

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

Philip S. Hart, assistant professor of communication studies, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, and assistant professor of environment, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts and School of Natural Resources and Environment, is recommended for promotion to associate professor of communication studies, with 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.

Academic Degrees:

Ph.D.	2010	Cornell University
M.S.	2005	University of Oregon
B.S.	2002	University of California, Davis

Professional Record:

2013 – present	Assistant Professor, Department of Communication Studies and Program in the Environment, University of Michigan
2010 – 2013	Assistant Professor, School of Communication, American University

Summary of Evaluation:

Teaching – Professor Hart is a dedicated and attentive teacher. Since his arrival at Michigan, he has drawn on resources at the Center for Research in Learning and Teaching (CRLT) to hone his already stellar classroom skills, resulting in excellent teaching evaluations which are consistently among the best in the department. Professor Hart is able to impart information and raise questions in ways interesting to students. He excels at teaching writing skills to his students. His course on “Environmental Communication: A Guide to Storytelling” is the only one like it on campus. Professor Hart’s undergraduate courses have a potentially critical impact for students’ future leadership in the area of sustainability. Additionally, Professor Hart offers a small graduate seminar, and runs a research group with three graduate students in which he mentors them and trains them in theory, methodologies, and the practical aspects of research.

Research – Professor Hart’s research addresses a diverse set of important topics about the environment, science, and perceptions of risk, with a particular focus on climate change. His work uses content analysis to investigate how such messages are framed in media, as well as a more social psychological approach to examine reception, that is, how people process and make sense of information and its impact on the likelihood of taking action in response. Professor Hart’s research is theoretically grounded, methodologically sophisticated, and characteristically interdisciplinary. He is rapidly becoming well-cited and ranks among the top of his peers. He not only produces a steady stream of high-quality work, but also publishes this work in well-established specialty journals as well as some of the most visible and respected journals in the communication studies discipline. Professor Hart is a collaborative and resourceful colleague in terms of co-authorship and acquisition of internal and external funding, and in terms of building bridges across disciplinary and institutional lines.

Recent and Significant Publications:

“The impact of climate change-related imagery and text on public opinion and behavior change,”  
with L. Feldman, *Science Communication*, 38(4), 2016, pp. 415-441.

- “Public attention to science and political news and support for climate change mitigation,” with E. C. Nisbet and T. A. Myers, *Nature: Climate Change*, 5, 2015, pp. 541-545.
- “Communication about invasive species: How ‘driver’ and ‘passenger’ models influence public willingness to take action,” with B. L. Larson, *Conservation Letters*, 7(6), 2014, pp. 545-552.
- “Boomerang effects in science communication: Political partisanship, social identity and public support for climate mitigation,” with E. C. Nisbet, *Communication Research*, 39, 2012, pp. 701-723 (selected as the top published paper in Science, Health, Environmental and Risk Communication in 2012 by the ComSHER division of AEJMC).

Service – Professor Hart is an active member of the Department of Communication Studies and the Program in the Environment (PitE). He has participated in lecturer reviews and served as a member of PitE’s Curriculum and Scholarship Committees. Professor Hart formally advises one graduate student in Communication Studies and is co-advisor to another. He also mentors other graduate students as co-author or in his research lab. Professor Hart’s service orientation is perhaps most evident in his leadership positions with the Communication Science, Health, Environment, and Risk Division (CommSHER) of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC). Next year, he will serve as a division head. He has also served on two editorial boards for peer-reviewed journals and as a reviewer for a number of highly respected journals and conferences. Additionally, Professor Hart was an advisor for the Environmental Protection Agency in 2011 to help develop priorities for subsequent funding strategies for social science research.

External Reviewers:

Reviewer (A)

“The work of Sol’s that I most appreciate, and which I tend to cite, is his work demonstrating the effects of specific message frames. He typically does a nice job creating clear, theory driven conditions and reporting the results in a clear way... This work does useful work in demonstrating how communication choices that those involved in risk issues make need to be carefully considered and tested.”

Reviewer (B)

“In sum, Dr. Hart is a successful and rising environmental and science communication scholar, with an impressive number of peer-reviewed publications, and some early success at grantwriting [sic]. He has contributed to better understanding of several communications processes, including boomerang effects and a variety of framing effects, especially in the context of climate change communications.”

Reviewer (C)

“In terms of [the] quality of his research, I can start by saying that Professor Hart’s research has been tremendously insightful and helpful for my own ongoing research (particularly on news coverage of climate change). I can continue by saying that his research contributions across risk and environmental communication more broadly – from the questions he poses to the methods he constructs and to the insights he gains from the work – are moving intersecting fields forward on some of the most vexing and challenging topics at the contemporary human-environment interface.”

Reviewer (D)

“After reviewing P. Solomon Hart’s materials for promotion, I find—without equivocation—that his research accomplishments, scholarly trajectory and future promise meet the University of Michigan’s criteria for promotion to associate professor with tenure. Overall, the quality and breadth of his empirical work in environmental communication, the strong theoretical underpinning that

guides his research, the theoretical significance of this work, the caliber of his methodologies, and his pursuit of work that carries the prospect of improving social discourse and public understanding of science all point to an impressive start to a fruitful and distinguished career in academe.”

Reviewer (E)

“Professor Hart is producing work of high quality at a rate that puts him at the very top of peers in the pre-tenure period of their careers. I can think of few senior scholars who accomplished as much or have been cited as often as Professor Hart, even if you only count work completed since 2013. ...Professor Hart’s scholarship is ‘getting out there’ and making a difference.”

Reviewer (F)

“He is strongly conceptual in his approaches to research questions and applies good analytical strategies to his data. One might describe his primary programmatic focus as exploring communication factors affecting the public presentation and reception of climate change information. That focus does not rely on a single theoretical orientation...Hart seems to, instead, let his conceptual and analytical efforts arise from the questions that he poses in any single research effort.”

Summary of Recommendation:

Professor Hart’s research contributes innovation and quality along with practical impact to several disciplines and units. He is a very strong teacher and has made an impact with his service contributions. We, along with the Executive Committees of the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts and the School of Natural Resources and Environment, recommend that Assistant Professor Philip S. Hart be promoted to the rank of associate professor of communication studies, with tenure, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, and associate professor of the environment, without tenure, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts and School of Natural Resources and Environment.



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

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