

Alexander Sebastian Dent

Associate Professor of Anthropology

ADDRESS

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EDUCATION

Ph.D. University of Chicago, Anthropology 2003
M.A. University of Chicago, Anthropology 1998
B.A. Princeton University, *Summa cum laude*, Anthropology 1993

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Language
Music
Intellectual property
Piracy and counterfeiting
Performance
Media and technology
Politics and culture of Latin America
The Arts

ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

2011-present	Associate Professor of Anthropology, The George Washington University (GWU)
2005-present	Assistant Professor of Anthropology, GWU
2004-2005	Earl S. Johnson Postdoctoral Fellow and Visiting Assistant Professor of Anthropology, University of Chicago
2003-2004	Visiting Assistant Professor of Anthropology, The University of Oklahoma

BOOKS

2020. *Digital Pirates: Policing Intellectual Property in Brazil* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press)

2009. *River of Tears: 'Country' Music, Memory, and Modernity in Brazil* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press)

PEER-REVIEWED ARTICLES

2019. "Ludic Authoritarianism." (*American Anthropologist*, 121:1, 193-6)
2017. "The Devil in the Deal: Notes Toward an Anthropology of Confidence" (*Anthropological Quarterly*, 90:4, 1007-1024)
2017. "Paraguayan Horses: The Entailments of Internet Policy and Law in Brazil" (*Current Anthropology*, 58, 113-122)
2016. "Policing the Unstable Materialities of Digital-Media Piracy in Brazil" (*American Ethnologist*, 43:2, 424-436)
2016. "Piracy, Counterfeiting, and Intellectual Property" (*Annual Reviews of Anthropology*, 45, 17-31)
2013. "Intellectual Property in Practice: *Filtering* Testimony at the United States Trade Representative" (*The Journal of Linguistic Anthropology*, 23:2, 48-65)
2012. "Piracy, Circulatory Legitimacy, and Neoliberal Subjectivity in Brazil" (*Cultural Anthropology*, 27:1, 28-49)
2007. "Country Brothers: Kinship and Chronotope in Brazilian Rural Public Culture" (*Anthropological Quarterly*, 80:2, 455-495)
2006. "High Ropes and Hard Times: Wilderness and the Sublime in Adventure-based Education" (*International Journal of the History of Sport*, 23:5, 856-875)
2005. "Cross-Cultural 'Countries': Covers, Conjunctions, and the Whiff of Nashville in *Música Sertaneja* (Brazilian commercial country music)" (*Popular Music and Society*, 28:2, 207-227)

FELLOWSHIPS AND GRANTS

- 2017-9 The George Washington University Dean's Research Chair Award
- 2015-18 The National Science Foundation (Principal Investigator -- US\$248,000.00 – co written with Joel Kuipers and Joshua Bell) *Cellular Connections: Repair and Expertise Among Washington DC Teens*.
- 2010-11 GWU – Institute for Public Policy Research Scholar (\$10,000.00) supports grant writing for project on piracy and intellectual property.
- 2009 Social Science Research Council – Project: *Towards a Détente on Digital Piracy* (\$3,000 – funded through the Fundação Getúlio Vargas, Rio de Janeiro)
- 2008 GWU -- University Facilitating Fund (UFF)/CCAS Dean's Award for Research

- (\$7,415.00)
- 2008 National Science Foundation Field School in Network Analysis, July 21st-26th
(tuition, room, and board)
- 2006-7 The National Film Board of Canada (CAN\$25,000.00 – co written with Charles
Laird)
- 2006 GWU – Facilitating Fund Award (US\$6,900.00)
- 2004 The University of Oklahoma Faculty Enrichment Grant (US\$1,000)
- 1998–2001 The Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada Doctoral
Fellowship (CAN\$16,000/yr. + tuition)
- 1998 U of C -- The Tinker Foundation for Research on Latin America Pre-Field
Exploration Grant (US\$1,250)
- 1996–2000 U of C Fellowship in Anthropology (US\$8000/yr. + tuition)

AWARDS

- 2015 The Trachtenberg Award for Outstanding Teaching – The George Washington
University
- 2008 Bender Award for Excellence in Teaching – The George Washington University

ETHNOGRAPHIC FIELDWORK

- 2015-present *Washington, DC* -- teenage cell phone use
- 2012 (Dec.) *Brazil: São Paulo, Campinas* -- anti-piracy NGOs
- 2011 (Oct.) *Brazil: São Paulo, Campinas* – informal worker unions, CD and DVD policing
- 2009 (July) *Brazil: São Paulo, Campinas, Foz de Iguaçu, Ciudad del Este* – piracy of CDs
and DVDs
- 2008 (Oct.) *Brazil: São Paulo and Campinas* – the informal economy and piracy of CDs and DVDs
- 1998–2006 *Brazil: São Paulo, Campinas, Itapira, Ribeirão Preto, Barretos, Americana, São
José do Rio Preto* – rural music and rodeo (20 months total)
- 2001–2002 *Chicago, IL: Center for School Improvement*
Ethnography of literacy software at two South-Side Chicago elementary schools.

