

CURRICULUM VITAE
Matthew Abel, PhD
Visiting Assistant Professor
Department of Anthropology
Kenyon College
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EDUCATION

2018-2023 Ph.D. Washington University in St. Louis (Sociocultural Anthropology;
certificate in Latin American Studies)
2016-18 M.A. Washington University in St. Louis (Sociocultural Anthropology)
2012-16 B.A. College of William & Mary (Anthropology; minor Env. Policy)
2015 Hertford College at Oxford University (Visiting Student)

ACADEMIC AFFILIATIONS

2023-present Visiting Assistant Professor, Dept. of Anthropology, Kenyon College
2019-2020 Visiting Fulbright Fellow, Amazonian Institute of Family
Farming (INEAF), Federal University of Pará, Brazil
2019 Visiting Graduate Researcher, Center for the Analysis of Socio-Ecological
Landscapes (CASEL), Indiana University, Bloomington, IN

RESEARCH & TEACHING INTERESTS

Political ecology, anthropology of development, environmental anthropology/sociology,
ethnohistory, food studies, political economy, agrarian studies; Brazil, Amazon

Dissertation Title: “The Forest and the Factory: Debt, Development, and Community in
the Amazon Delta.”

Committee: Bret Gustafson (co-advisor), Glenn Stone (co-advisor), John Bowen,
Talia Dan-Cohen, and Javier García Liendo.

RESEARCH GRANTS

NSF, Cultural Anthropology, EAGER, “Pilot Comparative Research on Adoption of
Digital Agricultural Technologies” (collaborator, PI: Glenn Stone), multi-sited study of
impact of new digital technology on agricultural systems. 2019-present.

NSF, Cultural Anthropology, Doctoral Dissertation Research Improvement Grant,
“Amazon developments: the impacts of public policy on rural social organization in
Brazil’s Amazon estuary.” 2019-2021. (PI). Research for this project was approved by
the Brazilian National Research Council (CNPq), Brazilian National Research Ethics
Commission (CONEP), and Washington University’s Institutional Review Board.

Fulbright Scholar IIE, State Department and US-Brazil Fulbright Commission, “Amazon developments: the impacts of public policy on rural social organization.” 2019-2020. (PI)
Divided Cities Summer Research Grant, Washington University – Mellon Foundation, “Arms-length urbanization in the Amazonian metropolis.” 2019 (declined).
Beinecke Fellowship, Sperry Fund, national award for graduate studies in the social sciences/humanities; selected nationally as one of 20 recipients. 2016.

PUBLICATIONS (* PEER-REVIEWED)

2023. Review of **The Tropical Silk Road: The Future of China in South America**. Edited by Paul Amar, Lisa Rofel, María Amelia Viteri, Consuelo Fernández-Salvador, and Fernando Brancoli. **NACLA Report on the Americas** 55(1).

*2022. “The struggle for health: medical brokerage and the power of care in Brazil’s Amazon estuary.” **Cultural Anthropology** 37(3).

*2022. “Merchants of the north: infrastructure and indebtedness along Brazil’s Amazon estuary.” **Economic Anthropology** 9 (2).

2021. “Soy Power” Review of **Seeds of Power** by Amalia Leguizamón and **The Government of Beans** by Kregg Hetherington. **Nature Plants** 7 (12): 1533-1535.

2021. “Transnational grain trade threatens Brazil’s Amazon.” **NACLA Report on the Americas** 53 (1).

Português: “Comércio internacional de grãos ameaça a Amazônia brasileira.”
NACLA Online [Link].

*2020. (Brent Kaup, Matthew Abel, and Amanda Sikirica). “Individualized environments, individual cures: an examination of Lyme disease activism in Virginia.” **Environment and Planning E: Nature and Space** 4 (2).

*2018. (Andrew Flachs and Matthew Abel). “An emerging geography of the agrarian question: spatial analysis as a tool for identifying the new American agrarianism.” **Rural Sociology** 84 (2).

