

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

Gillian C. White, assistant professor of English language and literature, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, is recommended for promotion to associate professor of English language and literature, with tenure, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts.

Academic Degrees:

Ph.D.	2005	Princeton University
M.A.	1997	New York University
B.A.	1990	Northwestern University

Professional Record:

2006 – present	Assistant Professor, Department of English Language and Literature, University of Michigan
2005 – 2006	Lecturer, Writing Program, Princeton University

Summary of Evaluation:

Teaching – Professor White is a thoughtful and successful teacher. Her courses range through the last five centuries of the literary canon and provide an essential service to the department in its mission to educate students in the core genres of the English literary tradition. She is, moreover, a pivotal person in keeping the interests of the M.F.A. and the Ph.D. programs integrated. Student evaluations are in the high range and repeatedly reflect positively on her ability to convey to students the challenges and rewards of reading poetry. Many students praise Professor White for her ability to stimulate discussion and excite students. Graduate students describe her as an exemplary critical thinker, and appreciate her detailed and timely feedback on their written work. She has served as a member of five dissertation committees.

Research – Professor White’s research focuses on American poetry from modernism to the present. Her command of the field is very strong and her work is rigorous. The centerpiece of Professor White’s tenure case is her book, Lyric Shame, forthcoming from Harvard University Press. Upon submission of the manuscript, she very speedily received contract offers from Harvard University Press and Oxford University Presses—two of the most prestigious presses in literary studies. This is clearly a testament to the manuscript’s strengths, and to the high standards to which it has been held. Of the six essays and reviews Professor White has published in the last seven years, the three most recent commentaries manifest a maturing sophistication about matters of philosophy and poetic practice. Professor White’s new project, tentatively titled Poetic Criticism, Inc., is anticipated with enthusiasm by the external reviewers.

Recent and Significant Publications:

Lyric Shame: Producing the Lyric Subject of Contemporary American Poetry, Harvard University Press, forthcoming 2014.

“Words in air and ‘space’ in art: Bishop’s mid-century critique of the United States,” in Elizabeth Bishop in the Twenty-First Century: Reading the New Editions, T. Travisano, et al. (eds.), University of Virginia Press, 2012.

“Reality in America: Realism and rhetoric in Wallace Stevens’ ‘The Nobel rider and the sound of words,’” *Wallace Stevens Journal*, 35(2), 2011.

“Readerly contingency in Bishop’s journals and early pros,” *Twentieth-Century Literature*, 55(3), 2009.

Service – Professor White has provided important service to her department that includes membership on the Executive, Graduate Admissions, Undergraduate Advisory, Lecturer Review, and Theory Course committees. She was also a reader and interviewer for an 18th-century candidate search. Professor White judges for prize committees and worked as an assistant editor for the *Michigan Quarterly Review* (2006-2010). She founded the successful “Poetry & Poetics Workshop,” a forum for Ph.D. and M.F.A. students and faculty to exchange works in progress and discuss materials presented by invited speakers. Professor White has also served as co-organizer of the Junior Faculty Forum.

External Reviewers:

Reviewer (A)

“...White’s book is going to be an important, controversial, memorable, and ‘effectual’ ‘intervention,’ as we now say – that is, it’s going to have critical consequences in the world of contemporary poetry and poetics...”

Reviewer (B)

“...the work she does on Bernadette Mayer should be considered ground-breaking. ...this chapter in itself constitutes a brilliant contribution to American studies. ... It is quite wonderful to see a scholar [of her generation]...illuminating an important passage in American poetic history – one that has never been mapped before. I think that Lyric Shame will become an exceptionally important book for anyone interested in the poetics and politics of twentieth and twenty-first century poetry.”

Reviewer (C)

“...the essays that White has published so far are highly finished: they reveal a mind equally adept at close reading and archival work... ...Lyric Shame is a powerful book...”

Reviewer (D)

“Professor White’s scholarship is both rigorous and accessible. ... Her approach is refreshingly open, combining inventive close reading with meticulous historicization of both individual poets’ careers and of American letters more broadly.”

Reviewer (E)

“...[Lyric Shame] is excellent. It is well-researched and engagingly written, intelligent and persuasive; most important, it seeks to inject subtlety and nuance into a debate that has relied too much on caricature and idle polemic.”

Reviewer (F)

“One of the most significant studies of American poetry published in recent decades, Gillian White’s book should be taken seriously by anyone who cares about recent poetry, across the spectrum of contemporary critical and poetic schools. It’s a substantial achievement.”

Reviewer (G)

"...Lyric Shame is an important work, and ought to put to rest all kinds of tired arguments about American poetry, those battling war horses that have served us well but now only look like monuments to old passions. It certainly makes us think again about a whole landscape, and in this sense alone, quite apart from its brilliant local readings, it is an amazing achievement."

Reviewer (H)

"...I don't think any poetry scholars at her career stage surpass White for overall quality of work or maturity of sensibility."

Summary of Recommendation:

Professor White's work represents an impressive record of original research on important and timely subject matter. She has also compiled a strong record of excellence as a teacher and citizen. The Executive Committee of the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts and I recommend that Assistant Professor Gillian C. White be promoted to the rank of associate professor of English language and literature, with tenure, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Susan A. Gelman".

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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