OTHER PUBLICATIONS

2018 – Book Chapter – “Piracy, Cloning, and Criminal Cats: The Discomforts of Cellular Telephony in Brazil,” in Bell and Kuipers eds., *The Linguistic and Material Intimacies of Cellular Phones*. London: Routledge. 237-265.

2017 – Co-Editor (with Ian Whitmarsh) – Special Issue of *Anthropological Quarterly* – “Reciprocal Radicalizing: A Tribute to the Work of James A. Boon.” “Introduction.” 90:4.

2016 – Book Chapter – “Hey, If I Should Grab Ya’: ‘College Country’ and the Ruralization of Urban Brazil,” in *Country Boys and Redneck Women: New Essays in Gender and Country Music* (Pecknold & McCusker, eds.)

2014 – Co-Editor (with Rosana Pinheiro-Machado) – Special Section of *Anthropological Quarterly* (Social Thought and Commentary) – “The Cellularity and Continuity of Protest in Brazil.” Also, Article – “Introduction.” 87:3.

2013 - Co-Editor (with Rosana Pinheiro-Machado) – Special Issue of *Cultural Anthropology (Hot Spots)*. Also, Article -- “Protesting Democracy in Brazil.” “Introduction,” and “Paradoxes of Development: Why Now?”

2013 - Article – “Francisco’s Two Sons.” – in *The Directory of World Cinema: Brazil*, Natália Pinazza and Louis Bayman, eds. Intellect Ltd. Pp. 125-127.

2013 - Article – “Unhappy Hillbillies and Ten-Gallon Hats.” *Sounds and Colors – Brazil*. Marlon Bishop, ed. Pp. 38-41

2013 - Encyclopedia Articles (3) – “*Música caipira* (Traditional Brazilian Country Music),” “*Música Sertaneja* (Commercial Brazilian Country Music),” and “Cultural Imperialism.” N.D. *The Greenwood Encyclopedia of Latin American Music*. (Jorge Torres, editor)

2012 - Editor -- Special issue of *Anthropological Quarterly*. “Pirates and Piracy, Broadly Conceived.” Also, “Introduction: Understanding the War on Piracy, or Why We Need More Anthropology of Pirates,” 85:3, pp. 659-672.

2011 - Contributor – *Media Piracy in Emerging Economies*. SSRCPress.

2010 - Article -- “Flouting the Elmo Necessity and Denying the Local Roots of Interpretation: ‘Anthropology’s’ Quarrel with ACTA and Authoritarian IP Regimes.” Program on Information Justice and Intellectual Property Research Paper Series, American University Washington College of Law. Pp. 1-15.

2010 - Editor -- Special issue of *Anthropological Quarterly*. “Anthropological Perspectives on Knowledge in the Digital Age.” Also, “Editor’s Note,” 83:1, pp. 5-6.

IN PRESS

2020 – Book Chapter – “Drinking Lime Juice to Throw Up, and the Right Way to Beat an Old Lady: Policing Punk in Late Dictatorial Brazil (1978–1982),” in Pardue and Winks eds., *Living (II) Legacies in Brazil*. London: Routledge.

2020 – Book Chapter – “Problems of Early Punk Practice in Brazil – 1978-82.” In Rodríguez-Ulloa, Olga; Rodrigo Quijano and Shane Greene, eds. *Punk! Las Américas* Bristol: Intellect.

COURSES TAUGHT

Language in Culture & Society (introductory undergraduate – enrollment 130)
Language, Culture, and Cognition (advanced undergraduate – enrollment 35)
Linguistic Anthropology Proseminar (graduate – enrollment 20)
Media, Technology, and Performance (advanced undergraduate & graduate – enrollment 35)
Culture, Intellectual Property, and the Informal Economy (graduate – enrollment 15)
Cultures of Central & South America (advanced undergraduate – enrollment 70)
Piracy, Copying and Culture (freshman seminar – enrollment 15)
The Anthropology of the Cell Phone (freshman seminar – enrollment 20)
The Anthropology of Sound (advanced undergraduate – enrollment 20)