In Press*, expected 2024. (Richard Pace, John Ben Soileau, Matthew Abel, and Cynthia Pace-Cisneros). “Struggles and Setbacks to Sustainability.” In **Chronicling Amazon Town, University of Florida Press, eds. Richard Pace and Helena Lima.

In Press*, expected 2024. (Richard Pace and Matthew Abel). “Social Conflict and the Rise of Gurupá’s Social Movements.” In **Chronicling Amazon Town, University of Florida Press, eds. Richard Pace and Helena Lima.

In Press*, expected 2024. (Richard Pace, Pedro Alves Veira, and Matthew Abel). “Rainforest Guardians and Sustainable Development.” In **Chronicling Amazon Town, University of Florida Press, eds. Richard Pace and Helena Lima.

FIELDWORK

2016-2023, Doctoral Dissertation Research, “Amazon developments: the impacts of development policy on rural social organization in Brazil’s Amazon estuary,” ethnographic study of the cumulative impacts of development policy on social and

political organization of riverine farming communities, supported by US-Brazil Fulbright Commission and National Science Foundation DDRIG.

2013-2016, Field Research, “Urban Farming, Shifting Concrete, and Economies of Difference,” ethnographic research on alternative agrifood movements, gentrification, and spatialization of race and inequality in Washington, DC

2014-2015, Field Research, “Community Gardens and the Private Life of Public Space,” multi-sited ethnographic and archival study of two community gardens initiatives

2013-2016, Research Assistant, “The Making of Lyme Disease” (PI: Dr. Brent Kaup, environmental sociology), College of William & Mary, research on Virginia Lyme disease activism and environmental politics

2013, Field Research, “Working in the Field: An Exploration of Farming, Ethnography, and Values,” ethnographic study of farmer guest-worker program

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Visiting Assistant Professor, Kenyon College

Fall 2023 Intro to Cultural Anthropology (ANTH 113)

Fall 2023 Economic Anthropology (ANTH 291)

Spring 2024 Agrarian Justice (ANTH 291)

Spring 2023 Intro to Cultural Anthropology (ANTH 113)

Instructor of Record, Department of Anthropology, Washington University in St. Louis

Summer 2023 Intro to Cultural Anthropology (ANTH 160): 9 students

Summer 2022 Culture and Environment (ANTH 361): 10 students

Spring 2022 Economies as Cultural Systems (ANTH 3391/ECON 2391): 26 students

Summer 2019 Intro to Cultural Anthropology (ANTH 160): 18 students

Assistant in Instruction, Department of Anthropology, Washington University in St. Louis

Spring 2021 (online distance learning), Spring 2018, Intro to Cultural Anthropology (ANTH 160), Prof. Childs, Thomas, and Murray, 339-423 students

Fall 2020 (online distance learning), Fall 2017, Economies as Cultural Systems (ANTH 3391/ECON 2391): Prof. Dan-Cohen, 64-71 students

Fall 2018, Culture and Environment (ANTH 361): Prof. Stone 160 students

INVITED TALKS

2023. University of Brasília. Power, Industry, and Agriculture along the lower Tocantins. Department of Geography. August.

2022. Colgate University. Patron-client relationships in the east Amazonian public health system. Survey of Brazilian History. September.

2022. College of William & Mary. Transnational grain trading and the Amazonian aviamento. Economic Anthropology. September.

2022. Washington University in St. Louis. Açaí, Forest Farming, and the Politics of Superfoods. Agri-Food Workshop. April.
2022. Washington University in St. Louis. Counterfeit Paradise or Cultural Parkland?: Extraction, Work, and Power in the Amazon Delta. Friday Archaeology, Dept. of Anthropology. February.
2019. Federal University of Pará (UFPA). Agriculture, Population, and Markets in the Açaí Economy. Amazonian Institute of Family Farming. The Agrarian Question. September.
2019. Indiana University. Amazon developments. Weekly Discussion Series at Center for the Analysis of Socio-Ecological Landscapes. April.
2017. State University of Pará (UEPA). Alternative agriculture movements in the US: an agrarian question? Agrarian Geography. August.

