

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

Santiago Colás, associate professor of comparative literature, with tenure, and associate professor in the Residential College, without tenure, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, is recommended for promotion to professor of comparative literature, with tenure, and professor in the Residential College, without tenure, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts.

Academic Degrees:

1991	Ph.D.	Duke University
1987	B.A.	University of Wisconsin, Madison

Professional Record:

2008 – present	Associate Professor, Department of Comparative Literature and the Residential College, University of Michigan
1996 – 2008	Associate Professor, Program in Comparative Literature (granted departmental status in 2007) and Department of Romance Languages and Literatures, University of Michigan
1992 – 1996	Assistant Professor, Department of Romance Languages and Literatures, University of Michigan

Summary of Evaluation:

Teaching – Professor Colás has received high praise from his students for his undergraduate and graduate courses. He has developed a number of highly innovative courses that draw large and growing enrollments. His curricular contributions in Comparative Literature and the Residential College have been singularly successful, and he was recently awarded LSA’s individual award for Outstanding Contributions to Undergraduate Education. Professor Colás has mentored a significant number of graduate students in Comparative Literature and other humanities departments, where he has served on more than twenty doctoral committees.

Research – After working as a highly regarded specialist in Latin-American literature for many years, Professor Colás recently re-oriented his research and has emerged as a force in the emerging interdisciplinary field of sports culture studies. His forthcoming book, Ball Don’t Lie!, is expected to make a major impact, re-orienting the discourse and setting new research agendas. He is also the author of thirty articles. He regularly makes media appearances and is in the process of establishing himself as a highly visible practitioner of public humanities.

Recent and Significant Publications:

Ball Don’t Lie! Myth, Genealogy and Invention in the Cultures of Basketball, Temple University Press, in press.

“Getting free: The arts and politics of basketball modernity,” *Journal of Sport and Social Issues*, 9(4), 2015, pp. 267-286 (first published online November 22, 2014).

“The difference that time makes: Hopelessness and potency in Borges’ ‘El Aleph,’” in *Thinking with Borges*, W. Egginton and D. Johnson (eds.), Davies Group Publishers, 2009, pp. 87-101.

Service – Professor Colás’ service contributions have been substantive. He has served as director of Graduate Studies in two departments, is a member of the Advisory Board on Intercollegiate Athletics (ABIA) and its Academic Performance Committee, and was named as UM’s representative to the national Coalition of Intercollegiate Athletics (COIA), where he has been an outspoken advocate for student-athlete intellectual, physical, and emotion well-being.

External Reviewers:

Reviewer (A)

“...[Balls Don't Lie!] is the first book, to my knowledge, that applies techniques of literary criticism to the history of basketball, even as it bridges disciplinary approaches and provides a significant contribution to sport history. It provides a thoughtful and engaging way to approach a sport that has come to occupy a central place in American culture, and it offers important food for thought that will influence both sport historians and popular writers about basketball. The book will further inject...[Professor Colás] into a national and international community of historians, cementing him as one of the leading thinkers on the history and culture of basketball.”

Reviewer (B)

“...what Colas’ work seeks to accomplish in this phase of his career is to produce a language for sport, a language of love and loss, a language that can give voice to victory, pain, politics, inter-generational conflict (Jordan versus Lebron), defeat, joy, race, utter numbness ... To write of sport as one would of a glorious sunset; to produce a poetice [sic] language worthy of the love sport engenders in those who give their lives to it.”

Reviewer (C)

“...[Colás] strikes me [as] a terrific scholar who’s clearly deserving of promotion to full. His level of productivity and visibility is very high with two books and a long list of articles and chapter[s] in prominent journals and edited volumes. The quality of his work is just as impressive. Colas works, in the best interdisciplinary tradition, at the intersection of ... literature, history, philosophy, and cultural studies... All of his scholarship is marked by great intelligence, originality, and strong sense of commitment to opening up new ways of seeing the world.”

Reviewer (D)

“As a group, the essays on Cortázar and invention are interesting, even important in that they amount to a clear articulation of a style of literary criticism that remains theoretical and political without, however, falling into either the decolonial or the deconstructive camp. In short, Colás appears to have been looking for a way out of that argument.”

Reviewer (E)

“...I predict that his forthcoming (2016, Temple University) book, will make unique contributions to the sport studies literature. This book is among a handful of texts that assess the narrative impact and cultural meanings of basketball. ... Structured around central ‘myths’ or the commonsense ideological lore of basketball, *Ball[s] Don't Lie!* offer[s] extended analysis of the themes Dr. Colás introduces in several published articles... [T]he book combines cultural criticism with phenomenological evaluation to counter these myths by providing numerous

genealogies including critical analyses of basketball desegregation, amateurism, 'ghettocentric' blackness, morals and resentment."

Reviewer (F)

"Reading the Jordan dunk against the Jordan jump-shot for example or the careful description of the 12 second play when Allen Iverson scores and foreshadows the end of the Jordan's era...or the court movement of Manu Ginobili's style, offer[s] a unique way to understand and appreciate the phenomenological, philosophical and aesthetic dimensions of sporting style and performance and the affective dimensions of this on the spectator. ... Colás's [sic] project is to produce new ways to think and write the sporting body and his research is field leading in doing so."

Reviewer (G)

"Dr. Colás can also be commended for 'bringing the body back in' to sport studies. For whatever unfathomable reasons (given the nature of sport practice), much sport studies research has avoided the critical cultural analysis of sport performance, preferring instead to focus on the texts that help constitute the broader sport spectacle or event. As a result, the very embodied nature of sport performance becomes strangely overlooked. ...Colás positions expressive sporting embodiments at the center of his analysis; treating the sporting body as both a material and symbolic manifestation of broader social values that frame individual identities and actions."

Reviewer (H)

"To be sure, his training as a literary theorist and his interdisciplinary approach to his previous work put him in good stead to critically examine sport narratives. But it is not often that we academics make such significant changes in what we study, and it is simply remarkable that despite his relative 'newcomer' status he has, in my view, made a major contribution to the relevant sport study literature. He has clearly embarked upon a major research program and his publications to date show significant intellectual acumen and progress. In short, from what I have reviewed, the quality of his work is first rate and I anticipate that his new book will be received as one of the most important book manuscripts of its critical kind."

Summary of Recommendation:

Professor Colás is a pathbreaking scholar whose national and international visibility is on a steep upward trajectory. His teaching and service contributions to the UM community and the larger academic world are notable. The Executive Committee of the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts and I recommend that Associate Professor Santiago Colás be promoted to the rank of professor of Comparative Literature, with tenure, and professor in the Residential College, without tenure, in the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts.



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

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