

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

Jennifer A. Wenzel, assistant professor of English language and literature, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, is recommended for promotion to associate professor of English language and literature, with tenure, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts.

Academic Degrees:

Ph.D.	1998	University of Texas at Austin
M.A.	1992	Indiana University
B.A.	1990	Austin College

Professional Record:

2003 – present	Assistant Professor, Department of English Language and Literature, University of Michigan
1999 – 2003	Assistant Professor, Department of English, Stonehill College
1998 – 1999	Visiting faculty, Department of English, University of Montana

Summary of Evaluation:

Teaching – Professor Wenzel has distinguished herself as an innovative and rigorous instructor. She has developed a strong repertoire of undergraduate and graduate courses that are essential to the curriculum of the Department of English Language and Literature. She has also taught an undergraduate course for the Center for Afroamerican and African Studies (CAAS). She has successfully introduced students to a range of texts and theoretical insights which aid their comprehension of global cultural formations and sociopolitical struggles. Students give her high marks and very positive feedback.

Research – Professor Wenzel has emerged as an important scholar of postcolonial studies generally and of African literatures in particular. The forthcoming publication of *Bulletproof: Afterlives of Anticolonial Prophecy in South Africa and Beyond* will doubtlessly further cement her status as one of the most impressive emerging scholars in her fields. It is a strikingly rich, theoretically deft examination of the workings of myth, history, and memory in response to a mid-century tragedy that took place in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa. The essays that have been culled from it, along with a set of powerful essays that emerged from her dissertation and her current work-in-progress on world literature, environmentalism, and globalization, have positioned her as a major new voice in postcolonial literary criticism and theory generally, and in the study of South African literature in particular.

Recent and Significant Publications:

*Bulletproof: Afterlives of Anticolonial Prophecy in South Africa and Beyond*, The University of Chicago Press, forthcoming 2009.

“The problem of metaphor: Tropic logic in cattle killing prophecies and their afterlives.” *African Studies*, 67(2), 2008, pp. 143-158.

“Refashioning sub-national pasts for post-national futures: The Xhosa cattle killing in recent South African literature,” in *History, Nationalism, and the (Re)Construction of Nations*, S. Carvalho and F. Gemenne (eds.), Palgrave, 2008.

“Petro-magic-realism: Toward a political ecology of Nigerian literature,” *Postcolonial Studies*, 9(4), 2006, pp. 449-464.

Service – Professor Wenzel’s service to the university and to the profession has been extensive. At the university, she has served as a member of the English Executive Committee (2006-2008), has co-chaired the English Graduate Committee (2004-2008), and served as a member of CAAS’s African Studies Cluster Hire Search Committee (2006-2007). She has also served as a reader for a range of important journals, including *African Studies* and *Publications of the Modern Language Association*, and as a member of the editorial board for a special issue of the journal *Stirrings Still* on Nobel laureate J. M. Coetzee.

#### External Reviews:

Reviewer (A)

“...I see Professor Wenzel emerging as a lucid and innovative theorist, undaunted by the big issues. ....Wenzel’s work is of a consistently high quality. It is characterized throughout by imaginative attention to textual detail, by impressive historical research, and—even more fundamentally—by a judicious level-headedness that is all the more admirable for being rare. This is one of the best tenure dossiers I have reviewed in recent years...”

Reviewer (B)

“This is the first tenure review packet that I have ever read in its entirety with continuous interest and admiration. The research is creative, solid and, often, surprising in its direction and implications; the theory dynamic, critical, provocative; the politics nuanced and careful; the style clear and graceful. In short, Professor Wenzel has set the highest aspirations for her scholarship, and rises to the challenge. Her work points the direction in which our profession should be moving.”

Reviewer (C)

“The fact that Wenzel is a meticulous scholar who always researches her material thoroughly is evident from the very beginnings of her published work. ... With Jennifer, you have one of the finest scholars [of her generation] in the field...”

Reviewer (D)

“I was very struck by the manuscript. ...[*Bulletproof*] was one of the most outstanding works of literary history I have read to date. ...[it] is strikingly well-argued, beautifully written and original in its conception and intellectual design.”

Reviewer (E)

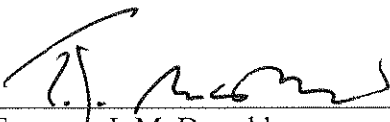
“The distinctive quality of her work arises from three factors: the depth and meticulousness of her research; the ability to place this work imaginatively in a broader set of fields; and finally her willingness to make bold and original arguments. ... Prof [sic] Wenzel has all the hallmarks of a leader in the field who will do your institution proud.”

Reviewer (F)

“Her expertise in colonial and postcolonial writing – in particular African literatures together with theoretical subtlety and the ability to confront problems in interpretation, would, I consider, make her indispensable to any major English Department.”

Summary of Recommendation:

Professor Wenzel has emerged as a leader in her field. Her creative, conscientious teaching and dedication to service have positioned her as an excellent member of the Department of English Language and Literature. The Executive Committee of the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts and I recommend that Assistant Professor Jennifer A. Wenzel be promoted to the rank of associate professor of English language and literature, with tenure, in the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts.



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

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