

PROMOTION RECOMMENDATION  
The University of Michigan-Dearborn  
College of Arts, Sciences, and Letters  
Department of Social Sciences

Approved by the Regents  
May 14, 2009

A. Trevor Thrall, assistant professor of political science, Department of Social Sciences, College of Arts, Sciences, and Letters, is recommended for promotion to associate professor of political science, with tenure, Department of Social Sciences, College of Arts, Sciences, and Letters.

Academic Degrees

Ph.D. 1996	Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, MA
B.A. 1989	University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI

Professional Record

2003 - present	Assistant Professor of Political Science, Department of Social Sciences, University of Michigan-Dearborn
1998 - 2003	Director of Research, Michigan Virtual University, Lansing, MI
1995 - 1998	Visiting Assistant Professor, Department of Communication Studies, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor

Teaching: Professor Thrall is rated excellent in teaching. He brings tremendous talent, creativity, and energy to the classroom. His teaching evaluations have been consistently excellent, reflecting students' appreciation of his breadth of knowledge, his engaging teaching style, and his enthusiasm for the topics he covers. He has shown an impressive ability to reach a wide range of students, from first-year undergraduates through graduate students. It is clear from teaching evaluations that students in the Masters in public policy (MPP) program, in particular, see Professor Thrall as a "go-to" instructor. However, introductory American Government students also give him high marks for making classroom material interesting and accessible. His effectiveness in the classroom is amply supported by his teaching evaluations. His ability to engage an audience has also been on display at his presentations as part of the Social Science Colloquium series as well as at campus faculty roundtables.

Professor Thrall plays a vital role in the political science discipline, not only because he is such an effective classroom instructor, but because his teaching covers so many key areas in the curriculum. His teaching load includes political communication, public policy, terrorism and national security, and research methods. His creativity and industry as a teacher is evident in the new courses he has developed at UM-Dearborn: an online version of Introduction to American Government; Science Technology and Public Policy; Ethics and Public Policy; and Terrorism and National Security Policy. His efforts in course development have been especially important to the growth of the MPP program.

Research: Professor Thrall is rated excellent in his research. He has assembled an impressive body of published works. His research straddles several subfields within political science, focusing on the interplay of media coverage, public opinion, and policy formation. His investigations of the influences on public support for war not only make useful scholarly contributions, but also speak to important matters of current political debate. Professor Thrall's work is especially valuable in pointing out the central role of citizen predispositions and values for understanding how the public responds to politicians' claims and appeals in support of

military action. In showing that support for war is shaped by a “marketplace of *values*” rather than a “marketplace of *ideas*,” he provides an important alternative framework for evaluating media coverage of war and its impact on public support. This line of research has been well-received, as evidenced by the comments of external reviewers. His work is reaching key professional audiences through peer-reviewed publications such as *Security Studies*, and through a forthcoming edited collection assembled by Professor Thrall. His research is methodologically sound and draws on several approaches, including content analysis and survey research. His work is highly engaging, in large part because he is eager to challenge prevailing wisdom. Professor Thrall is tremendously organized and disciplined in his research, and has several interesting projects in progress. It is clear that there will be consistent, high quality, scholarly output from him in the coming years.

#### Recent and Significant Publications:

- Thrall, A. Trevor, Cramer, Jane K., Editors, *American Foreign Policy and the Politics of Fear: Threat Inflation since 9/11*. Routledge. (Contracted May 2008; forthcoming April 24, 2009).
- Thrall, A. Trevor, Cramer, Jane K., “Threat Inflation: Theories and Debates,” forthcoming in *American Foreign Policy and the Politics of Fear: Threat Inflation since 9/11* (Routledge 2009).
- Thrall, A. Trevor, “Framing Iraq: Threat Inflation in the Marketplace of Values,” forthcoming in *American Foreign Policy and the Politics of Fear: Threat Inflation since 9/11* (Routledge 2009).
- Thrall, A. Trevor, Lollo-Fakhreddine, J., Donnely, L., Herrin, W., Paquette, Z., Wenglinski, R., Wyatt, A., “Star Power: Celebrity Advocacy and the Evolution of the Public Sphere,” *International Journal of Press/Politics*, 13:4, 2008, pp. 362-385.
- Thrall, A. Trevor, “A Bear in the Woods? Threat Framing and the Marketplace of Values,” *Security Studies* 16:3, 2007, pp. 462-488.
- Patrick, Brian A., Thrall, A. Trevor, “Beyond Hegemony: Bush Media Strategy and the War in Iraq,” *Mass Communication and Society*, 10:1, 2007, pp. 95-118.
- Thrall, A. Trevor, “The Myth of the Outside Strategy,” *Political Communication*, 23:4, 2006, pp. 407-420.
- Patrick, Brian A., Thrall, A. Trevor, “Winning the Peace: Paradox and Propaganda after the Invasion of Iraq,” *Global Media Journal*, 2:4, 2004, pp. 1-29.

Service: Professor Thrall’s service is rated excellent. He has contributed in varied and important ways to the Social Sciences Department and the campus. Most notably, he has assumed leadership of the MPP program, and is overseeing the integration of the MPP program with the Masters in public administration program, which has recently moved into the Social Sciences Department. In addition, Professor Thrall serves on the Faculty Senate as well as the CASL Distance Learning Committee. At the department level, he has been actively involved in several faculty search committees, and is responsible for coordinating the three-year curriculum plan for political science. He has also helped to revive the moribund student Political Science Club, which recently attracted a hundred students to a presidential debate watch, and drew an estimated two hundred students to their election eve watch. Professor Thrall’s efforts are playing a key role in the institutional development of UM-Dearborn, and they are directly enriching student life on campus. Overall, he has not simply offered his time and energy to campus service, but has shown valuable leadership.

External Reviewers:

Reviewer A: [His work is] “theoretically sound and addressing important issues of politics that have been inadequately investigated by political scientists...His work is of high quality, he has demonstrated a capacity to expand beyond his core research program, and he has a clear research agenda going forward. These all bode well for his future in the discipline.”

Reviewer B: “Thrall has an excellent research program based on impressive scholarship. His work is being read by his peers and I believe the book that will be published next year will be an important contribution to our understanding of presidents and the call to war.”

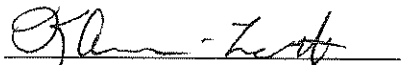
Reviewer C: “Professor Thrall is contributing significantly to the media-foreign policy/security literature, and his recent work is expanding to consider media and social movements. His strength is in his ability to challenge prevailing assumptions and to conceptualize alternative ways of thinking about topics. The evolution of his research suggests a promising trajectory.”

Reviewer D: “A ‘Bear in the Woods?’ is excellent. It asks an important question and answers it carefully and persuasively. I would also think that Thrall should be a strong candidate anywhere.”

Reviewer E: “Thrall’s articles are good, in two cases superb. A Bear in the Woods is wonderfully written, well-reasoned single-authored piece. Thrall is a sophisticated writer and a critical thinker who seems to enjoy being contrarian.”

Summary of Recommendation:

Professor Thrall is a gifted teacher, a thoughtful and respected scholar, and an eager team player in the day-to-day functioning of the political science discipline. He is a fine example of how the teacher-scholar model should operate. We are very pleased to recommend, with strong support of the College of Arts, Sciences, and Letters Executive Committee, A. Trevor Thrall for promotion to associate professor of political science, with tenure, Department of Social Sciences, College of Arts, Sciences, and Letters.



Kathryn Anderson-Levitt

Dean

College of Arts, Sciences, and Letters



Daniel Little

Chancellor

University of Michigan-Dearborn

May 2009