

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

Sofya Khagi, assistant professor of Slavic languages and literatures, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, is recommended for promotion to associate professor of Slavic languages and literatures, with tenure, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts.

Academic Degrees:

Ph.D.	2006	Brown University
M.A.	1999	Dartmouth College
B.A.	1996	University of Rochester

Professional Record:

2008 – present	Assistant Professor, Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures, University of Michigan
2006 – 2008	Post-doctoral Research Fellow and LEO Lecturer I, Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures, University of Michigan
2006	Adjunct Lecturer, Brown University

Summary of Evaluation:

Teaching – Professor Khagi teaches a wide range of courses on 19<sup>th</sup>-century Russian culture, literature, and science fiction, as well as the department's capstone seminar for majors (taught in Russian) and graduate courses on 18<sup>th</sup>-century Russian literature, Slavic literary theories, and research methods. Student evaluations are consistently among the department's highest. She is deeply engaged in promoting successful learning outcomes for her students, and she designs syllabi and supplemental materials that are thoughtfully conceived. She has become an important mentor for graduate students and has served on several dissertation committees.

Research – Professor Khagi has made major research contributions in two distinct areas: 19<sup>th</sup>- and 20<sup>th</sup>-twentieth century Russian poetry and post-modernist Russian and Baltic prose of the past three decades with a particular focus on science fiction. Her first book, Silence and the Rest: Verbal Skepticism in Russian Poetry (2013), was published by Northwestern University Press, one of the leading publishers in her field. In it she explores how Russia's greatest poets, traditionally admired for their veneration of literature and the word, place that logophilia in tension with grave doubts about language's ability to communicate deeper meaning. Her work on contemporary prose has appeared in four major refereed journals and is expected to culminate in a second book in the near future.

Recent and Significant Publications:

Silence and the Rest: Verbal Skepticism in Russian Poetry, Northwestern University Press, 2013.  
“One billion years after the end of the world: Historical deadlock, contemporary dystopia, and the continuing legacy of the Strugatskii brothers,” *Slavic Review*, 72(2), 2013, pp. 267-286.  
“The monstrous aggregate of the social: Toward biopolitics in Victor Pelevin's work,” *Slavic and East European Journal*, 55(3), 2011, pp. 439-459.

“From homo sovieticus to homo sapiens: Viktor Pelevin’s consumer dystopia,” *The Russian Review*, 67(4), 2008, pp. 559-579.

Service – Professor Khagi has provided important service to her department that includes membership on the Executive, Graduate Admissions, and Fellowship committees, as well as on lecturer review committees. She has been the undergraduate major advisor and the department’s Faculty Ally for Diversity in Graduate Education. She is currently serving as an associate director of the Center for Russian, East European, and Eurasian Studies. Within the profession, she has evaluated manuscripts for leading journals and organized panels at the field’s major conferences.

#### External Reviewers:

##### Reviewer (A)

“...I would rank her as one of the very best tenure candidates I have seen in recent years, and this goes for my evaluations of people at leading graduate research institutions and top liberal arts colleges.”

##### Reviewer (B)

“The breadth and sheer number of her publications is impressive...she has published in all of the leading peer-reviewed journals in the United States: *Slavic and East European Journal*, *Russian Review*, *Slavic Review*... Her book will appear with Northwestern University Press, certainly one of the five best presses for Slavic books in the country.”

##### Reviewer (C)

“Striking is the chronological sweep and expertise of Khagi’s study. The book is impressive for its clear thesis, broad philosophical base, clear and well-discussed examples... It is brilliantly written and well edited, and provides fascinating new insights on a topic that has been hitherto neglected or misconstrued in Russian literary criticism.”

##### Reviewer (D)

“...[*Silence and the Rest*] is an ambitious study of Russian lyric poetry, focused on twentieth-century texts but fully contextualized by the nineteenth-century tradition, and by a compact account of philosophies of verbal skepticism in the book’s Introduction. ... Khagi has also set out an impressive second project, on the contemporary prose writer Victor Pelevin.”

##### Reviewer (E)

“Somewhat unusually for a person who has not yet received tenure, she has gained expertise in two quite different areas. ...her book reveals an extensive knowledge of nineteenth[-] and twentieth-century Russian poetry... ... she has developed a similarly impressive expertise on contemporary Russian prose and culture.”

##### Reviewer (F)

“Another substantial area of Dr. Khagi’s interest and expertise is in postmodern and other recent prose literature from Russia and the Baltic Republics... Here her readings are informed by deep knowledge of previous eras in Russian fantastic and speculative literature...a crucial subtext for anyone working on Russian literature and culture.”

Reviewer (G)

"...my endorsement of Sofia [sic] Khagi's promotion and tenuring is unequivocal. I have the highest respect for what she has achieved to date as a scholar and I have no doubt her career will continue on rapidly rising trajectory. ... She would definitely receive tenure at my home institution..."

Reviewer (H)

"This tenure package is certainly the most impressive I have read not only in the Slavic field, but also in the wider field of my own department of modern languages and cultures. ... To think that Sofya has accomplished all this while also maintaining a substantial undergraduate and graduate teaching and mentoring schedule is to wonder whether her day – as in some science-fiction novel – lasts more than the usual 24 hours."

Summary of Recommendation:

Professor Khagi's research program in the literature and philosophy of the Baltic as well as the Slavic cultures is exceptional. She is an excellent teacher and mentor, as well as an invaluable department citizen. The Executive Committee of the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts and I recommend that Assistant Professor Sofya Khagi be promoted to the rank of associate professor of Slavic languages and literatures, with tenure, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts.



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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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