

PROMOTION RECOMMENDATION  
The University of Michigan  
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts

Matthew D. Lassiter, associate professor of history, with tenure, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, and associate professor of architecture, without tenure, A. Alfred Taubman College of Architecture and Urban Planning, is recommended for promotion to professor of history, with tenure, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, and professor of architecture, without tenure, A. Alfred Taubman College of Architecture and Urban Planning.

Academic Degrees:

Ph.D.	1999	University of Virginia
M.A.	1994	University of Virginia
B.A.	1992	Furman University

Professional Record:

2006 – present	Associate Professor, Department of History and Program in Urban and Regional Planning, University of Michigan
2000 – 2006	Assistant Professor, Department of History, University of Michigan
1998 – 2000	Visiting Instructor and Assistant Professor, Department of History, Bowdoin College

Summary of Evaluation:

Teaching – Professor Lassiter is an effective and inspiring instructor, who is a master pedagogue with exceptional teaching ability. His success has been repeatedly recognized: he received the Golden Apple award (2004), UM Undergraduate Teaching Award (2004-2005), Class of 1923 Memorial Teaching Award (2006), and appointment as an Arthur F. Thurnau Professor (2015) for his outstanding contributions to undergraduate education. Since receiving tenure in 2006, Professor Lassiter has taught more than 2,000 students in 28 courses, seventeen at the undergraduate and eleven at the graduate level. Professor Lassiter is an active, highly regarded, and nationally recognized mentor and teacher of an entire generation of Ph.D. students in the field of 20<sup>th</sup>-century U.S. history, many of whom have been placed in tenure-track positions.

Research – Professor Lassiter is a leading scholar of U.S. political and metropolitan history, whose latest research encompasses the history of crime and drugs along with the rise of the American carceral state. He is the author of one prize-winning monograph, The Silent Majority: Suburban Politics in the Sunbelt South (Princeton University Press, 2006), co-editor of The Myth of Southern Exceptionalism (Oxford, 2009), and author of the forthcoming monograph, The Suburban Crisis: Crime, Drugs, and White Middle-Class America (under contract, Princeton University Press). He has also published numerous peer-reviewed articles in leading journals and book chapters in field-defining essay collections.

Recent and Significant Publications:

The Suburban Crisis: Crime, Drugs, and White Middle-Class America, Princeton University Press, under contract.

“Pushers, victims, and the lost innocence of white suburbia: California’s war on narcotics during the 1950s,” *Journal of Urban History*, special section “Urban American and the Carceral State,” 2015, pp. 787-807.

“Impossible criminals: The suburban imperatives of America’s war on drugs,” *Journal of American History*, special issue “Historians and the Carceral State,” 2015, pp. 126-140.

“De jure/de facto segregation: The long shadow of a national myth,” in *The Myth of Southern Exceptionalism*, 2009, pp. 25-48.

Service – Professor Lassiter has held several leadership positions in the Department of History since receiving tenure, including director of graduate studies and director of undergraduate studies (2013-2015); he has also served as a member of the Undergraduate Working Group (2010-2011), the Eisenberg Institute Steering Committee, and the departmental Executive Committee. Professor Lassiter’s university service includes member of the Rackham School of Graduate Studies Executive Board (2011-2014) and of the Rackham School Dean Search Advisory Committee (2014-2015).

#### External Reviewers:

##### Reviewer (A)

“[Prof. Lassiter has] been extraordinarily active in scholarly exchanges, twice participating in *JAH* (*Journal of American History*) and *JUH* (*Journal of Urban History*) roundtables, twice editing *JUH* forums, and running a very successful workshop on metropolitan history. He’s also taken his arguments beyond the academy with pieces in *Dissent* and *The New York Times* and a number of appearances on public radio stations. What I find most impressive, though, is the impact his arguments are having on other scholars’ work. ... He’s clearly influencing current discussions, a striking achievement for any historian, much less someone just now reaching the mid-point of his career.”

##### Reviewer (B)

“Lassiter’s intellectual leadership, established by his bracingly original, strongly argued scholarship that is deeply researched in myriad archival sources, and his institutional and professional leadership as evidenced by the success of the metropolitan history program at Michigan and Matt’s pivotal role in a number of professional fora and activities, testify to his status as one of the very best historians of any generation working in the field of U.S. political history. ... Finally, Lassiter has done nearly as much to shape the field of modern US history through his professional leadership and mentoring as through his original research. Through the metropolitan history initiative, he has established the University of Michigan as a leading site for scholarship in recent U.S. history.”

##### Reviewer (C)

“Few historians of the period, no matter what their subfields, would not know Lassiter’s work handily. ... It’s a first class and highly deserving dossier. The intellectual stimulation that I receive from Lassiter’s work is a rare and beautiful thing. ... The preponderance of his work has that same seismic quality: while everyone is talking about the earthquakes, Lassiter’s deep research has the capacity to account for hidden history of the shifting tectonic plates of American politics. ... As for Lassiter’s ‘scholarly visibility,’ I would rank him among the top of our generation of scholars. ... He does not simply serve on boards and as a reviewer, he is at the

center of the field shaping, defining, reviewing, organizing, and pushing the intellectual future of not just his subfields but of twentieth century US history most broadly considered.”

Reviewer (D)

“I regard Lassiter as among the four or five smartest and most insightful U.S. historians I’ve ever encountered. This would include historians of all ranks who work in the period after Reconstruction. ... In twenty years in the profession, I have met very few people who look at historical questions with greater sharpness of insight, breadth and depth of understanding, and greater creative energy and focus than Lassiter does.”

Reviewer (E)

“Lassiter is a major scholar in the field of twentieth century US history, particularly, the social and political history of the United States since 1945. He established himself as a significant contributor to the field with the publication of his important first book, *The Rise of the Silent Majority* (2005). ... With the publication of the book [The Suburban Crisis] Lassiter will once again make an outstanding contribution to the field of US history since 1945. ... The book chapters are dense, deeply researched, and full of insight on the shifts and transformations of drug policy in the United States in the last third of the twentieth century. They combine social and political history in a sophisticated and masterful manner. I came away very excited by Lassiter’s findings and I am eager to see the book in print.”

Summary of Recommendation:

Matthew Lassiter is widely regarded as one of the leading historians of twentieth-century urban/metropolitan history: he is a highly productive scholar whose books and articles have defined key questions in the field. He has won multiple awards for his undergraduate teaching and is a highly successful mentor of graduate students. He has held several leadership positions in the Department of History and in the wider university community. The Executive Committee of the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts and I recommend that Associate Professor Matthew D. Lassiter be promoted to professor of history, with tenure, in the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts.



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Andrew D. Martin, Dean  
Professor of Political Science and Statistics  
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts



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Robert L. Fishman, Interim Dean  
A. Alfred Taubman College of  
Architecture and Urban Planning

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