LANGUAGES

French	-- spoken and read (fluent)
Portuguese	-- spoken and read (fluent)
Spanish	-- spoken and read (functional)

PAPERS AT CONFERENCES AND WORKSHOPS

Nov 2018	“Breakdown in Brazilian Punk: The Generative Potential of Intra-Group Violence.” American Anthropological Association Meetings. San Jose, CA.
Nov 2017	“The Dialogics of Songwriting.” American Anthropological Association Annual Meetings. Washington DC.
May 2016	“The Dynamics of Piracy in Brazil.” Latin American Studies Meetings, New York, NY.
Feb 2015	“The Materiality of Digital Piracy in Brazil.” Mellon Institute for Research in the Humanities. Madison, WI.
Nov 2014	“When Confidence Fails: ‘Government Shutdowns’ in 2009 and 2013.” American Anthropological Association Meetings. Washington DC.
Nov 2013	“Cellular Phone ‘Piracy’ As Interruption in Brazil.” American Anthropological Association Meetings. Chicago, IL.
Feb 2013	“Pirating and Cloning Cellular Phones in Brazil.” Smithsonian Conference – Unseen Connections in the Ecologies of Cell Phones.” Washington, DC.
Dec 2012	“What are the Effects of Current Piracy Policing in Brazil? Methodological Questions.” Global Congress on Intellectual Property and the Public Interest. Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. (Also, panel organizer.)
Nov 2012	“Media Piracy’s Virtual and Material Entailments.” American Anthropological Association panel “Mediated Boundaries: Language and Ethnography in the Internet Age.” San Francisco, CA.

- Sept 2012 "Hey! If I Should Grab Ya: 21st Century Transformations of Brazilian 'Country.'" Where's the "World" In Popular Music? Bloomington, IN.
- May 2012 "The Medium, the Writer, and His Wife: Violating Intellectual Property from Beyond the Veil." Latin American Studies Association Meetings. San Francisco, CA.
- Nov 2011 "Piracy's Urgencies: Policing Intellectual Property in Brazil" American Anthropological Association panel "Illicit Traffic" Montreal, Canada.
- Oct 2011 "O Conceito Antropológico da 'Cultura,' e o Policiamento da Propriedade Intelectual: Casos de "Sesame Street," e Música Sertaneja" (translation -- The Anthropological "Culture" Concept, and Strict Intellectual Property Policing: Cases from Sesame Street and Música Sertaneja) Grupo de Pesquisa em Políticas Públicas Para o Acesso à Informação (Study Group in the Public Policy of Access to Information). The University of São Paulo, Brazil.
- Nov 2010 "Animating the Eight Great Seconds of the Brazilian 'Peon Party'" American Anthropological Association panel "Oratorical Practice" New Orleans, LA.
- Dec 2009 "Informality's Critical Intimacies in São Paulo, Brazil" American Anthropological Association panel, "Informal Economies of Music" Philadelphia, PA.
- July 2009 "Policiando propriedade intelectual: o discurso quase religioso de 'pirataria.'" (translation -- Policing Intellectual Property: The Quasi-Religious Discourses of 'Piracy.')
- Grupo de Pesquisa em Políticas Públicas Para o Acesso à Informação (Study Group in the Public Policy of Access to Information). The University of São Paulo, Brazil.
- May 2009 "NGOs in the Policing of Brazilian IP" Conference -- "Towards a Détente on Digital Piracy" Social Sciences Research Council, Rio de Janeiro.
- April 2009 "Informality's Critical Intimacies in São Paulo, Brazil" Conference on "Digital Economies and the Politics of Circulation." Columbia University, New York City.
- Nov 2006 "Hick Dialectics: The Musicality of Sentiment in Brazilian Rural Songs" American Anthropological Association Meetings. San José, CA.
- March 2006 "*Música Sertaneja* and the Production of Gender in Brazil" Latin American Studies Association Meetings. Puerto Rico.
- Nov 2005 "*Música Sertaneja* and Blackness in Brazil" American Anthropological Association Meetings, Washington, DC.
- October 2005 "Brazilian Rodeo and the Country Cosmopolitan" Georgetown University Brazilian Studies Group. Washington, DC.
- April 2005 "High Ropes and Hard Times: Nature as the Bottom Line in Adventure Based Education's Social Model" Conference on "Muscular Christianity." Chicago, Illinois.
- April 2004 "*Música Caipira* and the Production of Locality in Brazil" The Puterbaugh Conference. University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma.
- Mar 2004 "*Música Sertaneja* (country music) and Gender in Brazil" Women's Studies Workshop.

