

Approved by the  
Regents  
May 21, 2015

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

Robin R. Means Coleman, associate professor of communication studies, with tenure, and associate professor of Afroamerican and African Studies, with tenure, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, is recommended for promotion to professor of communication studies, with tenure, and professor of Afroamerican and African studies, with tenure, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts.

Academic Degrees:

Ph.D.	1996	Bowling Green State University
M.A.	1993	University of Missouri
B.A.	1991	Chatham College

Professional Record:

2011 – present	Associate Professor, Department of Afroamerican and African Studies, University of Michigan
2005 – present	Associate Professor, Department of Communication Studies, University of Michigan
2005 – 2011	Associate Professor, Center for Afroamerican and African Studies, University of Michigan
2002 – 2005	Associate Professor, Department of Communication, University of Pittsburgh
1998 – 2002	Assistant Professor, Department of Culture and Communication, New York University
1996 – 1998	Post-doctoral Fellowship, Department of Communication, University of Pittsburgh

Summary of Evaluation:

Teaching – Professor Coleman is a dedicated teacher who has willingly and repeatedly taught required service courses in both departments at the undergraduate and graduate levels. Her courses focus on the representations of underrepresented minorities, particularly African Americans, in the media and on the consequences of those depictions. Professor Coleman has been an especially effective and outstanding mentor for graduate students and has played a central role in facilitating and expediting their progress through the communication studies Ph.D. program. She regularly teaches an upper-level course that trains graduate student instructors to be effective teachers. Her teaching is a central component to exposing students to issues of diversity and to training future faculty.

Research – Professor Coleman is one of the top scholars in the country working on race and the media. Her work is widely acclaimed as innovative, multi-methodological, and transdisciplinary. She has written two sole-authored books, two edited anthologies, a textbook, twelve book chapters, and fourteen articles. Two of her books, African American Viewers and the Black Situation Comedy: Situating Racial Humor and Fight the Power! The Spike Lee Reader, have been awarded prizes by the African American Communication and Culture Division of the

National Communication Association. Professor Coleman is in the process of completing a groundbreaking study of the history of the NAACP's media activism since the debut of the racially inflammatory film, Birth of a Nation, in 1915.

Recent and Significant Publications:

Intercultural Communication for Everyday Life, with J. Baldwin, et al., Wiley-Blackwell Publishing, 2014.

Horror Noire: Blacks in American Horror Films from the 1890s to Present, Routledge, 2011.

Fight the Power! The Spike Lee Reader, with J. Hamlet (co-ed.), Peter Lang, 2009.

"The future of the past: Religion and womanhood in the films of Tyler Perry, Eloyce Gist, and Spencer Williams, Jr.," with T. Williams in Interpreting Tyler Perry, R. Jackson, II and J. Bell (eds.), Routledge, 2013, pp. 152-165.

Service – Professor Coleman's service record is absolutely exemplary. She has been an indefatigable contributor to the service needs of both of her departments as well as to the college and the university. She is an associate chair for graduate studies in Communication Studies, serves on numerous committees in DAAS, and is on the Advisory Board for ADVANCE, the search committee for the associate vice president of finance, and the Rackham Graduate School's Executive Board, to name some of her service commitments.

External Reviewers:

Reviewer (A)

"...[Professor Coleman] is a terrific scholar with an international reputation for excellence. Her work is rigorous from both methodological and critical perspectives. ... She can traverse multiple fields, methods and reading demographics with grace and persistence. Honestly, when I was first asked to assess her work, my first thought was: ['Isn't she already a full Professor?']"

Reviewer (B)

"Dr. Coleman's record of scholarship, both quantitatively and qualitatively, is stellar. ... Her scholarly work is clearly highly valued by her colleagues as evidenced by the fact that she has served on the editorial boards or as reviewer for 15 prominent journals... ..I would situate her among the top scholars in the field of communication who address issues of representation and identity... Her record is remarkable..."

Reviewer (C)

"Her service on more than a dozen editorial boards of core journals within, and concerned with media studies stands as a marker of very high regard, as does the great variety of journals and publications that have sought her opinion as a reviewer. ...I have nothing but admiration for the scholarship that has been, and will continue to be produced by Dr. Robin Means Coleman."

Reviewer (D)

"[Professor Coleman] is an excellent scholar who is making critical and insightful contributions to research in the areas of race and the media, Black popular culture and audience ethnography. In comparing her dossier to those at other peer institutions...[Professor Coleman's] body of scholarship is by far the most impressive and rich collection of diverse yet interrelated publications that I have had the pleasure of reading. ... Something that really struck me as an

incredible strength...is the breadth and depth of her knowledge regarding theory and literature on every issue she examines..."

Reviewer (E)

"Professor Coleman's trans-disciplinary work is nuanced and complex. She has earned a place among the most well respected scholars in communication and Africana Studies... No one in the field occupies the void she has remarkably filled with her research. ... Her research rigor is exceptional. Her reputation as a...media scholar is impeccable."

Reviewer (F)

"Professor Means Coleman is an influential scholar of race and mass media... Taken as a whole, her scholarship is a constant reminder that ideologies of race and difference permeate every aspect of global media culture and play a critical role in structuring the life chances of African Americans and other subaltern communities."

Reviewer (G)

"...Professor Coleman has a reputation for original and innovative work on genres that...tend to be culturally devalued. ...[her] research thus constitutes an incredibly important intervention into how scholars think about both audiences and content... ... Professor Coleman's contributions to the interdisciplinary field of media studies are...consistent, rigorous, and significant."

Reviewer (H):

"Professor Coleman is an incredibly generative and productive scholar. ...her work is path breaking in many respects, opening up the scholarly canon to new kinds of questions, inquiries, and modes of analysis that are at once fresh, theoretically based and analytically astute. ...it is scholarship that is incredibly rich, engaged, and informed."

Summary of Recommendation:

Professor Coleman's scholarship is innovative and influential. She is dedicated to teaching that advances students' understanding of the importance of diversity, and she has provided outstanding service to the university at all levels. The Executive Committee of the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts and I recommend that Associate Professor Robin R. Means Coleman be promoted to the rank of professor of communication studies, with tenure, and professor of Afroamerican and African studies, with tenure, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts.



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

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