

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

Matthew D. Lassiter, assistant professor of history, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, is recommended for promotion to associate professor of history, with tenure, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts.

Academic Degrees:

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

Professional Record:

2000 – present	Assistant Professor, Department of History, University of Michigan
1998 – 2000	Visiting Instructor and Assistant Professor of History, Bowdoin College

Summary of Evaluations:

Teaching – Professor Lassiter has taught an array of courses on American history, including chronological surveys and thematic treatments of the twentieth century. He attends to a wide range of social and cultural phenomena, including urban history, film and music. He has taught the departmental survey of twentieth century United States and has offered thematic treatments of the period after 1945 and of the phenomenon of suburbanization. He is a hard taskmaster and assigns great amounts of reading, but convinces his students that completing it is not only worthwhile but essential. Student evaluation forms bespeak his ability to communicate clearly and to inspire enthusiasm and even rave reviews.

Research – Both the quantity and the quality of Professor Lassiter’s scholarship are impressive for an assistant professor. His *The Silent Majority: Suburban Politics in the Sunbelt South* is a landmark book that will have a decisive impact on scholarship in American social, cultural, and most notably, political history. Imaginatively crafted and persuasively argued, his book will make a signal contribution to the subfields of civil rights history and southern history. Professor Lassiter has also published four articles, two review essays, and two book reviews, and has co-edited an important collection of essays on southern “moderates” and their impact on the civil rights movement.

Recent and Significant Publications:

The Silent Majority: Suburban Politics in the Sunbelt South, Princeton University Press, 2006.

“Socioeconomic integration in the suburbs: From reactionary populism to class fairness in metropolitan Charlotte,” in *The New Suburban History*, K. M. Kruse and T. J. Sugrue (eds.), University of Chicago Press, 2006.

“Does the Supreme Court matter? Civil rights and the inherent politicization of constitutional law,” *Michigan Law Review*, May 2005, pp. 101-122.

“The suburban origins of ‘color-blind’ conservatism: Middle-class consciousness in the Charlotte busing crisis,” *Journal of Urban History*, May 2004, pp 549-582.

Service – Professor Lassiter has performed an impressive array of service during his time at Michigan. He has made invaluable contributions to undergraduate and graduate education and has done important service for the University and his profession. The amount of reviewing and editorial work that he has done at this stage in his career is notable and amply suggests that Professor Lassiter is well on his way to becoming an authoritative voice in his field.

External Reviews:

Reviewer (A)

“Lassiter’s book, *The Silent Majority*, will be a major contribution to this new political history. ... Lassiter has written widely and powerfully. He loves to engage important historical disputes, whether it be his brilliant review essay on Michael Klarman’s book, *From Jim Crow to Civil Rights*, or his various articles and edited book on massive resistance.”

Reviewer (B)

“Lassiter’s book will quickly find a place on ‘must read’ lists for graduate students seeking to become proficient in 20th century political history, urban/suburban history, and the history of the American South. ... Lassiter’s book is distinguished by its ambition, its scope, its deep research, and its acute analysis of the role of the South in shaping modern American conservatism.”

Reviewer (C)

“It is this focus on suburban southerners and their growing political clout (very much in evidence today in the South) that is new and refreshing about Matt’s work. But, the implication is national in that he demonstrates the convergence of southern and national policies.”

Reviewer (D)

“...he is a rare talent, worth a good deal of effort to retain. ...from my reading of *The Silent Majority*, I expect it to become the leading work in its field, and even to reshape the fields with which it is connected.”

Reviewer (E)

“...his forthcoming book, *The Silent Majority*, is a landmark study of local politics, which focuses on the issue of school desegregation in two metropolitan areas [in] order to make a larger argument about what Richard Sennett and Jonathan Cobb once called ‘the hidden injuries of class’ that have shaped social and political life in the United States from the 1950s to the present.”

Reviewer (F)

“The book is extremely well written, full of phrases that I wish I’d written, and quite well observed, bursting with small insights...”

Reviewer (G)

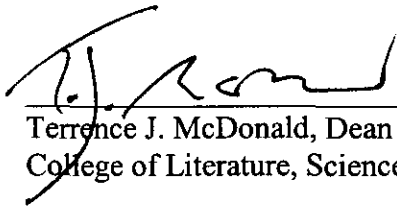
“... Lassiter has positioned himself to become one of the newest and most articulate voices on the subject of suburban politics, middle-class consciousness, and ‘color-blind’ conservatism... He is a productive and creative historian who is poised to become an influential scholar, and I recommend that you do all you can to retain him at your university.”

Reviewer (H)

“In its wide range, meticulous scholarship, attention to broad historical forces, and engaging prose, Professor Lassiter’s writing constitutes an extremely impressive body of work.... .*The Silent Majority: Suburban Politics in the Sunbelt South* is a remarkably ambitious and accomplished book, especially for someone at the beginning of his scholarly career.”

Summary of Recommendation:

Professor Lassiter is a remarkable scholar, an inspiring teacher, and a highly valued colleague. The Executive Committee of the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts and I recommend that Assistant Professor Matthew D. Lassiter be promoted to the rank of associate professor of history, with tenure.



Terrence J. McDonald, Dean
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts

May 2006