

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

Marlyse Baptista, associate professor of Afroamerican and African studies, with tenure, and associate professor of linguistics, with tenure, College of Literature, Sciences, and the Arts, is recommended for promotion to professor of Afroamerican and African studies, with tenure, and professor of linguistics, with tenure, College of Literature, Sciences, and the Arts.

Academic Degrees:

Ph.D.	1997	Harvard University
M.A.	1995	Harvard University
M.A.	1990	University of Massachusetts-Boston
B.A./Licence	1988	Université de Bordeaux III

Professional Record:

2007 – present	Associate Professor, Center for Afroamerican and African Studies (CAAS) and Department of Linguistics, University of Michigan
2006 – present	Membre Associé du Centre National de Recherche Scientifique (France)
2003 – 2007	Associate Professor, Department of Linguistics, University of Georgia
1998 – 2003	Assistant Professor, Department of Linguistics, University of Georgia
1997 – 1998	Visiting Scholar, Department of Linguistics, Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Summary of Evaluation:

Teaching – Professor Baptista is an innovative and highly successful teacher who designed and taught eight different courses since 2007. Her courses range from those with a focus on Creole languages and identities in the Caribbean to courses on syntax and semantics of noun phrases in Creole. All are welcome additions to the curricula of CAAS and Linguistics, providing students with new perspectives on an unusually interesting set of languages and language issues. Moreover, student evaluations in all her courses have been impressive. Professor Baptista has been an exemplary advisor and mentor to students at all levels. She is a member of three dissertation committees and the chair of a fourth. She works extensively with undergraduates and graduate students, and is noted for being generous with her time. She also collaborates with graduate students on research articles and fieldwork.

Research – Professor Baptista's major research area is Creole linguistics, including Cape Verde Creole, for which she is the world's leading expert. The Atlantic Creoles, which arose in the context of the Atlantic slave trade, are the best-known Creole languages in the world. Although they are young languages (arose in the last five hundred years), much about their specific histories and structures remains mysterious. Her goal is to explicate both. For both of her units Professor Baptista plays a bridging role. In CAAS she links linguistics, anthropology, history, and African/Africana studies; in Linguistics she links the specialists in formal grammatical theory with the specialists in language contact studies. She recently began working with faculty in the Departments of Psychology and Human Genetics on projects designed to elucidate Creole

history in a way that promises to break new ground in methodologies and in her findings. She has an impressive publication record and she maintains a wide visibility in her field(s).

Recent and Significant Publications:

“Cape Verdean Creole in education: A linguistics and human right,” with I. Brito and S. Bangura, in *Creoles in Education*, B. Migge, et al. (eds.), The Creole Language Library, John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2010, pp. 273-296.

“Economy, innovation, and degrees of complexity in Creole formation,” in *Complex Processes in New Languages*, E. Aboh and N. Smith (eds.), The Creole Language Library, John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2009, pp. 293-315.

“African American English: Connecting linguistics’ message with a mission,” with R. Queen, *Journal of English Linguistics*, 36(2), 2008, pp. 185-188.

*Noun Phrases in Creole Languages: A Multi-Faceted Approach*, with J. Guéron (co-ed.), John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2007.

Service – Professor Baptista has performed outstanding service for her two units, including participation on search committees for CAAS and on the Graduate Admissions Committee for Linguistics (2007, 2008), as well as the Executive Committees of both units. In addition, she served on a third-year review committee in Linguistics and as co-organizer of a year-long speaker series for CAAS’s Africa Workshop. Her external service record is equally impressive. She is now vice president/president elect of the Society of Pidgin and Creole Linguistics where she previously served as the Society’s secretary-treasurer.

External Reviews:

Reviewer (A)

“If I compare Dr. Baptista with other specialists in creole studies at a similar stage in their careers, then she is clearly one of the best internationally, as can be seen inter alia in the extent to which she is sought after for research projects in both North America and Europe. ... Dr. Baptista would be an asset to any leading research university.”

Reviewer (B)

“Prof. Baptista is the leading linguist working on Cape Verde’s Creole Portuguese; her many high-quality publications in English on this creole are largely responsible for making it known to non-Portuguese-speaking linguists. Over the past few years her interest in more general issues of syntactic theory have [sic] made her one of the world’s top creolists, as her recent election as Vice President and President-elect of the Society for Pidgin and Creole Linguistics makes clear.”

Reviewer (C)

“Marlyse Baptista is one of the most respected of the Creole studies scholars of her generation. Baptista’s publications are not flashy...but they are very solid and of excellent quality. Her detailed work comparing the different islands of Cabo Verde is certainly innovative, and her current work is more and more moving into an interdisciplinary direction.”

Reviewer (D)

“Less well recognized, I think, is the potential value of a creolist or linguist to *African and African American Studies*. ...within African American Studies...in which issues of

language...are rarely considered, recognition of the importance of creolistics and linguistics is minimal. ... It is a tribute to the far-sightedness of Michigan's Center for Afroamerican and African Studies and their ability to think outside the box that they have offered a joint appointment to Professor Baptista, and I am certain that her past and future contributions will justify their confidence in her ability to enrich their program."

Reviewer (E)

"It is very important to stress that, invaluable though they are, Baptista's contributions are not restricted to linguistic theory. She has been active in promoting the use of Cape Verdean in Cape Verde, and has written eloquently on this subject (see her in-press article for the collection *Creoles in Education*). Here she shows a concern for the linguistic and human rights of creole speakers; once again the focus is on Cape Verde, but her general message is of much wider relevance."

Reviewer (F)

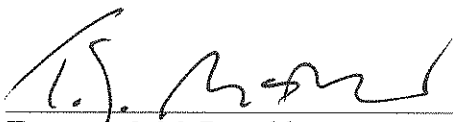
"By concentrating on heretofore understudied *dialectical* varieties of Cape Verdean, Professor Baptista contributes to this recognition that creoles are indeed highly diverse languages, fully deserving of an in-depth diachronic as well as synchronic description."

Reviewer (G)

"Marlyse Baptista is a prominent creolist... She is best known for scholarship that combines formal syntax and creole studies, but her work in creole studies has come to include a strong historical component. ...she has looked more broadly at issues of creole genesis, locating creoles within the larger framework of contact linguistics but doing so within a framework that looks at cognitive processes as the source of common strategies in language learning, hence in language formation."

Summary of Recommendation:

Professor Baptista is an internationally renowned figure in Creole studies. She is truly an excellent teacher and a much sought-after mentor. Her service activities have placed her among the most reliable and effective faculty. The Executive Committee of the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts and I recommend that Associate Professor Marlyse Baptista be promoted to the rank of professor of Afroamerican and African studies, with tenure, and professor of linguistics, with tenure, 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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