, layered relationships with the wildlife and the land — shaped by conservation policy, traditional use, and coexistence. Students spend extended time here developing the cinematic and ethical skills to capture stories that do justice to their complexity.

THE APPROACH

STAGE 01 — LISTEN

Before filming, observe and build trust. The story finds you before you find the story.

STAGE 02 — FRAME

Identify the human and environmental narrative. Find the story within the environment.

STAGE 03 — CAPTURE

Document with intention and ethics. Every frame should serve the story.

STAGE 04 — SHAPE

Build narrative structure from lived experience. Produce work driven by meaning, not imagery.

CREATIVE OUTPUT

By the end of the program, you will have produced portfolio-ready work grounded in ethical storytelling practice and shaped by lived field experience.

Documentary Film

Short documentary or film sequence

Field Documentation

Field production documentation

Visual Narrative

Visual narrative portfolio work

Portfolio Work

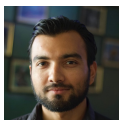
Ethically grounded, portfolio-ready material

*“The most important stories aren’t found. They’re built through attention, trust, and time.”***PROGRAM DETAILS****DURATION****14 Days****GROUP SIZE****~10 Students****ESTIMATED COST****\$6,000–\$6,400**

Includes international airfare · All accommodation and meals · Local guides and facilitation

PROGRAM LEADERSHIP**Jennifer L. Berglund****CREATIVE DIRECTION & STORYTELLING**

National Geographic Explorer, filmmaker, and science storyteller with over 15 years of field experience across documentary film, immersive media, and science communication. Jennifer guides story development, creative direction, and ethical filmmaking practice throughout the program.

**Manoj Gautam****FIELD & COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP**

Nepal-based conservation practitioner and the on-the-ground expert who makes this program possible. Manoj brings deep knowledge of local landscapes, communities, and ecological systems, along with longstanding relationships with the people whose stories this program seeks to tell — the access and trust on which the filmmaking work depends.