

## SARA DICKEY

*Department of Anthropology • 7500 College Station • Bowdoin College • Brunswick, Maine 04011  
Phone 207-725-3652 • FAX 207-725-3023 • Email [sdickey@bowdoin.edu](mailto:sdickey@bowdoin.edu)  
Faculty webpage <http://www.bowdoin.edu/faculty/s/dickey/>*

### EDUCATION

**Ph.D.** Anthropology, University of California-San Diego, 1988

**M.A.** Anthropology, University of California-San Diego, 1984

**B.A.** Anthropology, with Honors, University of Washington, 1982

### TEACHING

#### **Bowdoin College:**

2001-present Professor of Anthropology  
1994-2001 Associate Professor of Anthropology  
1988-1994 Assistant Professor of Anthropology

### ADMINISTRATION

#### **Bowdoin College:**

2014-2018 Faculty Liaison for Advising

#### **South India Term Abroad Program (SITA):**

2013-2018 Chair of the Board  
2004 Academic Director  
1991-1992 Faculty Director

### HONORS AND AWARDS

2018-2021 National Science Foundation Senior Research Award  
2007 - 2018 Bowdoin College Faculty Leave Supplement (3 awards)  
2007 - 2018 Bowdoin College Faculty Research Award (7 awards)  
2008-2009 American Institute of Indian Studies Senior Fellowship  
2005, 2004, 2001 Bowdoin College Faculty Research and Travel Assistance grant  
2001, 1992, 1990 Bowdoin College Faculty Research Fund grant  
2000 National Endowment for the Humanities Research Fellowship  
1999-2000 American Institute of Indian Studies Senior Fellowship  
1999-2000 Bowdoin College Freeman Foundation Grant for research in Asia

1996 Spring	Institute for Research on Women Visiting Scholar, Rutgers University
1995-96	South Asia Regional Studies Visiting Scholar, University of Pennsylvania
1995-96	Advanced Research Grant, Joint Committee on South Asia of the Social Science Research Council and American Council of Learned Societies
1995-98	Bowdoin College Kenan Foundation Faculty Development Grant
1993 Summer	Fulbright-Hays Group Project Abroad, Sri Lanka
1992, 1991	Bowdoin College Course Development grant
1991	Bowdoin College Faculty Development grant
1985-86	American Institute of Indian Studies Junior Fellowship
1985	Fulbright-I.I.E. Dissertation Fellowship (declined)
1984-85	National Resource Fellowship, Tamil
1982-87	National Science Foundation Graduate Fellowship (deferred 1984-86)

## PUBLICATIONS

### Books

Living Class in Urban India. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press; Delhi: Permanent Black (2016)  
*2018 Ananda Kentish Coomaraswamy Book Prize Honorable Mention from the Association of Asian Studies*

South Asian Cinemas: Widening the Lens, Sara Dickey and Rajinder Dudrah, eds. London: Routledge (2011)

Home and Hegemony: Domestic Service and Identity Politics in South and Southeast Asia, Kathleen M. Adams and Sara Dickey, eds. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press (2000)

Cinema and the Urban Poor in South India. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (1993)

### Journal Special Issue

South Asian Cinemas, guest-edited special issue of South Asian Popular Culture 8, 3 (2010)

