

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

Arvind-Pal Singh Mandair, assistant professor of Asian languages and cultures, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, is recommended for promotion to associate professor of Asian languages and cultures, with tenure, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts.

Academic Degrees:

Ph.D.	1999	University of Warwick (philosophy and religion)
M.A.	1994	University of Warwick
Ph.D.	1989	Aston University (chemistry)
B.Sc.	1985	Council for National Academic Awards

Professional Record:

2006 – present	Assistant Professor and Tara Singh and Balwant Kaur Chattha and Gurbax Singh and Kirpal Kaur Brar Chair in Sikh Studies, Department of Asian Languages and Cultures, University of Michigan
2001 – 2006	Assistant Professor and S.K.K. Bindra Chair in Sikh Studies, Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies, Hofstra University
1999 – 2001	Research Fellow, Department of Religion, University of London
1997 – 1999	Lecturer, Department of History and Politics, Coventry University
1991 – 1993	S.E.R.C. Research Fellow in Superconductors, Department of Physics, University of Warwick
1989 – 1991	Senior Research Scientist, Courtaulds Plc

Summary of Evaluation:

Teaching – Professor Mandair is an experienced and effective teacher. His courses, which range from large undergraduate lecture classes to small graduate seminars, are well structured, rigorous, challenging, and well received by students. His contributions to the curriculum are indispensable: since coming to Michigan he has developed a number of new courses in Sikh studies, critical religious studies, and postcolonial studies. He has also proven himself to be an effective mentor to graduate students.

Research – Professor Mandair has distinguished himself as one of the leading scholars of Sikh studies in the world today and as a significant scholar in the fields of religious studies and postcolonial studies. His recent monograph, *Religion and the Specter of the West: Sikhism, India, Postcoloniality and the Politics of Translation*, is a path-breaking study that works across the disciplines of continental philosophy, history of South Asian religions, and postcolonial theory to explore anew the encounter between India and the West. In addition to his monograph, Professor Mandair has co-authored three books and is a founding editor of the new journal, *Sikh Formations: Religion, Culture, and Theory*. He also delivered the prestigious Jordan Lectures in Comparative Religion at the University of London's School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) in 2009.

Recent and Significant Publications:

Secularism and Religion-Making, with M. Dressler (co-ed.), Oxford University Press, forthcoming 2011.

Religion and the Specter of the West: Sikhism, India, Postcoloniality and the Politics of Translation, Columbia University Press, 2009.

“Interdictions: Derrida and the disorders of Indian identity,” *Social Identities: Journal of Race, Nation and Culture*, 13(3), 2007, pp. 337-363.

“The politics of non-duality: The work of transcendence in Modern Sikh hermeneutics,” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, 74(3), 2006, pp. 646-674.

Service – Professor Mandair’s service contributions to the department have more than met the expectations for someone at his rank. He has been elected to serve on the departmental Executive Committee three times and has also served on the Graduate Program and Curriculum Committees. He has contributed to the Center for South Asian Studies and founded the University’s Sikh Studies Forum. Professor Mandair provided very significant service to the profession when he helped establish the international Sikh Studies conversation.

External Reviews:

Reviewer (A)

“...[*Religion and the Specter of the West*] will occupy a central ground in Sikh studies, with which all further scholarship will have to reckon.”

Reviewer (B)

“...“[*Religion and the Specter of the West*] is a very substantial contribution to scholarship...which places the candidate as an important voice in the field of postcolonial studies. In my opinion, this work has more substance and philosophical depth than many other works in the field... Were I to compile a list of the most significant books to appear recently in the fields of Sikh Studies and Postcolonial Studies of religion then Mandair’s book would certainly be near the top of the list.”

Reviewer (C)

“...Arvind is among the ten most visible scholars in the field, world-wide. His establishing and nurturing of the journal *Sikh Formations* is especially notable, and his collegial work with other scholars in the field—as writer and editor—also stand out as an important contribution. ... [*Teachings of the Sikh Gurus*]’ lucid, carefully articulated, historically informed introduction and its well-considered approach to the task of textual selection are exemplary... It is an essential work.”

Reviewer (D)

“...Mandair’s contribution is quite distinctive and I will not hesitate in putting him along with the top ten scholars of Sikh studies the world over.”

Reviewer (E)

“[*Religion and the Specter of the West*] is at once a ground-breaking treatise on Sikh Studies, a major intervention in postcolonial theory/studies, and theory and method debates in the study of religion... It is an example of interdisciplinary philosophizing at its very best. ... Mandair is without doubt the leading Sikh scholar of his generation.”

Reviewer (F)

"...Arvind Pal Mandair has launched nothing short of a paradigm shift in Sikh Studies."

Reviewer (G)

"Professor Mandair is the *most* original mind working in Sikh Studies today. ... In little over a decade, Prof. Mandair has established a new research agenda in Sikh Studies that places it within a broader framework of critical theory and post-colonial studies. ...[*Religion and the Specter of the West*] is likely to have a lasting imprint on future research as it becomes the new benchmark by which all other outputs are measured."

Reviewer (H)

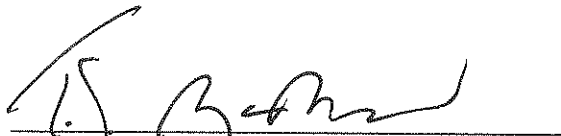
"As the co-founder and co-editor of the journal *Sikh Formations: Religion, Culture and Theory* (published by Routledge), he is at the forefront in charting new directions and methodologies for the study of Sikhism."

Reviewer (I)

"...[*Religion and the Specter of the West*] really puts Arvind on the map as the intellectually most formidable figure in Sikh Studies anywhere in the world today. ...it is a far-ranging work which creatively engages with a number of different subjects and disciplines and which should therefore serve to establish his wider reputation, in the fields of both South Asian and religious studies."

Summary of Recommendation:

Professor Mandair is a highly productive and innovative scholar. He is also a successful teacher and has a strong service record. The Executive Committee of the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts and I recommend that Assistant Professor Arvind-Pal Singh Mandair be promoted to the rank of associate professor of Asian languages and cultures, with tenure, 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

May 2011