**DILNI ABEYRATHNE**

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# EDUCATION

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| **MA** | **University of Kentucky | College of Arts & Sciences | Department of Geography May 2025** |
|  | Geography (with New Maps Plus certificate) |
|  | GPA: 4.0 |
|  | **University of Kentucky | College of Arts & Sciences | Lewis Honors College May 2023** |
| **BA** | Environmental & Sustainability Studies |
|  | Graduated: *Summa Cum Laude* |
|  | GPA: 4.0 |
|  | **University of Kentucky | College of Arts & Sciences | Lewis Honors College May 2023** |
| **BA** | Geography (with minor in Mapping & GIS) |
|  | Graduated: *Summa Cum Laude* |
|  | GPA: 4.0 |
|  | **University of Kentucky | College of Arts & Sciences | Lewis Honors College. May 2023** |
| **BA** | International Studies |
|  | Graduated: *Summa Cum Laude* |
|  | GPA: 4.0 |
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# HONORS AND AWARDS

**Ellen Churchill Semple Award for Outstanding Undergraduate Research Paper** **2023**

Awarded for an outstanding undergraduate research paper on any theme in geography

**Gyula Pauer Cartography Award** **2023**

Awarded for an outstanding portfolio of maps demonstrating technical skill and professional maturity in cartography

## Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship (SURF) 2022

Research fellowship awarded to undergraduates undertaking independent research with a faculty mentor during the summer

## Raitz Scholarship 2022

Awarded to support academic merit and inclusivity among undergraduates in the Department of Geography

**Gamma Theta Upsilon Honor Society 2022 – present** International geographic honor society; requires being in the top 35% of the class

## Joseph R. Schwendeman Award 2021 & 2022 & 2023

Awarded for the highest GPA in the Department of Geography

**Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society 2021 – 2022** Multidisciplinary national collegiate honor society; requires being in the top 7.5 % of the class (for juniors)

**Alpha Lambda Delta Honor Society 2020 – present** National collegiate honor society that recognizes and supports first-year success; requires 3.5 GPA or higher

**Dean’s List 2019 – 2023**

Awarded for a GPA of 3.6 or higher and at having least 12 credit hours of coursework taken per semester

## Otis A. Singletary Scholarship 2019 – 2023

Highest merit-based full-tuition scholarship awarded to incoming undergraduates for the length of their degree. Highly competitive and selective with only 20-25 incoming freshman receiving the award per year

# RESEARCH & OTHER EXPERIENCES

## Mapshop July 2021 – July 2023

University of Kentucky

Role: Cartographer & Research Assistant

Advisor/supervisor: Dr. Matthew W. Wilson

* Mapped urban tree canopy cover in Lexington, KY
* Analyzed and mapped differences in the 2010 and 2020 decennial census for Kentucky
* Investigated and mapped Lexington’s current and historical urban services boundaries • Maps and data featured on project website: [https://mapshop.as.uky.edu](https://mapshop.as.uky.edu/)

## Undergraduate Research Thesis - Geography January – May 2023 University of Kentucky

Role: Student Researcher

Advisor/supervisor: Dr. Ted Schatzki

* Conducted independent study analyzing the perception of the nature as an entity or place and as related to restoration ecologies through the lens of two actors: local Appalachians and those beyond Appalachia
* Title: “Natural Realities: An Exploration of Perceptions on the Nature and Characterization of Restoration Ecologies Related to Mountaintop Removal (MTR) Mining in Eastern Kentucky”

## Undergraduate Research Thesis – International Studies January – May 2023 University of Kentucky

Role: Student Researcher

Advisor/supervisor: Dr. Diana E. King

* Conducted independent study analyzing the perception of the nature as an entity or place and as related to restoration ecologies through the lens of two actors: local Appalachians and those beyond Appalachia
* Title: “Towards a Green Solace: Collective Identity, Sustainability, and Wishes for a New World”

## Documenting Racialized Violence in Kentucky (DRVK) Internship September 2021 to May 2023 University of Kentucky

Role: Intern, Cartographer, ARC/GIS Undergraduate Director of Mapping

Advisors/supervisors: Dr. Lynn Phillips, Dr. Nikki Brown, Dr. Melanie Goan

* Made 20+ maps illustrating incidents of lynching, demographics changes in the black population, sundown towns, and night riders in Kentucky
* Maps featured on project website: [https://drvk.createuky.net](https://drvk.createuky.net/)

## Cartography Commission January 2023

Scripps College

Role: Cartographer

Commissioner: Dr. Wendy Cheng

* Designed map visualizing incidents of campus spying in various U.S. universities
* Map included in Dr. Cheng’s recent book, *Island X: Taiwanese Student Migrants, Campus Spies, and Cold War Activism*