## Articles and Book Chapters

- “Conundrums of Caste, History, and Truth: Hindu Nadar Identities in Urban South India,” in Victor C. de Munck and Elisa J. Sobo, eds., The Anthropology of Power, Agency, and Morality: The Enduring Legacy of F. G. Bailey, pp. 130-146. Manchester University Press (2022)
- “Decent,” South Asia, special section on “English Keywords” (forthcoming)
- “Cinematic Cultures,” in Sanjay Srivastava, Yasmeen Arif, and Janaki Abraham, eds., Critical Themes in Indian Sociology, pp. 375-389. New Delhi: Sage Publications (2019)
- “Apprehensions: On Gaining Recognition as Middle-Class in Madurai,” Contributions to Indian Sociology (n.s.), 47, 2: 217-243 (2013)
- “The Pleasures and Anxieties of Being in the Middle: Emerging Middle Class Identities in Urban South India,” Modern Asian Studies 46, 3: 559-599 (2012)
- “Widening the Lens on South Asian Cinemas,” Sara Dickey and Rajinder Dudrah, in Sara Dickey and Rajinder Dudrah, eds., South Asian Cinemas: Widening the Lens, pp. 1-7. London: Routledge (2011)
- “South Asian Cinemas: Widening the Lens,” Sara Dickey and Rajinder Dudrah, South Asian Popular Culture 8, 3: 207-212 (2010)
- “Anjali’s Alliance: Class Mobility in Urban India,” in Diane P. Mines and Sarah Lamb, eds., Everyday Life in South Asia, Second Edition, pp. 192-205. Bloomington: Indiana University Press (2010)
- “Fantasy, Escape, and Other Mixed Delights: What Have Film Analysts Seen in Popular Indian Cinema?” Projections: Journal of Movies and Mind 3, 2: 1-19 (2009)
- “The Nurturing Hero: Changing Images of MGR,” in Selvaraj Velayutham, ed., Tamil Cinema: The Cultural Politics of India's Other Film Industry. London: RoutledgeCurzon (2008)
- “Still ‘One Man in a Thousand’,” in David Blamey and Robert E. D’Souza, eds., Living Pictures: Perspectives on the Film Poster in India, pp. 69-78. London: Open Editions (2005)
- “Anjali’s Prospects: Class Mobility in Urban India,” in Diane P. Mines and Sarah Lamb, eds., Everyday Life in South Asia, Indiana University Press (2002)
- “Opposing Faces: Film Star Fan Clubs and the Construction of Class Identity in South India,” in Christopher Pinney and Rachel Dwyer, eds., Pleasure and the Nation: The

History, Politics and Consumption of Popular Culture in India. Delhi: Oxford University Press (2001)

“Introduction: Homes, Hegemonies, Identities and Politics,” Sara Dickey and Kathleen M. Adams, in Kathleen M. Adams and Sara Dickey, eds., Home and Hegemony: Domestic Service and Identity Politics in South and Southeast Asia. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press (2000)

“Mutual Exclusions: Domestic Workers and Employers on Labor, Class and Character in South India,” in Kathleen M. Adams and Sara Dickey, eds., Home and Hegemony: Domestic Service and Identity Politics in South and Southeast Asia. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press (2000)

“Permeable Homes: Domestic Service, Household Space and the Vulnerability of Class Boundaries in Urban India,” American Ethnologist 27, 2: 462-489 (2000)

- Reprinted in revised form in Martha Ann Selby and Indira Vishwanathan Peterson, eds., Tamil Geographies, SUNY Press (2008)

“Anthropology and its Contributions to Studies of Mass Media,” International Social Science Journal XLIX, 3: 413-427 (1997)

- Incorporated by Michael Herzfeld in Anthropology, Malden: Blackwell, UNESCO (2001)

“Consuming Utopia: Filmwatching in Tamil Nadu,” in Carol A. Breckenridge, ed., Consuming Modernity: Public Culture in a South Asian World. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press (1995)

“The Politics of Adulation: Cinema and the Production of Politicians in South India,” The Journal of Asian Studies 52, 2: 340-372 (1993)

“Accommodation and Resistance: Expression of Working-Class Values through Tamil Cinema,” Wide Angle (Special Issue on Asian Film) 11, 3: 26-32 (1989)

“Dowry in Complex Societies,” Stevan Harrell and Sara Dickey, Ethnology 24, 2: 105-120 (1985)

### **Book and Video Reviews**

“Review of Isabelle Clark-Decès, The Right Spouse: Preferential Marriages in Tamil Nadu,” Journal of Asian Studies 78, 3: 703-704 (2020)

“Review of Anand Pandian, Reel World: An Anthropology of Creation,” American Ethnologist 44, 1: 144-145 (2017)

