

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

Elizabeth F. S. Roberts, assistant professor of anthropology, and assistant professor in the Residential College, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, is recommended for promotion to associate professor of anthropology, with tenure, and associate professor in the Residential College, without tenure, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts.

Academic Degrees:

Ph.D.	2006	University of California, Berkeley and San Francisco
M.A.	1997	University of California, Berkeley
B.A.	1993	University of California, Berkeley

Professional Record:

2008 – present	Assistant Professor, Department of Anthropology and the Residential College, University of Michigan
2006 – present	Assistant Research Scientist, Institute for Research on Women and Gender, University of Michigan

Summary of Evaluation:

Teaching – Professor Roberts is an innovative teacher. Her courses focus on the intellectual and ethical problems associated with the nature/culture divide. She has taught small seminars and large lecture classes in the Residential College and the Department of Anthropology. Students from across the sciences and humanities enjoy her classes, and those in medical careers find them especially appealing. Students give Professor Roberts very good teaching evaluations and they are eager to work with her. She is a talented mentor and has served as an advisor to nineteen students, chaired two doctoral committees, and served as a member of eight more.

Research – Professor Roberts' is a social cultural anthropologist who specializes in medical anthropology and technology studies. Her research centers on assisted reproduction in Latin America and her scholarship contributes to anthropological literatures on kinship, science and technology studies, religiosity and secularism in Latin America, and global debates about the ethics of assisted reproduction. She is the author or co-author of fourteen peer-reviewed articles, five book chapters, and one review essay in addition to her 2012 book, which has been widely hailed as a landmark study. Professor Roberts has also collaborated on two theoretical projects to define fields of research into reproduction not bounded by Latin America, and she is developing a second major ethnographic project on human generation and inheritance, focusing on scientific researchers and research subjects in the field of epigenetics.

Recent and Significant Publications:

God's Laboratory: Assisted Reproduction in the Andes, University of California Press, 2012.
"Scars of nation: Surgical penetration and the state in Ecuador," *Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Anthropology*, 17(2), 2012, pp. 215-237.

“Abandonment and accumulation: Embryonic futures in the United States and Ecuador,”
Medical Anthropology Quarterly, 25(2), 2011, pp. 232-253.

“Extra embryos: Ethics, cryopreservation and IVF in Ecuador and elsewhere,” *American Ethnologist*, 34(1), 2007, pp. 188-199.

Service – Professor Roberts has played an active role in the social and academic life of the Residential College, the Anthropology Department, the Institute for Research on Women and Gender (IRWG), and elsewhere on campus. She has sat on important committees, organized colloquia, and hosted guest speakers. She also directed IRWG’s Program in Reproductive Governance. She is a dynamic presence in the field of anthropology at large, organizing panels at annual meetings, reviewing manuscripts for top-tier journals, and evaluating research proposals for the National Science Foundation. She is a member of nine professional associations.

External Reviewers:

Reviewer (A)

“Roberts has a reliable ear for what is in the process of becoming a major set of scientific and public policy questions, and the ambition and curiosity to tackle an entirely new field. ... I can say with confidence that I consider Liz Roberts to be one of the two or three best scholars in reproductive politics.”

Reviewer (B)

“If I am optimistic about the future of anthropology, it is because of the visionary, interdisciplinary and socially-minded work of...productive scholars like Dr. Roberts. Although the book focuses on Ecuador, its lessons transcend geographical boundaries-it is as meaningful for Brazil as it is for United States today.”

Reviewer (C)

“The depth and subtlety Roberts brings to these analyses make her work more exciting than virtually any other anthropologist of reproduction I know. ... I consider her book, God’s Laboratory...a tour-de-force...”

Reviewer (D)

“Roberts’ book is a major contribution to Andean ethnography. She engages important themes of race, class, gender, and national identity, connecting her writings with scholars of the region. ...her fieldwork is original, the labs and clinics open new questions...”

Reviewer (E)

“...I find Prof. Roberts’ research to be well conducted, well presented and interesting. I feel she is in the upper quarter of her cohort... I read Prof. Roberts’ record as suggesting a scholar who will be quite productive over the next decade, producing well conducted research that addresses current theoretical concerns.”

Reviewer (F)

“Roberts’ has been awarded some of the very top grants in Anthropology throughout her career and has recently obtained an NIH K12 Career Development award, something that almost no cultural or medical anthropologist receives. ... She is on her way to a quite stellar career.”

Reviewer (G)


“...what constitutes the real innovation of this book is the careful attention to race and racialization that Roberts is able to pay to her materials. ... God’s Laboratory is exemplary ethnography.”

Reviewer (H)

“God’s Laboratory...Roberts’s [sic] greatly anticipated monograph based on extensive fieldwork in Ecuador, puts her in strong standing in the field of anthropology of reproduction... The signal accomplishment of...[her] work, to my mind, is her full integration of class and race-as well as gender and culture-into her analysis of assisted reproduction.”

Summary of Recommendation:

Professor Roberts is a skillful researcher and scholar. She is also a gifted teacher and an energetic contributor to her discipline. The Executive Committee of the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts and I recommend that Assistant Professor Elizabeth F. S. Roberts be promoted to the rank of associate professor of anthropology, with tenure, and associate professor in the Residential College, without 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

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