

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

Nancy Rose Hunt, associate professor of history, with tenure, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, and associate professor of obstetrics and gynecology, without tenure, Medical School, is recommended for promotion to professor of history, with tenure, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, and professor of obstetrics and gynecology, without tenure, Medical School.

Academic Degrees:

Ph.D. 1992 University of Wisconsin, Madison  
B.A. 1980 University of Chicago

Professional Record:

2000 – present Associate Professor, Department of History and Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, University of Michigan  
1997 – 2000 Assistant Professor, Department of History and Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, University of Michigan  
1992 – 1997 Assistant Professor, Department of History, University of Arizona

Summary of Evaluation:

Teaching – Professor Hunt is a passionately committed instructor who has thought deeply about pedagogy and the philosophy of teaching. Her courses are animated by a wide range of interdisciplinary interests, including medicine and anthropology, but also visual studies, women’s studies, and gender studies. Professor Hunt makes valuable teaching contributions to the Department of History and to the Center for Afroamerican and African Studies (CAAS). In her undergraduate courses, her approach is distinguished by an impressive ability to engage students in relatively small classes, especially in freshman seminars. In a similar vein she excels at working with honors students and Undergraduate Research Opportunity Program (UROP) students. She is an outstanding mentor. This same approach makes her a vital contributor to graduate study in the Africa field.

Research – Professor Hunt is one of the most outstanding historians of African medical history, with a particular focus on the Congo and Francophone Central Africa. She is a historian of medicine, maternal and child health, and ideas about healing, as well as a pioneer of African gender history and a historian or ethnographer of popular knowledge. She is a true boundary-crosser, recently adding visual culture to her expertise. Her first book on colonialism and the medicalization of childbirth was an acclaimed tour de force. Her second book, *A Nervous State: Violence, Sterility, and Healing Movements in Colonial Congo*, is a brilliant demonstration of the value and possibilities of her distinctive methods. Her forthcoming projects, a student-oriented global history of health and medicine and an intellectual biography of a Belgian colonial planter, will confirm her standing at the very forefront of her field.

#### Recent and Significant Publications:

*A Nervous State: Violence, Sterility, and Healing Movements in Colonial Congo*, Duke University Press, forthcoming 2012.

“An acoustic register, tenacious images, and Congolese scenes of rape and ruination,” in *Scarred Landscapes and Imperial Debris*, A. L. Stoler (ed.), special issue of *Cultural Anthropology*, 23, 2008, pp. 220-53.

“Rewriting the soul in a Flemish Congo,” *Past and Present*, 198, 2008, pp. 185-215.

“Between fiction and history: Modes of writing abortion in Africa,” *Cahiers d'Études Africaines*, 47(186), 2007, pp. 277-312.

Service – Professor Hunt has been an excellent citizen in the Department of History, having served on a wide range of its committees. She has also played a key role in rebuilding the African field and Africa studies more broadly at CAAS and at the new African Studies Center. Professor Hunt was co-editor of the leading international journal, *Gender & History*, which was hosted at Michigan under the auspices of the Institute for Research on Women and Gender (1999-2005). In addition to CAAS, Women's Studies, and the Medical School, she has also been active in the Joint Ph.D. Program in Anthropology and History.

#### External Review:

Reviewer (A)

“Nancy is clearly one of the most influential and ceaselessly inventive historians studying African history from my approximate generational cohort, and one of the few scholars in the field that I can think of who have tried to push the historiography into a genuinely postnationalist mode of thinking.”

Reviewer (B)

“...[*A Colonial Lexicon*...] will further consolidate Hunt's reputation as an historian of rare creativity, as an Africanist of distinction, and as a leading scholar of colonial medical systems. ... Clearly this is a scholar at the height of her productivity, whose work is destined for ever wider circulation. .... She is a scholar who has been prepared to take risks in the service of strong intellectual and ethical commitments. In all honesty, I was somewhat shocked to learn that she had not yet been promoted.”

Reviewer (C)

“Her impressive record amply shows that she merits such a promotion. ... The proven excellence of her work, the fascinating quality of her plans for future research, and her truly inspiring capacities both for students and colleagues will make her a true asset for your department, also in the future.”

Reviewer (D)

“Nancy Rose Hunt is one of the most original scholars in African history at this time. ... The striking thing about Rose Hunt's scholarship is the lack of subservience and predictability in relation to prevailing norms and languages. While very solid in terms of empirical and ethnographic tasks, she also engages directly with epistemological questions across disciplines in quite fearless and original ways.”

Reviewer (E)

“...her professional presence is genuinely international and a model of the multi-disciplinarity that is (finally) coming to characterize the contemporary discipline of history. Most significantly for me, she commands the fields on which she draws to degrees that allow her to convert them powerfully to components of an epistemologically thorough historical voice; she is not distracted by their respective, and entirely proper, but also quite distinct, disciplinary concerns.”

Reviewer (F)

“Nancy is one of the most productive and original scholars working on the history of medicine, gender, reproduction, and the body in Africa today. ...[her] work pushes the envelope with regard to the use of historical sources. Heavily influenced by recent trends in anthropology, as well as by the linguistic turn in historical writing, she has questioned the ways in which we, as historians, write about history. This has led her to a concern with the authorial voice, and with the role of time in the construction of historical narratives.”

Reviewer (G)


“*A Nervous State*...is one of the most chilling accounts of colonialism and its aftermath that I’ve ever read. ... This is a researcher whose contributions to academic life are far beyond the ordinary in terms of intellectual vision and verve. From the archives to the most current theoretical literature, her research is singular in its variety and sophistication.”

Reviewer (H)

“...Hunt is a unique scholar in my field (which is African history primarily, but also medical history). No-one [sic] can match Professor Hunt when it comes to her historical imagination, allied with deep and committed scholarship. Reading her work always makes me envious. She is pathbreaking and fearless and her creative energies are phenomenal. At the same time, the work is based on long and sometimes difficult years of dogged research, both archival and ethnographic.”

Summary of Recommendation:

Professor Hunt is at the top of her field. She is a dedicated and challenging teacher, and she has an impressive record of service. The Executive Committees of the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts and the Medical School and we recommend that Associate Professor Nancy Rose Hunt be promoted to the rank of professor of history, with tenure, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, and professor of obstetrics and gynecology, without tenure, Medical School.



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



James O. Woolliscroft, M.D.  
Lyle C. Roll Professor of Medicine and Dean,  
Medical School

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