- University of Oklahoma. Norman, Oklahoma.
- Jan 2004 “Pirates and Freedom Fighters: Approaches to the Informal Musical Economy in Brazil” Brazil-US Colloquium on Communication Studies. University of Texas. Austin, Texas.
- Oct 2003 “Country Covers: Translating Nashville into Brazilian *Música Sertaneja* (‘country music’)” Language in Culture – Interdisciplinary Seminar Hosted by the Department of Anthropology, University of Oklahoma. Norman, OK.
- Oct 2003 “Pure Emotion: The Whiff of Nashville in Brazilian *Música Sertaneja*” Society for Ethnomusicology Meetings. Miami, FL.
- Nov 2002 “Hillbilly Historians: Localizing Discourses in the Performance of Brazilian Rural Musical Genres” American Anthropological Association Meetings. New Orleans, LA,
- May 2002 “Papa Cornélio: Foundation Myths, Independent Production, and Redemptive/Destructive Technologies” University of Chicago/University of Michigan Linguistics Conference: New Medias, New Publics, Chicago, IL.
- Mar 2002 “Singing Hillbillies: Counter-Globalizing Discourses in the History of Brazilian Rural Musical Genres” Central States Anthropological Society, East Lansing, MI.
- Mar–April 2001 “Country/City and International/Local relations in the Creation Story of Brazilian ‘Country Music’ (1929),” EthNoise Ethnomusicology Workshop, and Workshop for the Anthropology of Latin America, University of Chicago, Chicago, IL.
- May 1998 “Singing the State: Villa-Lobos and Brazilian Populism, 1930-45” Conference on the Anthropology of Education, University of Chicago, Chicago, IL.
- April 1998 “The Struggle Against Persistence: Heitor Villa-Lobos’s Musical Education, 1930-1945” Workshop for the Anthropology of Latin America, University of Chicago, Chicago IL.

INVITED LECTURES

- May 2018 “Music and Hybridity in Brazil.” Brazilian Studies in the United States: The Road Ahead. New Haven: Yale.
- Oct 2015 “The Devil in the Deal.” Brown University Department of Anthropology. (also presented at UC Santa Cruz department of anthropology, May 2016).
- Oct 2013 “Notes Toward an Anthropology of Confidence.” University of Virginia Department of Anthropology, Charlottesville, VA.
- Sep 2013 “Hey, If I Should Grab Ya”: College Country and Rural Cosmopolitanism in Brazil.” Brown University Department of Music, Providence, RI.
- Nov 2012 “Writing from the Other Side: Intellectual Property and Brazilian Spiritism.” Columbia University Brazil Seminar, New York City, NY.
- Nov 2012 “Policing Intellectual Property in Brazil.” City University of New York, Graduate Center, New York City, NY.
- Dec 2011 Gilbert Chase Lecture in Ethnomusicology -- “Traditional ‘Country’ Music (*Música*

- Caipira*) and the Production of Locality in Brazil” Tulane University Department of Music, New Orleans, LA.
- May 2011 “The Urgency of Circulatory Legitimacy: Policing Intellectual Property in Brazil.” Cornell University Department of Anthropology. Ithaca, NY.
- April 2010 “River of Tears.” University of Maryland, Departments of Theater & Dance and Music, College Park, MD – same lecture delivered to the class of Bryan McCann (History), Georgetown University.
- Oct 2006 “Brazilian Rodeo and the Country Cosmopolitan.” University of Maryland, Race and Ethnicity in Brazil, College Park, MD.
- April 2006 “Brazilian Country Music.” Brazilian Cultural Institute of Washington DC.
- Oct 2005 “Notes on Brazilian Rodeo.” Brazilian Studies Group, Georgetown University, Washington DC.
- Feb 2005 “*Música Caipira* and the Production of Locality in Brazil.” Program in Ethnomusicology, Department of Music. Columbia University, New York, NY.
- Dec 2004 “Racial Ideologies in Brazilian Country Music.” History and the Performance of Culture Anthropology Lecture Series, Bard College, NY