## Cartography Commission October 2022

University of Kentucky

Role: Cartographer

Commissioner: Dr. Lydia Pelot-Hobbs

* Designed map illustrating carceral and freedom sites in New Orleans
* Map presented at the annual American Studies Association conference in the fall of 2023

## Summer Research Undergraduate Fellowship (SURF) May 2022 – August 2022 University of Kentucky

Role: Student Researcher

Advisor/supervisor: Dr. Nari Senanayake

* Conducted research on the perception of nature as connected to mountaintop removal reclamation sites and the construction of nature as a social and physical entity
* Research presented at the Summer Undergraduate Research + Creative Symposium
* Title: “Prismed Natures? Ties between the Reclamation of Mountaintop Removal Mining Sites and the Construction of Nature in Appalachia and Beyond”

## Paul Edwin Potter Internship May 2022 – July 2022

University of Kentucky, Kentucky Geological Survey

Role: Full-time Intern, Student Researcher, Cartographer Advisor/supervisor: Dr. William Haneberg

* Mapped over 800 landslides in six mountaintop removal mine sites in eastern Kentucky with a focus on environmental justice
* Research presented at the KGS Paul Edwin Potter Interns’ Showcase (poster presentation)
* Title: “From Perished Peaks to Sliding Slopes: Mapping Landslides and Environmental Justice on Select Mountaintop Removal Sites in Eastern Kentucky”

## Undergraduate Research Thesis – Environmental & Sustainability Studies January – May 2022 University of Kentucky

Role: Student Researcher

Advisor/supervisor: Dr. Betsy Beymer-Farris

* Conducted independent research on the nuances, benefits, and implications of implementing silvopasture as a method to pasturing livestock
* Research presented to a panel of Alltech employees at Alltech’s headquarters in Lexington, KY
* Title: “Sliver Amongst the Forest: A Guide to Silvopasture in Kentucky”

## Cartography Commission June – July 2021

University of Kentucky

Role: Cartographer

Commissioner: Dr. Nari Senanayake

* Redesigned map of Sri Lanka’s CKDu hotspots and agroecological zones
* Map published in: Senanayake, N. (2021) Theorising liminal states of health: A spatio-temporal analysis of undiagnosis and anticipatory diagnosis in the shadow of toxic pollution. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 00, 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.1111/tran.12504>

# AFFILIATED ORGANIZATIONS, LEADERSHIP, & SERVICE

**Kentucky Student Environmental Coalition,** Lexington, KY **August 2022– present** Position: Community member (current), Greenthumb connection

* Community organization focused on environmental sustainability activism and outreach
* Currently serving as a community member during restructuring

**Sri Lankan Student Association (SLSA),** University of Kentucky **August 2021 – present**

Position: Community member, EMS (Event Management System)/Events Officer, Undergraduate Representation

* University and community organization for those who identify as Sri Lankan and/or are interested in Sri Lanka
* Currently a community member, previously aided in events and designing an annual newsletter

**Greenthumb,** University of Kentucky **August 2020 – May 2023**

Position: Lead coordinator, Secretary, Co-Outreach Coordinator

* University student sustainability organization
* Managed restructuring and rebuilding as lead coordinator, took minutes of meetings, and aided in community outreach and recruitment

**Sustainability Future Leaders,** University of Kentucky **October 2021 – May 2023**

Position: EMS Officer

* University student sustainability organization
* Served in managing events and aiding with general organization matters

## Philharmonia Orchestra, University of Kentucky August 2019 – April 2021 Position: 2nd violinist

* University orchestra

**Sierra Club Climate Justice League,** Sierra Club **February – May 2020** Position: Student Fellow

* Program within the Sierra Club for training young climate activists

**Girls Group,** Urban Impact **September – December 2019** Position: Volunteer

* After school non-profit organization for grade school that provides academic help and enrichment
* Served as a Girls Group volunteer for evening gatherings and activities

# LANGUAGES

**Sinhala**: native language, native fluency in all areas

**English**: second language, native fluency in all areas

**Spanish & Korean:** intermediate & novice in all areas, respectively

# RESEARCH INTERESTS

**Interests:** environmental science, sustainability, human-nature relations, environmental thought and understanding, environmental justice, critical/feminist/post-humanist geographies, political ecology, connections between epistemology/ideology and environmental management

# HOBBIES & OTHER ACTIVITIES

**Reading:** avid reader of fiction, non-fiction, and academic books

**Writing:** writer of 16 years (mostly short stories but currently working on two fantasy novels) and poet (select poems published from ages 11-14)

**Music & dance:** violinist of 11 years (accolades won for first 7 years, but currently on hiatus due to injury) and casual dancer (mostly traditional Sri Lankan dances)

**Handcrafts:** sewing, embroidery, & crocheting (influences from my grandmother) and trinket crafting

**Art:** sketching and painting

**Coding:** amateur website creation using CSS and HTML, beginner in Python for ArcGIS Pro (arcpy)

**Photography:** hobbyist photographer