

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

Omolade Adunbi, assistant professor of Afroamerican and African studies, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, is recommended for promotion to associate professor of Afroamerican and African studies, with tenure, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts.

Academic Degrees:

Ph.D.	2010	Yale University
M.Phil.	2006	Yale University
M.A.	2004	Yale University
B.A.	1992	Ondo State University

Professional Record:

2010 – present	Assistant Professor, Department of Afroamerican and African Studies (DAAS), University of Michigan
2010 – present	Faculty Associate, Program in the Environment (PitE), University of Michigan

Summary of Evaluation:

Teaching – Professor Adunbi is an outstanding teacher. Within DAAS, he teaches core courses alongside specialized classes rooted in his research expertise. He also teaches for PitE, where he is affiliated with the Environmental Justice minor. Of special note is his 300-level cross-listed course on “Environmental Politics,” which has grown in enrollment by over 100% and now supports a GSI position. DAAS does not have a doctoral program; hence, Professor Adunbi has served on only two dissertation committees, but he has mentored numerous undergraduate honors and Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program (UROP) students.

Research – Professor Adunbi is a prolific scholar whose research expands the boundaries of knowledge about oil economies and the competing interests of community livelihoods, state agendas, NGO activities, and multinational corporate resource extraction. His reputation as one of the top scholars studying oil politics in both Africa and beyond is quickly increasing. Praise for his recently published book, *Oil Wealth and Insurgency in Nigeria*, highlights Professor Adunbi’s long term engagement with Niger Delta communities and his cogent analysis of corporate oil extraction—and the violence and human rights abuses it produces. He is currently working on two new projects: one on heritage claims to oil wealth in other African contexts, and a second on Chinese investments in Nigeria. In addition to his book, Professor Adunbi recently published three peer-reviewed articles. Additionally, he has three articles in press and a seventh under review. Two of the published articles are condensed versions of chapters from his book; the remaining five (three of which are co-authored) represent Professor Adunbi’s growth beyond the book into new research areas concerning human rights, freedom of information, NGOs, and social media-ated politics.

Recent and Significant Publications:

“Embodying the modern: Neoliberalism, NGOs and the culture of human rights practices in Nigeria,” *Anthropological Quarterly*, forthcoming.

Oil Wealth and Insurgency in Nigeria, Indiana University Press, 2015.

“‘Whose freedom? Whose information?’ Discourses on freedom of information policies,” with S. Avle, *Journal of Information Policy*, 5, 2015, pp. 179-203.

“Mythic oil: Resources, belonging and the politics of claim-making among Ilaje Yorùbás,” *Africa, Journal of the International African Institute*, 83(2), 2013, pp. 293-313.

Service – Professor Adunbi directs the Honors Program in DAAS and has served on the departmental Curriculum and Executive Committees. He was elected to the UM Faculty Senate and helps oversee the Environmental Justice minor in PitE. Professor Adunbi also served as a co-chair of the 2013-2014 program committee for the annual meeting of the African Studies Association (the largest scholarly organization focusing on Africa), and on the Review Committee for President Obama’s Young African Leaders Initiative/Mandela Fellowship, in addition to reviewing manuscripts for numerous journals and academic publishers.

External Reviewers:

Reviewer (A)

“So informed, Adunbi offers a highly productive and truly original conceptualization of the terms of resource-based politics. Returning to classic themes of African studies, he identifies the involvements of transnational oil companies as a new form of ‘indirect rule’ at work in Nigeria’s oil delta in collusion with state actors as well as non-governmental organizations.”

Reviewer (B)

“Adunbi offers wonderful evidence of a plethora of movements using right-based discourses, how leaders sought and cemented connections with transnational organizations, and how many of the leaders ultimately became co-opted in the very system they ostensibly resisted. There is a tendency in the media—and in some scholarship—to either heroicize or criminalize rebels. Adunbi resists both tendencies and offers one of the best discussions of the often violent politics in the region that is currently available.”

Reviewer (C)

“He is a fearless scholar working in an area where even the brave tread with caution. In that terrain, Adunbi has carved out a niche that equally serves the need of scholars and governments, while contributing to the important discourse on the Niger Delta.”

Reviewer (D)

“Dr. Adunbi’s book, *Oil Wealth and Insurgency in Nigeria*, is a significant contribution to the work on the governance of natural resources in Africa. In it, he looks broadly at how oil has structured regimes of rule in Nigeria, through the state-like effects of transnational oil companies, the militarization of the Nigerian petro-state, the formation and transformations over time of human and environmental rights groups, and the sporadic emergence of more militant forms of opposition to the state and oil companies such as MEND. Dr. Adunbi weaves together arguments about ancestral promise and expectations of oil wealth and the jarring spectacle of wealth in the form of skyscrapers and modern cities to explain the rise of new and diverse forms of what he calls ‘oil consciousness’ and ‘oil activism’ in Nigeria...”

Reviewer (E)

“Similar to the best anthropological treatises out there, Professor Adunbi’s book sizzles with the sight, taste, and sound of the *place* of analysis, the oil-bearing Nigerian Delta. ...[His] analysis navigates nimbly between the lives of individual subjects and the socio-economic and political structures that simultaneously facilitate and impede their agency. The book’s creative and intelligent imbrication of history, indigeneity, locality, globality, and transnational agency makes it a worthwhile addition to the canon, and guarantees that it will be a point of reference in the field for the foreseeable future.”

Reviewer (F)

“...[Oil Wealth and Insurgency in Nigeria] is an exceptionally valuable study of oil and violence... Violence and oil have often gone hand in hand, of course, but Adunbi has given us some new ways to think about this relationship in the neoliberal twenty-first century. One of his most compelling insights here is that participation in NGOs and membership in insurgent groups is very fluid, with the same figures, kinds of knowledge and discourse, and mobilizing strategies moving back and forth across the NGO/insurgency line quite easily and rapidly, tracking with and responding to minute shifts in the encompassing Nigerian and global oil complex.”

Reviewer (G)

“Dr. Adunbi’s intellectual curiosity, exceptional research and writing skills, and his dedication to long term scholarship in Nigeria make him a fine anthropologist. His thorough understanding of anthropological theory and the socio-cultural issues associated with extractive resources, land use, oil, human rights, impunity, violence, and historical memory make him an excellent scholar. ... His book *Oil Wealth and Insurgency in Nigeria* more than met the very high expectations his panel presentations had engendered. This work is innovative and nuanced.”

Reviewer (H)

“Adunbi’s analysis has both historical depth and comparative breadth; it combines insightful political analysis with theoretical sophistication and sharp cultural critique. ...Adunbi’s work stands out for its ethnographic depth and the compelling nature of the story he tells.”

Summary of Recommendation:

Professor Adunbi’s scholarship is excellent and his contributions to the teaching program are diverse and valuable. He is also an active member of his community. The Executive Committee of the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts and I recommend that Assistant Professor Omolade Adunbi be promoted to the rank of associate professor of Afroamerican and African studies, with tenure, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts.



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

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