

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

Miranda D. Brown, assistant professor of Asian languages and cultures, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, is recommended for promotion to associate professor of Asian languages and cultures, with tenure, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts.

Academic Degrees:

Ph.D.	2002	University of California, Berkeley
M.A.	1999	University of California, Berkeley
B.A.	1996	University of California, Berkeley

Professional Record:

2002 – present      Assistant Professor, Department of Asian Languages and Cultures,  
University of Michigan

Summary of Evaluation:

Teaching – Professor Brown is a serious and dedicated instructor. She has served on eight doctoral mentoring and dissertation committees inside and outside the department, supervised one dissertation, and directed two honors theses. Her classroom teaching has been wide-ranging and has contributed significantly to the curriculum. She has developed a number of new courses on Chinese history and Chinese science, including two large undergraduate lecture courses. She has also taught our undergraduate capstone seminar on critical theory in Asian studies and served as concentration advisor for undergraduates whose research focus was China.

Research – Professor Brown’s research focuses on early Chinese history, where she has established herself as one of the leading scholars of her field. Her recent monograph, *The Politics of Mourning in Early China*, is a path-breaking study that challenges the father-emperor analogy that heretofore has been taken as foundational in the study of imperial Chinese political culture. She has published four articles, three in refereed journals and one in a prominent Chinese journal, and one book chapter in a peer-reviewed scholarly publication. She wrote several chapters in a widely used textbook on Chinese civilization and is currently at work on her second monograph project exploring the epistemology of medical practice and discourse in Han China (206 BCE–220 CE).

Recent and Significant Publications:

“Han Steles: How to elicit what they have to tell us,” in *Re-Envisioning Culture: Ideals, Practices, and Problems of the ‘Han Dynasty We Family Shrines,’* C. Y. Liu (ed.), Princeton: Princeton Art Museum, forthcoming 2008.

*The Politics of Mourning in Early China*, State University of New York Press, 2007.

“Neither ‘primitive’ nor ‘others,’ but somehow not quite like ‘us’: The fortunes of psychic unity and essentialism in Chinese studies,” *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, 49(2), 2006, pp. 219-252.

*A Brief History of Chinese Civilization*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, with C. Schirokauer, Thompson/ Wadsworth, 2005.

Service – Professor Brown’s service contributions have more than met the expectations of one at her rank. She has twice been elected to the departmental Executive Committee and has been a member of the Executive Committee of the Center for Chinese Studies. She served on a particularly difficult search for a position in the Korean humanities as well as on the departmental Curriculum Committee and Graduate Program Committee. Lastly, Professor Brown has reviewed submissions for several prestigious journals.

External Reviews:

Reviewer (A)

“Professor Brown had the benefit of being the student of some of the very best teachers of early China... And she learned to use her resources well. Her command of the classical texts is exemplary, and...she is able to bring real imagination to her reading of them. Indeed, she is of a strong critical turn of mind, and in her research is quite ready to challenge prevailing opinions... She is clearly a consistently productive scholar with enormous promise.”

Reviewer (B)

“*Politics* is an exemplary work of translation and addresses unjustly neglected social historical questions...”

Reviewer (C)

“I strongly recommend Professor Brown: I believe that she is a credit to your University and I have found her a most valuable colleague.”

Reviewer (D)

“I believe that by focusing on mourning practices she has found a very original and fruitful approach to Chinese (and Asian) history... I consider her a very intelligent and well-informed scholar, asking important questions and giving well-founded answers.”

Reviewer (E)

“...[Brown] does an excellent job that makes many important contributions to the understanding of filial piety and politics in early China, esp. the Han period. ... As one of the few scholars who focus on the study of Han China, esp. the Eastern Han history, with a profound theoretical training, Miranda Brown can read Chinese texts fluently and precisely, can identify significant topics, above all, she is able to connect the Chinese case to the general issue of the understanding of cultural diversity...”

Reviewer (F)

“That she deserves tenure seems to me beyond any doubt. ... I was impressed with her work from the first, and I have no hesitation in saying that she is now one of the leading figures in this country – and to my mind the leading figure [of her generation] – in the study of the Han dynasty, and a key member of a small group of superb scholars [of their generation]... whose work is redefining the broader field of early China studies here and abroad.”

Reviewer (G)

“Brown’s collection of essays shows her range, her versatility, and her revisionist streak. ...[she] has displayed the breadth of interests and coolness in confronting controversies that we typically associate with senior scholars. As she publishes in both Chinese and English, on topics spanning several disciplines, her work is becoming known to an extremely wide readership.”

Reviewer (H)

“Working in the nexus of social, intellectual and political history, Brown is becoming one of the few scholars whose activities will determine the field of ‘Early China’ for years to come. ...she appears to be unrivalled. Her breadth, maturity, originality and thoroughness promise her a great academic future.”

Reviewer (I)

“Overall, I consider Miranda Brown to be one of the very best scholars of her generation for the study of early Chinese history. In both quality and quantity, Miranda Brown’s scholarship is clearly at the forefront of her generation. ... Her book and her articles are highly significant and extremely exciting works that are forcing a re-thinking of many of our long-held assumptions concerning early Chinese history and culture.”

Reviewer (J)

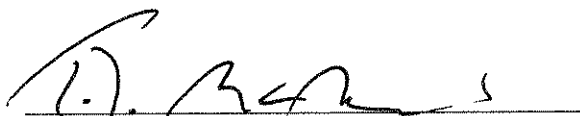
“Professor Brown’s published work shows a solid mastery of diverse early Chinese sources, a keen understanding of the methodological and theoretical parameters of her work, and an ability to pose and answer timely, original research questions.”

Reviewer (K)

“...Prof. Brown has a rare intellectual dynamism, and both a broad and deep command of her field. Her interpretations are reliably original. ... Intellectually she is already a mature scholar, active enough in scholarship that she is well on her way to...[becoming one of] the leading historians of early imperial China. She has my unqualified recommendation for promotion to tenure.”

Summary of Recommendation:

Professor Brown is a highly productive and innovative scholar whose work has had a significant impact on her field. She is a dedicated teacher and an active citizen. The Executive Committee of the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts and I recommend that Assistant Professor Miranda D. Brown be promoted to the rank of associate professor of Asian languages and cultures, 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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