“Review of Susan Seizer, Stigmas of the Stage,” American Anthropologist 110, 1: 68-69 (2008)

“Review of Melissa Butcher, Transnational Television, Cultural Identity, and Change: When STAR Came to India,” Journal of Asian Studies 64, 3: 774-776 (2005)

“Review of Karin Kapadia, Siva and Her Sisters: Gender, Caste and Class in South India,” Journal of Asian Studies 56, 2: 528-529 (1997)

“Review of Richard Breyer, dir. and prod., Kasthuri,” Journal of Asian Studies, 54, 3: 915-916 (1995)

“Review of Marguerite S. Robinson, Local Politics: The Law of the Fishes,” Pacific Affairs 64, 2: 294 (1991)

### **Work in Progress**

“Scarce Grooms, Unproductive Women, Sanskritizing Castes, and Conspicuous Consumers: Problems with the Literature on Dowry in South India” (under revise and resubmit with Modern Asian Studies)

“‘All Are Welcome, Bring No Gifts’: Class and the Public Wedding Feast”

“‘Hypergamy’ and the Problem of Brides in South Asian Scholarship”

### **SELECTED PAPERS AND PRESENTATIONS**

“Ravels of Class, Caste, and History: Urban Hindu Nadar Identities in South India.” Invited lecture for the Urban Studies Lab’s “Citiesque” seminar series at Indraprastha Institute of Information Technology-Delhi, January 19, 2022.

“*Namma Maanavarkazhukkaaka Anthropology Patikkiratuivil Enna Laapam?*” (“What Are the Benefits for All Our Students in Studying Anthropology?”) Invited lecture for the Tamil Department, V.V.V. Women’s College, Virudhunagar, India, April 2020

“Class, Family History, and Education in India and the U.S.” Invited lecture for the Adi Dravidar Government Girls Hostel, Madurai, India, March 2019

“Changing Norms of Gender and Family in Madurai, 1985-2019.” Invited lecture for the International Studies Center, Lady Doak College, Madurai, India, February 2019

“The Cultural Politics of Possession Rituals, Caste, and Class.” Paper presented at South Asia Conference, University of Wisconsin-Madison, October 2017

- “The Convoluted History of Tamil Cinema Scholarship.” Invited lecture for Lady Doak College Cinema Studies Group, Lady Doak College, Madurai, India, July 2017
- “Registers of Tamil and English as Identity Markers.” Invited lecture for SCILET (Study Centre for Indian Literature in English and Translation), American College, Madurai, India, July 2017
- “Class and the Public Wedding Feast.” Invited paper presented at Tamil Nadu Studies Workshop, University of Chicago, May 2014
- “‘All Are Welcome, Bring No Gifts’: Class and the Public Wedding Feast.” Invited paper presented at Global South Asia Conference, New York University, February 2014
- “Discourses of Realism and Authenticity in Tamil Cinema.” Paper presented at South Asian Studies Meetings, University of Wisconsin-Madison, October 2010
- “MGR Story-Making in the Public Sphere: The Afterlife of an Indian Film Star/Politician.” Lecture presented at Centre for Screen Studies Screen Symposium, University of Manchester, April 2010
- “Negotiating Visibility: On Being Seen as Middle-Class in Madurai.” Paper presented at American Anthropological Association Annual Meetings, Philadelphia, December 2009
- “*MGRin Pukazhukku Kaaranam Enna?*” (“What Are the Reasons for MGR’s Fame?”) Invited presentation to Itaya Kani 101<sup>st</sup> Volume Celebration, Chennai, March 2009
- “The Powers of Tamil Cinema: Questioning Received Wisdom.” Presentation to Uzhagathaya Tamil Talkies Awards Film Seminar, Chennai, March 2009
- “MGR Stories.” Presentation to MIDAS Narrative Study Group, Cambridge, MA, September 2006
- “The Pleasures and Anxieties of Being in the Middle: Emerging Middle Class Identities in Urban South India.” Paper presented to University of Iowa, Colloquium series on Lived Experience, Mediated Representations and Rapid Economic Growth: South and East Asia, February 2004
- “Narratives of Class in Urban India.” Presentation to MIDAS Narrative Study Group, Cambridge, MA, May 2002
- “Class, Caste, and Takuti: The Relevance of ‘Class’ in Urban South India.” Paper presented to University of Chicago South Asia Seminar, February 2002

