

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

Shahar M. Pinsker, assistant professor of Near Eastern studies, and assistant professor of Judaic studies, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, is recommended for promotion to associate professor of Hebrew literature and culture, with tenure, and associate professor of Judaic studies, without tenure, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts.

Academic Degrees:

Ph.D.	2001	University of California, Berkeley
M.A.	1997	University of California, Berkeley
B.A.	1994	The Hebrew University, Jerusalem

Professional Record:

2008 – present	Assistant Professor, Frankel Center for Judaic Studies, University of Michigan
2003 – present	Assistant Professor, Department of Near Eastern Studies, University of Michigan
2002	Assistant Professor/Postdoctoral Scholar, Department of Hebrew Literature, Ben-Gurion University
2001	Visiting Assistant Professor, Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, Harvard University

Summary of Evaluations:

Teaching — Professor Pinsker is an enthusiastic teacher who has devoted time and energy toward revamping the curriculum in Hebrew and Jewish cultural studies (HJCS), resulting in a significant increase in the number of HJCS concentrators. His new courses have bridged the artificial division between the study of language and that of literature and culture. He has embraced new technology in creating effective websites for a number of his classes and has collaborated with colleagues from other units to establish a popular new interdisciplinary course on the place of Jews in the modern world. Students have given him very strong evaluations.

Research — Professor Pinsker has reorganized and revitalized the program in Hebrew and Jewish cultural studies and has written a path-breaking analysis of the origins of modern Hebrew literature. He has several new research projects well underway, including a revisionist study of the place of Yiddish in Israel that promises to change the way that tradition is viewed within the Zionist context. Since arriving at Michigan, Professor Pinsker has completely revised his dissertation, producing a book that reviewers predict will become a classic in the field of modern Hebrew studies and significantly alter our understanding of early *belles lettres* in Hebrew. His thorough grounding in the rabbinic texts and in European literature gives him a wider perspective on Hebrew creative writing than many of his contemporaries here and in Israel. Future projects will focus on the role of Yiddish in the culture of the state of Israel.

Recent and Significant Publications:

Literary Passports: The Making of Modernist Hebrew Fiction in Europe, Stanford Studies in Jewish History and Culture, Stanford University Press, forthcoming 2010.

“The construction of ‘secular’ and ‘religious’ in Modern Hebrew literature,” in *Religion or Ethnicity? Jewish Identities in Evolution*, Z. Gitelman (ed.), Rutgers University Press, 2009, pp. 221-238.

“Midrash, intertextuality, and Modernist Hebrew fiction,” in *Jewish Literatures and Cultures: Context and Intertext*, A. Norich and Y. Eliav (co-ed.), Brown University Press, 2008, pp. 201-228.

Hebrew, Gender and Modernity: Critical Responses to Dvora Baron’s Fiction, Studies and Texts in Jewish History and Culture, co-edited with S. Jelen, University Press of Maryland, 2007.

Service — Professor Pinsker has shouldered a full committee load within Near Eastern studies, currently serving as undergraduate chair. He is committed to the Frankel Center for Judaic Studies, sitting on its Executive Committee and organizing an international conference on the Cultural Geography of Yiddish under its auspices. He has been active in the Center for Middle Eastern and North African Studies on campus and nationally is book review editor of the respected journal, *Hebrew Studies*.

External Reviews:

Reviewer (A)

“He puts his commanding knowledge of rabbinic literature to excellent use, showing how the Hebrew modernists continue to tap this body of traditional texts (contrary to standard accounts); the minute analytic attention to stylistic detail is extremely effective in making the revisionist case...”

Reviewer (B)

“...[he] has challenged familiar paradigms of literary scholarship and has offered a revisionist conceptualization of Hebrew prose. His original combination of the historical and the theoretical brings into the field new perspectives and makes his works a must not only for students of literature, but also for historians who pursue the emergence of Modern Jewish culture.”

Reviewer (C)

“What is liberating about...[his] approach is not just that it takes us beyond the polemics that governed prior and even current generations of scholars and teachers. It is more open to the world and is, in many senses, truly *global*. ... The combined dedication to scholarship, translation, interpretation and teaching across all borders is what makes Shachar [sic] Pinsker so ‘transnational’ himself and such a valued member of the academic community in all its dimensions.”

Reviewer (D)

“...Dr. Pinsker is a remarkably gifted scholar. In fact, among his peers who specialize in Hebrew and Yiddish Literature he seems to me the most broad-minded, well-trained and impressive in his erudition as well as in his wide variety of scholarly abilities and interests.”

Reviewer (E)

"...I would characterize him as a very productive scholar in the field of modern Jewish literature, with an impressive body of scholarship on modern Hebrew, as well as modern Yiddish literature. He is among the top scholars in the field of modern Jewish literature in the U.S., and his work compares favorably with that of scholars in Israel as well. ...it is essential for your department to have a person with Pinsker's expertise on your faculty, and Pinsker is definitely the right person for such a position."

Reviewer (F)

"...[*Literary Passports*] will be one of the most important original contributions in English to the study of modern Hebrew literature. ... I think that Pinsker will be one of the people who will be setting the agenda for Hebrew literary studies in coming years, both here and in Israel."

Reviewer (G)

"*Literary Passports* is terrifically wide-ranging and well-researched, its biographical and aesthetic arguments original and compelling; in short, any future work in modernist Hebrew prose fiction will owe Pinsker's study an inestimable debt."

Reviewer (H)

"It is rare to find a scholar who combines such breadth and depth of knowledge, with an ability to produce astute interpretation of texts. ... Altogether, this is one of the strongest tenure review files I've seen. It includes an outstanding monograph (in press), an excellent edited volume, a plethora of essays published as book chapters or as refereed articles in highly regarded journals, and a second book project that is well underway."

Summary of Recommendation:

Professor Pinsker's scholarship is excellent, his teaching is very strong, and the impact of his service contribution has been significant. The Executive Committee of the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts and I recommend that Assistant Professor Shachar M. Pinsker be promoted to the rank of associate professor of Hebrew literature and culture, with tenure, and associate professor of Judaic studies, without tenure, in the College of Literature, Science, and Arts.



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

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