

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

Farina Mir, 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:

Ph.D.	2002	Columbia University
B.A.	1993	Barnard College

Professional Record:

2003 – present	Assistant Professor, Department of History, University of Michigan
2002 – 2003	Assistant Professor, Department of History, University of Virginia

Summary of Evaluations:

Teaching – Professor Mir is a specialist of South Asian studies whose dedication to rigor and generosity are highly valued. She has undertaken extremely demanding undergraduate courses on the history of South Asia, some focusing mainly on the twentieth century and others ranging over the grand sweep of the past. She wins student respect for her combining of local, regional, and transnational perspectives, and for her integration of a variety of historical documents in seminars and lecture courses. Where discussion can be integrated with lectures, her syllabi encourage critical thinking even in large, fast-moving lecture courses. At the graduate level, Professor Mir guides students through the arduous process of grounding themselves in the complex and ever-burgeoning historiographies of their relevant fields, while challenging them to think analytically about the concepts they use.

Research – Professor Mir's scholarship is wide ranging and theoretically sophisticated. Her research, which is implicitly comparative in conception and scope, works against the grain of existing orthodoxies in her field to integrate social and cultural history together. Her articles and forthcoming monograph, *The Social Space of Language*, have made considerable impact not only within South Asian history per se, but also in the comparative study of colonialism and the widening trans-regional field of the history of Islam. Together with her forthcoming co-edited volume, *Brittle Borders, Redolent Imaginings: Rethinking Punjab's Culture and History*, her coauthored textbook in progress, *The History of Islam in South Asia*, and her emergent second major project, this *oeuvre* represents a substantial contribution to the next wave of scholarship on the history of South Asia.

Recent and Significant Publications:

The Social Space of Language: Vernacular Culture in British Colonial Punjab, University of California Press, forthcoming 2010.

"Interpreting the history of Islam in South Asia, 1750-1950," *Religion Compass*, forthcoming 2010.

"Imperial policy, provincial practices: Colonial language policy in nineteenth-century India," *Indian Economic and Social History Review*, 43(4), 2006, pp. 395-427.

“Genre and devotion in Punjab’s popular narratives: Rethinking cultural and religious syncretism,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 48(3), 2006, pp. 727-58.

Service – Professor Mir has assembled an impressive record of service, including the Honors Committee, undergraduate advisor in the Department of History, and three terms on the Postdoctoral Fellowship Committee. She has played a central role in the Eisenberg Institute of Historical Studies serving on their Planning Group and twice on the Steering Committee. She also served a year on the Program in Anthropology and History Executive Committee and has been active in the Center for South Asian Studies and the Islamic Studies Initiative.

External Reviews:

Reviewer (A)

“To my mind, Mir’s work thus brings together literary study and history to define a very distinctive approach to cultural history. ...her attempt to define a ‘literary formation’ at the intersection of publication and performance tradition is an original contribution to our thinking about modern South Asia’s cultural history.a signal contribution to the historical literature.”

Reviewer (B)

“She has made a giant step forward in the cultural history of South Asia, striding off into new frontiers... I was cheering...as I read the introduction to her book... In my mind, she is above all the brightest rising star among historians of regional literary cultures in South Asia.”

Reviewer (C)

“Mir’s analysis displays a suppleness of mind, capable of relating a number of disciplines, and of explaining complex concepts in wonderfully limpid prose, eschewing jargon, and making the job of the readers a pleasurable experience.”

Reviewer (D)

“In my estimation *The Social Space of Language* is a signal contribution to the field of South Asian history, one that addresses a wide range of themes pertinent to the study of linguistic communities in the medieval and British colonial periods in India, and most substantively, in pre and post-partition Punjab. ... As far as the history of Punjabi literature and language is concerned, I expect this book to establish her as a leading scholar in the field.”

Reviewer (E)

“There is no question that Professor Mir’s book will receive enthusiastically positive reviews in the field of colonial history and South Asian Studies. It is an outstanding first book, deserving of high praise for its rich history of language and vernacular culture as well as for its striking portrait of Punjabi society, religion, and politics in the colonial period.”

Reviewer (F)

“This is a widely-researched and finely argued work. ...it makes a powerful case for utilizing the ‘literary’ as an archive to read alongside and contra to the colonial and nationalist archives.”

Reviewer (G)

"The book manuscript I have just read is quite simply a brilliant piece of literary and cultural history. ...her manuscript is a more sophisticated contribution to the regional history of Punjab than the books by more senior scholars..."

Reviewer (H)

"Farina's forthcoming book, *The Social Space of Language*...breaks new ground in South Asian history. ... The book is deeply researched, is in constant conversation with scholarship both inside and outside South Asian studies, and is very lucidly written."

Reviewer (I)

"Farina Mir's 'The Social Space of Language...' is a fine and nuanced study on a topic of much importance... It is intensively researched, clearly written, and it achieves much more than its stated aim; an unusual feat. ... Farina Mir is a promising historian of South Asia, remarkably free of bias when dealing with emotionally and politically loaded issues and equally at home in the intellectual communities on both sides of the Indo-Pakistan border. She has dug up fresh archival material, provided fresh perspectives, and is all set to continue the good work."

Summary of Recommendation:

Professor Mir is an outstanding researcher and a valued teacher and colleague. The Executive Committee of the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts and I recommend that Assistant Professor Farina Mir be promoted to the rank of associate professor of history, 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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