- “Anjali’s Prospects: Family, Gender, and Class Mobility in Urban India.” Paper presented to University of California, Santa Barbara, Women, Culture and Development Colloquium, May 2001
- “The Moral Center of Class: Narratives of Labor, Wealth, and Character in Urban South India.” Paper presented to Harvard University Department of Anthropology Colloquium, February 1998
- “Permeable Homes: Domestic Service, Household Space and the Vulnerability of Class Boundaries in Urban India.” Paper presented to University of Michigan South and Southeast Asia Seminar, Ann Arbor, MI, April 1997; and at Institute for Research on Women Visiting Scholar Colloquium, Rutgers University, March 1996
- “Mutual Exclusions: Domestic Workers' and Employers' Narratives on Labor, Class and Character in South India.” Paper presented to New York University Department of Anthropology, March 1997; to the MIDAS Narrative Study Group, Cambridge, MA, December 1996; and at Conference on South Asia, University of Wisconsin at Madison, October 1996
- “Opposing Faces: Film Star Fan Clubs and the Construction of Class Identity in South India.” Paper presented at American Anthropological Association Annual Meetings, San Francisco, November 1996
- “Intimate Distances: Negotiating Differential Forms of Women's Power in Domestic Service Relationships.” Presentation to the Department of Anthropology, Rutgers University, April 1996

## **COURSES TAUGHT**

Contemporary Issues in Anthropology (senior seminar)  
 Cultural Performances (advanced seminar)  
 Introduction to Cultural Anthropology  
 History of Anthropological Theory  
 Ethnographic Research  
 Class and Culture  
 People Like Us: Class, Identity, and Inequality (first-year writing seminar)  
 Everyday Life in India and Pakistan  
 Modernity in South Asia  
 Activist Voices in India  
 Bollywood and Beyond: Indian Cinemas and Society  
 Women, Power and Identity in India  
 Political Identities in South Asia  
 Maine Social Research Projects  
 Culture through Performance  
 Psychological Anthropology





## COMMITTEE WORK

Working Group on Fostering Academic Honesty and Adjudicating Dishonesty, 2017-2018  
 Roux Center for the Environment Program Committee, 2016-2018 (appointed by Dean for Academic Affairs)  
 Recording Committee, 2014-2018  
 Faculty Appeals and Grievances Committee, 2013-14  
 Judicial Board, 2011-13  
 Gay and Lesbian Studies Committee, 2001-02, 2009-10, 2011-12  
 Bowdoin College Art Museum Director Search Committee, 2012  
 Research Oversight Committee, 2006-07, 2009-2011  
 Asian Studies Committee, 1988-90, 1993-95, 1996-99, 2001-2011  
 Film Studies Working Group, 2008-09  
 Oversight Committee on the Status of Women at Bowdoin (Chair), 2005-06  
 Bias Incident Group, 2005-06  
 Faculty Resources Committee, 2005  
 Planning Group, 2002-03 (appointed by President)  
 Sexual Misconduct Board, 1998-99  
 Committee on Appointments, Promotions and Tenure, 1994-95 (elected)  
 Theater Arts Committee, 1993-94  
 Faculty Research Committee, 1992-94  
 Mellon Minority Undergraduate Fellowship Committee, 1993  
 Faculty Affairs Committee, 1990-91 (elected)  
 Study Away Committee, 1990-91  
 Coalition of Interdisciplinary Studies, 1990-91  
 Committee on African-American Studies, 1989-90

## OTHER COLLEGE SERVICE

Re-appointment, tenure, and/or promotion committee member for Asian Studies, Africana Studies, Dance and Theater, Sociology, and Cinema Studies faculty  
 South India Term Abroad (SITA) Program Board Member, 1989-2018