OTHER PRESENTATIONS

- Nov 2018 *Roundtable organizer* for “The Anthology of Breakdown & Repair” (with Joel Kuipers and Josh Bell). American Anthropological Association Annual Meetings. San Jose, CA.
- Nov 2014 *Panel organizer* for “Toward an Anthropology of Confidence.” American Anthropological Association Annual Meetings, Washington, DC.
- Dec 2009 *Panel Co-Organizer.* “Informal Economies of Music.” American Anthropological Association Annual Meetings, Philadelphia, PA
- Sept 2008 *Presentation* -- “What is Culture?” to the Senior Architecture Studio of Ball State University, The George Washington University
- Jan 2008 *Respondent.* Paper by Bryan McCann (History, Georgetown University), presented to The George Washington University Seminar in Urban Studies.
- 2007 – 2010 *Seminar Co-Organizer,* The George Washington University’s Dean’s seminar “Performance and the Mediation of Social Life.” (with Joel Kuipers and Siobhan Rigg)
- March 2006 *Panel Co-Organizer,* “(Un)popular Brazilian Music: Alternative Visions of Brazilian Musicality.” Co-Organized with Paul Sneed. Latin American Studies Association Meetings. Puerto Rico.
- Nov 2005 *Panel Co-Organizer,* “Ethnographies of Global Country: Country & Western and Blackness.” Co-organized with Jerry Wever. American Anthropological Association Meetings. Washington, DC.

- Feb 2004 *Television.* “Murder They Wrote.” Interviewed for one-hour show on murder in country music, by Country Music Television (CMT). Anne Fentress – Producer. Nashville, TN.
- Oct 2004 *Discussant.* The Margaret Mead Traveling Ethnographic Film Festival. The Museum of Natural History, University of Oklahoma. Norman, OK.
- Nov 2002 *Panel Co-Organizer.* “Legacies in Performance: Historical Ritual and Cultural Commodification.” Co-organized with Jesse Shipley. American Anthropological Association Meetings. Claudio Lomnitz – Discussant. New Orleans, LA.
- Oct 2002 *Poster-Presentation.* “Using Design Research Techniques to Evaluate Commercial Software: What Can We Learn?” Co-authored with Diana Joseph. International Conference for the Learning Sciences. Seattle, WA.
- Jun 2001 *Panel-Discussant.* “Building Communities that Value Diversity,” Princeton University, Alumni Conferences. Princeton, NJ.
- Nov 2000 *Organized concert/lecture, introduced and translated for Paulo Freire.* “Paulo Freire: Viola Music of Brazil,” EthNoise and the Center for Latin American Studies. University of Chicago, IL.
- Sept 1998 *Respondent.* “Death by Folksong,” paper by Professor Martin Stokes. Conference on *Anthropology’s Mediated Representations*, University of Chicago, Chicago, IL.

UNIVERSITY SERVICE -- GWU

- 2019-20. Chair – Job Search Committee -- Anthropology Department & Elliott School – Anthropology of the Environment, The George Washington University
- 2017-pr. Undergraduate Advisor, The George Washington University
- 2013-17 Director of Graduate Studies – PhD Program in Anthropology, The George Washington University
- 2011-2. Chair – Job Search Committee -- Anthropology Department – Open Search, The George Washington University
2010. Anthropology Department Coordinator for Transition to G-PAC, The George Washington University
- 2009-pr. Dean’s General Curriculum Requirements Committee, The George Washington University
- 2008-pr. Undergraduate Advisor, The George Washington University
- 2006-pr. Integrating Essay Committee, Anthropology Department, The George Washington University
- 2006-pr. Cotlow Fund Committee, Anthropology Department, The George Washington University
- 2006-pr. Chair of Web Committee, Anthropology Department, The George Washington University (led a recent redesign of the departmental site)

- 2006-2010 Co-Organizer of University Seminar – “Performance and the mediation of social life” – with Joel Kuipers (anthropology) and Siobhan Rigg – The George Washington University
- 2006-7 Co-organizer, with Barbara Miller, of the Margaret Mead Traveling Film Festival, The George Washington University
- 2006-7 Job Search Committee – Anthropology Department/ Elliott School Assistant Professor Search in the Anthropology of the Middle East, The George Washington University
- 2006-7 Job Search Committee – American Studies Department Assistant Professor Search in Latino Studies, The George Washington University
- 2005-7 Anthropology Departmental Library Representative (executed complete journal review in 2006).
- 2005-6 Job Search Committee – Anthropology Department Assistant Professor Search in the Evolution of Mind, Brain, and Cognition, The George Washington University

SERVICE TO THE DISCIPLINE

- 2014-7 National Science Foundation Dissertation Grants Panel – Cultural Anthropology Alexandria, VA
- 2006-pr. Associate Editor of journal *Anthropological Quarterly*, The Institute for Ethnographic Research, The George Washington University
- 2009-pr. Reader for *American Anthropologist*, *The Journal of Linguistic Anthropology*, *Popular Music and Society*, *American Ethnologist*, Wesleyan University Press, University of Chicago Press, The University of California Press, and *Ethnomusicology*

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

American Anthropological Association
Latin American Studies Association
Society for Ethnomusicology (SEMA)