

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

Hussein A. Fancy, assistant professor of history, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, is recommended for promotion to associate professor of history, with tenure, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts.

Academic Degrees:

Ph.D.	2008	Princeton University
M.A.	2003	Princeton University
B.A.	1997	Yale University

Professional Record:

2010 – present	Assistant Professor, Department of History, University of Michigan
2007 – 2010	Michigan Society of Fellows, University of Michigan

Summary of Evaluation:

Teaching – Professor Fancy has taught core lecture courses on the history of Europe during the Medieval, Renaissance, and Reformation periods with great success. He has also offered 300- and 400-level colloquia on specific topics in the history of the later Middle Ages. Professor Fancy played a key role in transforming History 110 (Western Civilization) into a new, more global format. He is also a highly respected and admired graduate teacher who has taught the core research seminar for first-year graduate students as well as a more specialized seminar on “political theology.” Professor Fancy plays a pivotal role in the training and mentoring of graduate students in Medieval and pre-Modern Europe.

Research – Professor Fancy is a scholar of social, cultural, and intellectual history of Medieval Spain with a particular emphasis on the relationship between Christianity and Islam in the Iberian Peninsula and North Africa. He is the author of a scholarly monograph, The Mercenary Mediterranean (University of Chicago Press, forthcoming), and of several scholarly articles, including “Theologies of Violence” for which he has received national recognition for his imaginative interpretations of religion and violence. Professor Fancy has also launched a second research project entitled “Sea of Impostors: Law, Slavery and Race in the Medieval Mediterranean,” which will expand the scope of his scholarship to encompass the pre-modern history of criminality and slavery in the Mediterranean.

Recent and Significant Publications:

The Mercenary Mediterranean: Sovereignty, Religion, and Violence in the Medieval Crown of Aragon, University of Chicago Press, forthcoming 2016.

“Monarchs and minorities: ‘Infidel’ soldiers in Mediterranean courts,” in The Globalization of Knowledge in Post-Antiquity: Thābit ibn Qurra and the 40 Mercenaries, S. Brentjes and J. Renn (eds.), Ashgate Publishing, forthcoming January 2016.

“Theologies of violence: The recruitment of Muslim soldiers by the Crown of Aragon,” *Past & Present*, 221(1), 2013, pp. 39-73 (2014 Charles Julian Bishko Memorial Prize).

“The last Almohads: Universal sovereignty between North Africa and the Crown of Aragon,”
Medieval Encounters, 19(102), 2013, pp. 102-136 (reprinted in Spanning the Strait:
Studies in Unity in the Western Mediterranean, Y.-G. Liang, et al. (eds.), Brill, 2013.

Service – Professor Fancy has been an active member of the departmental Undergraduate Committee, which includes advising undergraduate History majors (2012-2014); in that capacity he was one of the authors of an imaginative new interdisciplinary minor in Religion that was launched in 2014. He has leadership roles in the Medieval and Early Modern Studies Program (MEMS), including service on the Executive Committee and chairing the Medieval Lunch series. Professor Fancy has also been a member of the Steering Committee for the Eisenberg Institute for Historical Studies (2014-present).

External Reviewers:

Reviewer (A)

“I would put Professor Fancy’s forthcoming book, *The Mercenary Mediterranean*, and his *Past and Present* article on a list of the most significant recent publications in the field (or fields). Why? In their use of Latin and Romance archival sources as well as Arabic sources (mostly literary) and in their probing analyses of Catalan-Aragonese, Sicilian, Almohad, and Marinid political theologies, Fancy’s publications are methodological *tours de force*.”

Reviewer (B)

“His scholarly production is anchored in an unusual command of languages which is rare to find in the academic North American scene (or in any academic scene, I have to say) and yet it is a capital pre-requisite in the study of medieval Iberian and North African cultures. He is strong in Latin, Spanish, Catalan, and Arabic. This is a very important asset.”

Reviewer (C)

“Professor Fancy also helps us think about distinctions at the center of our practice as historians generally, and not only medievalists. I should add: as students of society, whether anthropologists, political philosophers, or sociologists. His use of medieval material here serves as a staging ground for rethinking our relation to concepts such as religious and secular, concepts that have been formative for early modern and modern thought.”

Reviewer (D)

“Having now had the opportunity to read through Dr. Fancy’s work, I can state unequivocally that it stands at the forefront of a new generation of scholars exploring the place of Muslims in the intersecting fields of medieval Iberian and Mediterranean history. ... Dr. Fancy has published in top scholarly journals, produced a fine book-length monograph forthcoming with a top university press, and continues to be involved in a promising research trajectory.”

Reviewer (E)

“I think he is one of the really outstanding scholars [of his cohort] working on the late medieval Mediterranean, and he will claim a very special place as a historian of the Mediterranean (a field that is now the most important area for medieval studies) and of the connections between different religious groups in the Middle Ages.”

Reviewer (F)

“One of your questions specifically asks if I would place this candidate’s books or articles on a list of the most significant to have appeared recently and there is no question I would rank The Mercenary Mediterranean and ‘Theologies of Violence’...among the most important works published in the last ten years and would assign them to graduate students in my classes on medieval Spain.”

Reviewer (G)

“As Fancy’s impressive forthcoming book, The Mercenary Mediterranean, and its elegant attendant articles show, he is a superb scholar whose work on medieval Iberian and Mediterranean history has already won him international recognition. I would place him among the leaders in a generation of historians [of his cohort] questioning the established paradigms by which scholars have understood interfaith relations among Muslims, Christians, and Jews in the medieval Mediterranean world – one of the hottest areas of medieval studies and one whose findings resonate well beyond the field.”

Reviewer (H)

“Fancy’s next book project, A Sea of Impostors: Law, Slavery and Race in the Medieval Mediterranean is, from his description, brilliant, clever, and unquestionably important. He is an outstanding candidate for promotion to tenure. He is head and shoulders above similar scholars at this point in their careers.”

Reviewer (I)

“I am enormously impressed by the analytical skills he shows and his ability to present his material concisely and clearly; I have no hesitation in recommending Dr[.] Fancy for promotion and tenure.”

Summary of Recommendation:

Professor Fancy is a scholar of Medieval Iberia and North Africa, who situates his empirical work on Christians, Muslims, and Jews in the Medieval Mediterranean in the context of political theology as well as theories of religion and politics. He is also an accomplished classroom teacher as well as an astute and generous citizen in our intellectual community. The Executive Committee of the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts and I recommend that Assistant Professor Hussein A. Fancy be promoted to the rank of associate professor of history, 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

May 2016