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

- 2023 Society for the Anthropology of Lowland South America, Letícia, Colombia. “The migrating sibling pair in Amazonian riverine society.” Session Title – Siblinghood in Lowland South America. July.
- 2022 Portuguese Anthropological Association Bi-Annual Conference. Évora, Portugal. “From Saints to Seminars: Political Publics and Religious Organization in Brazil’s Amazon estuary.” Session Titles – Community, Religion, and Politics. September.
- 2022 Latin American Studies Association. San Francisco, CA. Session Chair and Co-Organizer with Robyn Yzeman and Bea Addis. Discussant: Gustavo Oliveira. “Brazil’s Northern Arc: Transnational Grain Trading and the Forest’s New Fate.” Session Title – Shifting Political Ecologies of Development in the Greater Amazon. May.
- 2022 Society for Applied Anthropology/Society of Ethnobiology Joint Conference. Salt Lake City, UT. “The Forest and the Factory: Extraction, Work, and Power in the Amazon Delta.” Session Title – Cultivating the Wild. March.
- 2021 (with Marcos Cardoso) Society for the Anthropology of Lowland South America, Charlottesville, VA. “The Pluriactivity and Persistence of the Aviamento: Subsistence, Debt, and Exchange along the lower Tocantins.” May.
- 2021 Society for Economic Anthropology and Culture & Agriculture Joint Conference, St. Louis, MO. “Merchants of the north: transnational grain trading in the Amazon estuary.” March.
- 2019 Sixth Equatorial Anthropology Meeting, Federal University of Bahia, Salvador, Bahia, Brazil. “Desenvolvimentos amazônicos: família, comunidade, e conflito no Baixo Tocantins, Pará / Amazonian developments: family, community, and conflict along the Lower Tocantins, Pará.” Session Title – Notions in dispute: “family” and “community”, ethnographic problems in multiple social contexts. December.
- 2019 American Ethnological Society, St. Louis, MO. “In the shadow of extraction: participatory development and the politics of distribution in rural Amazonia.” March.
- 2019 Dimensions of Political Ecology Conference, Lexington, KY. “Development policy and social differentiation in Brazil’s Amazon estuary.” Session Title – Intersections of

intervention: on development, difference, dispossession, and discourse. Lexington, KY. February.

2018 American Anthropological Association Annual Conference, San José, CA. “‘Ocupa ou não ocupa’: political crisis and the double bind.” Session Title – Violence and Insecurity in Latin America. November.

2017 Dimensions of Political Ecology Conference, University of Kentucky, Lexington, KY. “Unpacking our publics: urban agriculture and the institutional contexts of critical engagement.” February.

AWARDS & FELLOWSHIPS

Robert W. Sussman Award, Department of Anthropology, Washington University in St. Louis, 2021-2022, for outstanding research/publication demonstrating high distinction

Kathleen Cook Graduate Student Prize, Department of Anthropology, Washington University in St. Louis, 2020-2021, for excellence in graduate student scholarship, teaching and community-building

Samuel Hughes Scholarship, Washington University in St. Louis, 2016-present.

Highest Honors, Department of Anthropology, College of William & Mary, 2016.

Phi Beta Kappa, College of William & Mary, 2015.

Class of 1940 Scholarship, College of William & Mary, competitive merit-based award full tuition, room, and board to one W&M student in graduating class, 2014-2016.

PEER REVIEWER

Anthropologica (Canadian Anthropological Society)

Boletim do Museu Paraense Emílio Goeldi—Ciências Humanas

Journal of Global Catholicism

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

Co-founder, Latin American Social Theory Reading Group, Department of Anthropology at Washington University, 2020-2022.

Ethnobiology Journal Club, Missouri Botanical Garden, St. Louis, MO 2016-present.

Society of the Anthropology of Lowland South America (SALSA)

Society for Cultural Anthropology (SCA)

Society for Economic Anthropology (SEA)

Latin American Studies Association (LASA)

Association of Brazilian Anthropologists (ABA, waiting full affiliation)

LANGUAGES

English (native), Portuguese (fluent), Spanish (reading and comprehension)