

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

Susan Scott Parrish, associate professor of English language and literature, with tenure, associate professor in the Honors Program, without tenure, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, and associate professor of environment, without tenure, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, and School of Natural Resources and Environment, is recommended for promotion to professor of English language and literature, with tenure, professor in the Honors Program, without tenure, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, and professor of environment, without tenure, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, and School of Natural Resources and Environment.

Academic Degrees:

Ph.D.	1998	Stanford University
M.A.	1990	University of California, Berkeley
B.A.	1986	Princeton University

Professional Record:

2014 – present	Associate Professor, Honors Program and Program in the Environment (PitE), University of Michigan
2005 – present	Associate Professor, Department of English Language and Literature, University of Michigan
1998 – 2005	Assistant Professor, Department of English Language and Literature, University of Michigan

Summary of Evaluation:

Teaching – Professor Parrish has established an impressive record of imaginative teaching and inspired mentorship. Her courses in English and PitE range over two centuries of American literature, covering topics such as Colonial and Revolutionary Literature, New World Travel Literature, Environmental Imagination, Race and Environment, and Faulkner, Hurston, and Wright. She regularly teaches, and has proven equally successful at teaching, introductory courses for non-majors, prerequisites for the English major, upper-division courses, and honors and graduate seminars. Professor Parrish's approach to classroom practice centers on care: her own care for her students' learning process and well-being, her students' care for the texts they are reading and their historical contexts, and class participants' care and respect for each other's comments and differing perspectives. Students vindicate the effectiveness of her approach with exceptionally strong course evaluations, and with comments that consistently stress the degree to which she creates an atmosphere of common purpose and mutual respect in her classroom.

Research – Professor Parrish's first book, American Curiosity: Cultures of Natural History in the Colonial British Atlantic World, is a landmark publication in her field. Her second book, The Floor Year 1927: A Cultural History, is acknowledged by external evaluators as another path-breaking work. In the time since her first promotion, Professor Parrish has published nine well-placed articles and a new edition of Robert Beverley's The History and Present State of Virginia. Together, these works delineate her broad range of interests in the environmental humanities and American cultural history. Already a leading scholar in early American literature, Professor Parrish has expanded her expertise into research in the early twentieth century, effectively contributing in important and relevant ways to modernist, environmental, and African-American studies.

Recent and Significant Publications:

The Flood Year 1927: A Cultural History, Princeton University Press, in production.

“As I Lay Dying and the Modern Aesthetics of Ecological Crisis,” in The New Cambridge Companion to William Faulkner, J. Matthews (ed.), Cambridge University Press, 2015.

“Zora Neale Hurston and the environmental ethic of risk,” in American Studies, Ecocriticism, and Citizenship: Thinking and Acting in the Local and Global Commons, J. Adamson and K. Ruffin (eds.), Routledge Press, 2013 (lead chapter).

Robert Beverley, The History and Present State of Virginia (1705), new edition with an introduction by S. S. Parrish, Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture, University of North Carolina Press, 2013.

Service – Professor Parrish has a well-deserved reputation as a generous and able administrator. She has been elected multiple times to the Department of English Language and Literature Executive Committee, and has served with distinction as the director of the Honors Program. As director of the Undergraduate Studies Program, she successfully guided the Department of English Language and Literature through a series of necessary albeit difficult and often contentious conversations about the structure of the undergraduate major.

External Reviewers:

Reviewer (A)

“Professor Parrish is an accomplished scholar of superior gifts as a researcher, an interpreter of aesthetic texts and historical formations, and as a craftsman of analytical prose. Her justly acclaimed first book won her recognition among both literary scholars and historians, a recognition further attested by her subsequent essays for top refereed journals in both fields and by her contributions to a number of recent important collaborative collections. Were I asked to start a department of English or American Studies or an Environmental Humanities division from scratch, she would be one of the first colleagues I would attempt to recruit.”

Reviewer (B)

“...I am pleased to attest that Professor Parrish’s move into new scholarly terrain is one of extraordinary success and accomplishment. I cannot overstate how impressed I am with her new book. *The Flood Year 1927* is simply brilliant—a scholarly tour de force that reconfigures our understanding of a complex set of relations between environment, race, literature, and performance in a revelatory and ground-breaking manner.”

Reviewer (C)

“What you sent me stands as an extraordinarily impressive body of material, impressive especially in its range. ...Parrish writes in such a way as to make her own learning accessible to those outside her field, while sacrificing nothing of that field’s rigor.”

Reviewer (D)

“Professor Parrish’s next monograph will be paradigm shifting. ... This work, coupled with a range of articles from an essay about Virginia to intellectual contributions to the Atlantic World, from slave portraiture to creole subjects in the wake of European empire expansion puts Professor Parrish at the forefront of her fields of inquiry. ...few scholars at the rank of Full Professor have such range and depth of scholarship; this is truly an accomplishment.”

Reviewer (E)

"I have read over, with great interest, the manuscript of her second book, 'The Flood Year 1927: A Cultural History,' and I find that an insightful and very well-written study. I have read a number of works on the 1927 Mississippi flood, but this one may get at the greater meaning of the flood than any other work I have seen."

Reviewer (F)


"I consider Susan Scott Parrish one of the outstanding voices of her generation in American studies, someone who is already a well-established, highly respected scholar, and who is poised...to be a central figure in the next years of American literary scholarship."

Summary of Recommendation:

Professor Parrish continues to craft high-quality, widely admired scholarly works, and has cultivated a deeply caring and intellectually capacious pedagogical style that has garnered the admiration of both her students and colleagues. Her service to the Department of English Language and Literature and the Program in the Environment proves she is an invaluable asset to the university community. The Executive Committee of the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts and I recommend that Associate Professor Susan Scott Parrish be promoted to the rank of professor of English language and literature, with tenure, professor in the Honors Program, without tenure, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, and professor of environment, without tenure, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, and School of Natural Resources and Environment



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



Daniel G. Brown, Interim Dean
Professor of Natural Resources and Environment
School of Natural Resources and Environment

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