

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

Michael P. Lempert, assistant professor of anthropology, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, is recommended for promotion to associate professor of anthropology, with tenure, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts.

Academic Degrees:

Ph.D.	2004	University of Pennsylvania
M.Ed.	1996	University of Virginia
M.A.	1994	University of Virginia
B.A.	1990	Clark University

Professional Record:

2009 – present	Assistant Professor, Department of Anthropology, University of Michigan
2010	Professeur invité, l'École des hautes études en sciences sociales (EHESS), Paris
2007 – 2009	Assistant Professor, Department of Linguistics, Georgetown University
2007	Visiting Lecturer, Department of Anthropology, University of California, San Diego

Summary of Evaluation:

Teaching – Professor Lempert makes strong contributions to both formal and informal teaching in anthropology. He has taught courses ranging from a large service course that draws in students from outside the major, to undergraduate and graduate courses in face-to-face interaction, his area of research expertise. He has created new theoretical and methods classes for graduate students and advanced undergraduates, that give students valuable opportunity to develop their skills in observation and analysis by working with video-data using sophisticated methods of documentation. Professor Lempert also leads a highly successful forum for linguistic and socio-cultural anthropology graduate students to present and discuss their work. He is currently advising six graduate students and serving as chair of one dissertation committee.

Research – Professor Lempert is a linguistic anthropologist whose research on American political communication, Tibetan monastic debate, and general theoretical work on problems of communication and social interaction has received significant attention. He has an exceptionally strong publication record that spans linguistic analysis of U.S. election politics, anthropological interrogations of modern critical theory, and Buddhist/Tibetan studies contributions to the relationships between textual and lived traditions. His award-winning 2012 book, Discipline and Debate: The Language of Violence in a Tibetan Buddhist Monastery, is a substantial achievement that combines extensive ethnographic research with detailed textual analyses. His second, co-authored book, Creatures of Politics: Media, Message, and the American Presidency, examines the rhetoric of U.S. electoral politics. These works have established him as a leader in the study of face-to-face interaction, discourse analysis, and scale.

Recent and Significant Publications:

Discourse and Religion. Handbook of Discourse Analysis, Second Edition, D. Tannen, et al. (eds.), Wiley-Blackwell, in press.

Discipline and Debate: The Language of Violence in a Tibetan Buddhist Monastery, University of California Press, 2012 (recipient of the annual Clifford Geertz Prize from the Society for the Anthropology of Religion).

Creatures of Politics: Media, Message, and the American Presidency, with M. Silverstein, Indiana University Press, 2012.

"Avoiding 'the issues' as addressivity in U.S. electoral politics," *Anthropological Quarterly*, 4(1), 2011, pp. 187–208.

Service – Professor Lempert has provided important service to his department, as adviser to first-year students in Linguistic Anthropology since 2010, and as a member of the Executive, Curriculum, and Colloquium committees, among others. Since 2010, he has organized an annual faculty seminar series that is jointly held between U-M and the University of Chicago. He has served as an Institute of International Education (IIE) Student Fulbright Program interviewer as well as an application reviewer for the Center for South Asian Studies' Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) fellowships. He has reviewed articles for fifteen top-tier journals in his areas of specialization, and has evaluated National Science Foundation, Wenner-Gren Foundation, and Lewis and Clark Foundation grant proposals.

External Reviewers:

Reviewer (A)

"Dr. Lempert brings a compelling and rare mixture of expertise in linguistics, anthropology and Tibetan/Buddhist studies that gives him somewhat incomparable skill in not only bridging these disciplines but also advancing them relative to their own internal intellectual debates. ...he has already made contributions that seat him at the table of more established colleagues."

Reviewer (B)

"...I support Dr. Lempert for promotion and tenure with no reservations whatsoever. He has already proven himself to be an extremely productive scholar and dedicated classroom instructor. I look forward to his many contributions to the discipline in the future."

Reviewer (C)

"...he has established himself as a significant presence in the field of linguistic anthropology: wherever you turn in the principal journals...there he is, as editor of a special issue, author of a major article or penetrating review essay, contributor of an illuminating review. ...he strives constantly to push the field forward, tackling core problems, and offering always a critical challenge to intellectual business as usual."

Reviewer (D)

"Lempert is a quite broad-gauge scholar who combines remarkable expertise and imaginative control of quite focused technical approaches in his research with a lively, principled, and wholly distinctive sense of the interplay of the specifics of communicative practice, semiotics, and the larger scale contours of social, cultural, and political life. ... Lempert is also one of our most

sophisticated theorists, bringing together systematic understandings of semiotic theory, linguistic ideology, and the dialogical work of Bakhtin and subsequent authors.”

Reviewer (E)

“Unusually for someone at his stage of career, Dr. Lempert has already taken significant steps to lay out a truly original theoretical vision...[His] work and the theoretical developments at its core make him one of only a handful of scholars of his generation who one can already speak of as emerging intellectual leaders not only in their narrow areas of specialization, but of cultural and linguistic anthropology more generally.”

Reviewer (F)

“I see Lempert as one of the leading linguistic anthropologists of his generation. ... I found the analysis [in his 2011 *Anthropological Quarterly* article] new and compelling.”

Reviewer (G)

“...Michael’s materials demonstrate a highly active scholar, teacher, and important contributor to the field of linguistic anthropology. ... I think his work and the promise of his future projects are worthy of promotion and tenure at the University of Michigan.”

Reviewer (H)

“...[Discipline and Debate] is also an outstanding example of a study of the ways a world religion engages with the cultural demands of global modernity. ...I think this is one of the most creative and convincing studies of religion and modernity that I have read. ...it stands out for its depth and originality, and it immediately propels Dr. Lempert to the front ranks of those working in this area. A major piece of work, I expect Discipline and Debate to be widely influential and to remain so for a long time.”

Summary of Recommendation:

Professor Lempert’s research is outstanding. He is a committed teacher, a conscientious mentor, and has a strong service record. The Executive Committee of the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts and I recommend that Assistant Professor Michael P. Lempert be promoted to the rank of associate professor of anthropology, with 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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