

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

Damon I. Salesa, assistant professor of history and assistant professor of American culture, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, is recommended for promotion to associate professor of history, with tenure, and associate professor of American culture, with tenure, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts.

Academic Degrees:

D.Phil.	2000	University of Oxford
M.A.	1997	University of Auckland
B.A.	1993	University of Auckland

Professional Record:

2002 – present	Assistant Professor, Department of History and Program in American Culture, University of Michigan
2001	Research Fellow, National Library of New Zealand

Summary of Evaluation:

Teaching – Professor Salesa has compiled an outstanding teaching record. He has clearly demonstrated his excellence in the classroom and shows every sign of continued growth in both curricular range and pedagogical technique. Faculty in both units noted his importance to multiple dialogues about curriculum. His courses are imaginatively designed, wide-ranging in their coverage of an enormous geographical arena, and multidisciplinary. The variety of courses he has developed is all the more impressive considering that he was one of the first hires in the subfield of Pacific Islander history and has essentially constructed the curriculum from scratch. Student evaluations are very high and their comments are very complimentary.

Research – Professor Salesa is expert in the histories of New Zealand, Samoa, and the Pacific in general. His contributions in the area of historical methodology are original and important. His groundbreaking book, *Racial Crossings*, forthcoming from Oxford University Press, tells a fascinating and unexpected story of forced racial amalgamation in British colonial experience. In addition, he has published one book chapter and five articles, three of which reach forward to a second monograph in progress. He has also published *Discovering Our Ancestors* and *Hawaiki*, two histories in a high school textbook series that has been translated into seven languages.

Recent and Significant Publications:

Racial Crossings: Victorian Britain, Colonial New Zealand, and the Problem of the Races, Historical Monographs Series, Oxford University Press, forthcoming.

“Samoa’s half-castes and some frontiers of comparison,” in *Haunted by Empire: Geographies of Intimacy in North American History*, A. Stoler (ed.), 2006, Duke University Press, pp. 71-93.

“Korero: A reflection on the work of Judith Binney,” in *Korero*, a special edition of the *New Zealand Journal of History*, 38(2), 2004, pp. 272-98.

“‘The power of the physician’: Doctors and the dying Maori in early New Zealand,” *Health and History*, 4(1), 2001, pp. 13-40.

Service – Professor Salesa has performed important work in a variety of venues at Michigan and beyond. He has served on the Curriculum, Fellowships, Honors, and Salary and Lecturer Review Committees. His participation in these efforts has been dedicated, serious, and reliable across the board. He has been an advisor to academic institutions in New Zealand as well as their Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs. His two histories in a high school textbook series are almost certainly unprecedented.

External Reviews:

Reviewer (A)

“...[Salesa’s] book...will be hailed I am sure as a major contribution to British, colonial/imperial, New Zealand, indigenous and transnational histories. ... It’s authoritatively written, insightful and elegant, persuasive and powerful. It draws on an enormously impressive and diverse set of archival collections and print culture sources, tapping historiographical veins and theoretical repertoires with an equal measure of skill and eloquence...”

Reviewer (B)

“His lucidity, his intellectual generosity, his scholarly commitment to certain perspectives, his insistence on the importance of wide reading and comparative thinking, his dual focus on the local and the imperial, his interest in grounded theory informing empirical material, his respect for the capacity to juxtapose different narratives and different realities – all of these came through strongly in this piece and convinced me that he has the makings of a very good historian.”

Reviewer (C)

“*Racial Crossings* is an excellent book, addressing in an original and compelling way a subject around which there is a growing and important literature. ...his study moves back and forth between metropole and colony, giving *almost* equal weight to both venues as sources and initiators of ideas and policy as well as the interactions between them.”

Reviewer (D)

“For a first book in particular, this is a tour de force: impressive, intelligent, meticulous, and convincing. It is, quite simply, a very important piece of work. ... I regard Salesa as among the very best scholars of his generation... I have no doubt that, given him impressive publication record and the sheer intelligence of the contributions he has made, he would be tenurable at any institution in the country.”

Reviewer (E)

“...[I] am tremendously impressed by the rigorous and exhaustive character of Salesa’s archival investigations, and more importantly, by the nuance and intelligence of his interpretation and narrative. ...I would have little hesitation in identifying Salesa as the most capable and promising Pacific historian of his cohort...”

Reviewer (F)


"...Salesa's focus on island cultures within the Pacific provides an unusual but tremendously revealing site from which to interrogate racial formations from a comparative perspective... Salesa's work provides thoughtful and original resolutions of many of the tensions that have trapped imperial historiography in tired and unproductive polemics."

Reviewer (G)

"What is most arresting about Salesa's approach to the analysis of this taxonomic category is his juxtaposition of western efforts at definition and indigenous appropriations and transformations of their central terms. ...I foresee a long and exciting career for Professor Salesa. I thus offer my strongest recommendations for his tenure and promotion to Associate Professor at the University of Michigan."

Summary of Recommendation:

Professor Salesa presents an impressive record of scholarship, teaching, and service. The Executive Committee of the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts and I recommend that Assistant Professor Damon I. Salesa be promoted to the rank of associate professor of history, with tenure, and associate professor of American culture, with tenure, in the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts.



Terrence J. McDonald
Arthur F. Thurnau Professor,
Professor of History, and Dean
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts

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