

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

James W. Cook, Jr., associate professor of history, with tenure, and associate professor of American culture, without tenure, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, is recommended for promotion to professor of history, with tenure, and professor of American culture, without tenure, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts.

Academic Degrees:

Ph.D.	1996	University of California, Berkeley
B.A.	1988	Princeton University

Professional Record:

2004 – present	Associate Professor, Department of History, University of Michigan
2012 – present	Associate Professor, Department of American Culture, University of Michigan
2004 – 2012	Associate Professor, Program in American Culture, University of Michigan
2001 – 2004	Assistant Professor, Department of History and Program in American Culture, University of Michigan
1997 – 2000	Assistant Professor, Department of History, and Director, American Studies, Butler University
1996 – 1997	Lecturer, American Studies Program, University of California, Berkeley

Summary of Evaluation:

Teaching – Professor Cook is a highly successful teacher of American cultural history whose innovations include a new large lecture course on the “New York Modern” and a seminar course on “U.S. Mass Culture.” His excellent teaching has been recognized by a University Undergraduate Teaching Award (2004) and an LSA Excellence in Education Award (2005). Professor Cook is also a dedicated teacher of graduate students in history and American culture and is currently supervising seven doctoral dissertations.

Research – Professor Cook’s scholarship has established his reputation as the leading U.S. cultural historian of his generation. He has published a documentary reader on P.T. Barnum and popular culture in the 19th-century United States, co-edited a field-defining essay collection entitled The Cultural Turn in U.S. History, and authored a much-lauded theoretical essay in *American Historical Review* on the salience of the cultural turn in American cultural history that is widely read in graduate classrooms. He has also published essays that have formed the foundation for his current book project, The Politics of Black Celebrity. This book project has involved extensive research across several continents and will offer highly significant new perspectives on African American cultural production in a wider global context and on its connections to the Black freedom struggle in the United States.

Recent and Significant Publications:

The Politics of Black Celebrity: A Global History, 1770-1940, W.W. Norton, under contract.

"Finding Otira: On the geopolitics of Black celebrity, 1770-1940," *Raritan*, forthcoming 2014.

"The kids are all right: On the 'turning' of cultural history," *American Historical Review*, 117(3), 2012, pp. 746-771.

The Cultural Turn in U.S. History: Past, Present, & Future, co-edited with L. Glickman and M. O'Malley, University of Chicago Press, 2008.

Service – Professor Cook has been an active member of both departments. In History he served as a member of the Steering Committee of the Eisenberg Institute for Historical Studies and is currently an undergraduate advisor and member of the Undergraduate Committee. He was director of Graduate Studies in American Culture; he has chaired one search committee in Latino history and served on a number of tenure and review panels in both units. In the wider profession Professor Cook is a frequent referee for university presses and scholarly journals.

External Reviewers:

Reviewer (A)

"In its conceptualization and its imaginative, expansive, meticulous documentation...[The Politics of Black Celebrity] will be a major book in both American and 'global' history."

Reviewer (B)

"...[Professor] Cook's book will transform the ways that scholars understand African American cultural production but also the very ways that scholars talk about nineteenth century capitalism, politics, and culture. ... in both his archive-based and his historiographic scholarship, Cook has emerged as one of the nation's most preeminent voices in U.S. cultural history, a status that will only be enhanced when books now under contract are published."

Reviewer (C)

"Jay is a masterful scholar...I know that his scholarship has made cultural history a more interesting place to work. I look forward to celebrating the publication of 'The Politics of Black Celebrity,' to reading the book and assigning it to my students. But that book will simply be an additional entry on the list of Jay's already significant contributions..."

Reviewer (D)

"James has emerged as a historian of national and international significance. Historians of American culture have to read his essays. Students in other, seemingly different fields such as urban and social history, have to similarly confront the issues he raises."

Reviewer (E)

"It is difficult to overstate the originality of Professor Cook's approach to black celebrity, or its geographic and temporal scope, or the significance of his conclusions for our understanding not only of black expressive culture, but of global mass culture, and perhaps most important of the origins of black activism."

Reviewer (F)

"...[Professor] Cook is an historian of demonstrated subtlety and creativity; he has written a terrific book about the nineteenth century, and a series of essays that place him at the leading edge of the US field in general. Were he my colleague, I would support his promotion to full professor with enthusiasm."

Reviewer (G)

"Cook's book promises to reframe and deepen our understanding of nineteenth- and twentieth-century African American achievement and to redraw the maps and networks by which that achievement took place. ... In his fine grained studies, Cook is doing what less careful scholars eager to make more facile claims of cultural patterns have failed to do. The book that he has underway promises to be a genuinely major work."

Reviewer (H)

"...Cook is one of a handful of mid-career scholars who are reshaping the field of cultural history by combining it with the emerging history of capitalism. He has already established himself as a leading figure in the field, and is poised on the brink of even greater prominence."

Summary of Recommendation:

Professor Cook's scholarly accomplishments are substantial, definitive, and wide-ranging. He is also a highly successful and innovative teacher of undergraduate and graduate students. The Executive Committee of the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts and I recommend that Associate Professor James W. Cook, Jr. be promoted to professor of history, with tenure, and professor of American culture, without tenure, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts.



Susan A. Gelman
Heinz Werner Distinguished University Professor,
Professor of Psychology and Interim Dean,
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts

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