

PROMOTION RECOMMENDATION
THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
COLLEGE OF LITERATURE, SCIENCE, AND THE ARTS

Miranda D. Brown, associate professor of Asian languages and cultures, with tenure, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, is recommended for promotion to professor of Asian languages and cultures, with tenure, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts.

Academic Degrees:

Ph.D.	2002	University of California, Berkeley
M.A.	1999	University of California, Berkeley
B.A.	1996	University of California, Berkeley

Professional Record:

2008 – Present	Associate Professor, Department of Asian Languages and Cultures, University of Michigan
2002 – 2008	Assistant Professor, Department of Asian Languages and Cultures, University of Michigan

Summary of Evaluation:

Teaching – Professor Brown has been one of the department’s most innovative teachers over the past five years. She designed and developed a 200-level course entitled “Introduction to Chinese Civilization” that now regularly attracts 150-200 students. Professor Brown has successfully brought her own research into the classroom to develop new and exciting courses on Chinese medicine (the subject of her new book), a topic that is proving to be of great interest to a wide range of students. She has also been a leader in developing tools for web-based instruction in the area of Chinese studies.

Research – Professor Brown is a historian of ancient China, examining the development of Chinese culture from the beginning around 3,000 years ago to the fall of the Han Dynasty in 220 CE. This is the formative period of Chinese culture, during which many of the most influential Chinese classics, including the foundational works of Confucianism and Daoism, were produced. One of the primary sources for her research is Chinese tomb inscriptions that have been preserved on bamboo strips, as well as inscriptions on stone stelae. Although trained as a historian, Professor Brown’s work extends into the disciplines of philosophy, religion, sociology, and medicine. There has been a significant increase in her scholarly productivity since her tenure review (including the founding of a new interdisciplinary journal, *Fragments: Interdisciplinary Approaches to the Study of Ancient and Medieval Pasts*). Her most recent work is expanding into new areas with a notable maturity of perspective.

Recent and Significant Publications:

The Art of Medicine in Early China: The Ancient and Medieval Origins of a Modern Archive,
Cambridge University Press, forthcoming, 2015.

“Who was he? Reflections on China’s first medical naturalist,” *Medical History*, 56(3), 2012, pp. 366-389.

“Returning the gaze: An experiment in reviving Gu Yanwu (1613-1682),” *Fragments: Interdisciplinary Approaches to the Study of Ancient and Medieval Pasts*, 1, 2011, pp. 41-87.

A Brief History of Chinese Civilization (revised 3rd edition), with C. Schirokauer, Thomson/Wadsworth, 2011.

Service – Professor Brown has served as the director of undergraduate studies and chair of the Curriculum Committee. In the latter, she worked to reform the department’s offerings by removing outdated courses, renaming current courses, and designing new courses. Two new gateway courses she designed can be taught by several members of the department: “Great Cities of Asia” and “Food of Asia.” She also established a teaching rotation for these courses. In addition, she standardized the syllabus of a 300-level junior-senior colloquium that is taught each term by multiple faculty in multiple sections because of the large number of majors in Asian Languages and Culture.

External Reviewers:

Reviewer (A)

“There can be little doubt that the body of her scholarship amply qualifies her for the rank of full professor in a major research institution; indeed, although I have not been asked to compare against the norms of promotion at other institutions, I cannot resist commenting that I believe this to be true for any university in the U.S. Of particular importance is how much she has done in the last few years.”

Reviewer (B)

“On a more general plane the sophisticated comparative-theoretical interests of Dr. Brown are also reflected in the many co-authorships visible in her recent work and eloquently stressed in her teaching statement from the perspective of methodology. They reveal not only a very outgoing and communicative personality of a mature scholar, able to accept and consider criticism, and to offer straightforward and thoughtful suggestions about the work of others, but also a teaching ethos interested in the development of a lively, state-of-the art curriculum, including new teaching technology.”

Reviewer (C)

“Professor Brown is not only contributing to academic discussion; she offers a distinctive vision of Chinese studies, linking the theories of such a scholar and thinker as Gu Yanwu to leading theorists of the Western tradition. This is a challenging theme, which will raise many arguments, but the debate is important and timely, and Professor Brown will surely play a leading role.”

Reviewer (D)

“Prof. Brown is already a widely recognized historian of early China... ...[she] has already acquired national visibility by virtue of her first monograph and her co-authored Brief History of Chinese Civilization. Her forthcoming Art of Medicine in Early China will further enhance that visibility. In my view, Prof. Brown has certainly demonstrated clear evidence of sufficient progress to warrant promotion to full professor in an outstanding research program.”

Reviewer (E)

“...[Professor Brown’s] most significant work to date is her forthcoming book, *The Art of Medicine in Early China*. In a nutshell, it is a study of how the history of Chinese medicine came to be couched as a literature ‘chronicling the careers of great men’...rather than the sociology of practice. ... It belongs on any list of required readings for Chinese medicine, and probably early China generally.”

Reviewer (F)

“...Professor Brown is a scholar of range, depth, and multiple achievement. ...[she] has systematically and steadfastly worked, both in her own research and in very practical field-making ways, toward making that vision real both within the China field and without. I have found my thinking about my own period, and about Chinese history at large, greatly enriched by her work. She most assuredly deserves promotion to full professor.”

Reviewer (G)

“What makes Miranda Brown’s work so significant is that she has an excellent ability not only to read texts with tremendous care and nuance but also to see the larger implications of each of the texts she studies. She is a truly excellent historian. ... Her books and articles are highly significant and important works that are forcing a re-thinking of many of our long-held assumptions concerning early Chinese history and culture.”

Summary of Recommendation:

Professor Brown has played a central role in revitalizing the study of ancient China. She has made significant contributions to the curriculum in Asian languages and cultures and has served her department and the broader community in important ways. The Executive Committee of the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts and I recommend that Associate Professor Miranda D. Brown be promoted to the rank of professor of Asian languages and cultures, with tenure, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts.



Andrew D. Martin
Dean, and Professor of Political Science
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts

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