

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

Katharine M. Jenckes, associate professor of Spanish, with tenure, Department of Romance Languages and Literatures, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, is recommended for promotion to professor of Spanish, with tenure, Department of Romance Languages and Literatures, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts.

Academic Degrees:

Ph.D., M.A.	2001	University of Oregon
B.A.	1992	Reed College

Professional Record:

2011 – present	Associate Professor, Department of Romance Languages and Literatures, University of Michigan
2005 – 2011	Assistant Professor, Department of Romance Languages and Literatures, University of Michigan
2003 - 2005	Assistant Professor, Department of Hispanic Studies, Rice University
2002 – 2003	Visiting Assistant Professor, Department of Spanish, Reed College
1999 – 2001	Visiting Lecturer, Department of Romance Studies, Duke University

Summary of Evaluation:

Teaching – Professor Jenckes has demonstrated teaching excellence in a wide range of undergraduate and graduate courses, and a high level of commitment to students and the teaching of Latin American studies, with a particular emphasis on the Southern Cone (Chile and Argentina). Her undergraduate courses provide a solid historical overview of contemporary Latin America and help students familiarize themselves with its major contemporary literary, cultural, and social trends. Professor Jenckes’ graduate courses primarily focus on humanism, aesthetics, ideology, and political theory in Latin America. Overall, student evaluations range in the middle and top university and college quartiles. Student comments often include praise for the clarity of her explanations, approachable demeanor in class, and presenting the material in an interesting manner. They are very enthusiastic about her, often remarking that she is “a great professor” and praising the quality of her instruction. Professor Jenckes has been a dedicated graduate advisor; she has chaired seven dissertation committees and is currently chairing three more, in addition to serving on sixteen other dissertation committees, past and present.

Research – For well over a decade, Professor Jenckes’ research has been situated in the theoretical Latin Americanist humanities, with a particular interest in the intersection between literature and the historical and ethico-political concerns of Chile and Argentina, which are in the Southern Cone region of Latin America. Her publications explore the relation between poetry, historicity, and political terror in societies marked by the institutional and cultural legacies of authoritarian rule and violence. Drawing on the major debates of the 1980s and 1990s on the relation between testimony and the human rights response to military repression in the Southern Cone, her latest work examines the ways in which Southern Cone poetry and visual arts question the relation between humanism and the veracity of witnessing and acting. Professor Jenckes’

second book manuscript, Witnessing Beyond the Human, is forthcoming from SUNY Press in 2017. External reviewers express substantive praise for this project, emphasizing her meticulous analysis of literary texts and visual pieces; the sophistication, originality, and lucidity of her ideas; her compelling attention to language; and her detailed conceptual/ theoretical acumen. Her second book consolidates her position as a significant voice in the field of Latin American cultural studies. Professor Jenckes has also published two articles in peer-reviewed venues.

Recent and Significant Publications:

Witnessing Beyond the Human: Addressing the Alterity of the Other in Post-Coup Chile and Argentina, SUNY Press, forthcoming 2017.

“Juan Gelman’s open letters: Mourning and *mundo* beyond militancy,” in *The New Centennial Review*, 14(1), 2014, pp. 153-174.

“Deconstruction and Latinamericanism, reconsidered (A propos John Beverley’s *Latinamericanism After 9/11*),” *Política común*, 4, 2013, pp. 4-10.

Service – Professor Jenckes has a solid record of service. She has served on the departmental Graduate and Executive committees, as a member of the Spanish Curriculum Committee and lecturer review committees, as Spanish advisor, and for several terms as a faculty mentor of junior faculty. Professor Jenckes has been active in contributing to the intellectual life of the department by serving on the Keniston Lecture Committee, which invites distinguished scholars in the humanities and social sciences to lecture to the university community as a whole, and by bringing prominent scholars to the university. Professor Jenckes is a responsible, hard-working, professional, and insightful colleague.

External Reviewers:

Reviewer (A)

“...[in Witnessing Beyond the Human] Jenckes explores the distinction between witnessing (actual seeing) and bearing witness (actual testimony), showing that ‘witnessing’ in general is grounded upon the impossibility of the coincidence of these two components (witnessing, bearing witness) of testimony. From that commencement, Jenckes presents wonderful readings of a range of authors, and also a range of genres... Jenckes does not select from distinct genres in the interest of diversity. She does so because the different mediums, in Jenckes’s [sic] able hands, alter the nature, meaning, and import of the theme of witnessing.”

Reviewer (B)

“She is internationally known and highly regarded. ... She is a wonderful writer, a fine scholar and theorist. She is on the leading edge of work in the theoretical/philosophical interpretation of Latin American cultural production.”

Reviewer (C)

“The Jenckes writings I know and have read with all the attention that they demand and deserve demonstrate high intellectual capabilities and disciplined critical purpose. I place the work on Borges and Benjamin at the very top of what I set aside for consultation and study... With [Witnessing Beyond the Human]...forthcoming and considering such an outstanding body of work as thus far produced, the promotion to Full Professor is both well justified and timed.”

Reviewer (D)

“The book’s greatest strength has to do with the way it pushes literary criticism well beyond what we’ve seen in Latin American literary studies until now, with only very few exceptions... It combines theoretical sophistication with elegant, rigorous close readings of poetry, narrative, and photocollage, at a time when many scholars feel compelled to choose between the two. ...it is the first book to carry out a deeply Derridean analysis of post-dictatorship testimonial aesthetics in the Southern Cone.”

Reviewer (E)

“If it is true the critic reveals herself at the outset in her very choice of objects, Jenckes once again demonstrated to be a skillful critic in her second book. Her choice of poet Juan Gelman, visual artist Eugenio Dittborn, and novelists Roberto Bolaño and Sergio Chejfec provide the perfect focus for an interpretive effort on the limits and the instability of the human, particularly as the postdictatorial and/or border environments depicted by these works offer ample subsidy for that reading.”

Reviewer (F)

“This is important work. ...Jenckes’s major contribution, not to Latin Americanism...but to the subfield of literary ethics that concerns itself with the status of *witnessing*, that is, her introduction of the notion of radical *possibility*. ...classic accounts of witnessing both seek to take a distance from, and also presuppose and perpetuate, an established conception of what it means to be human. Jenckes’ work seeks to exacerbate, and then to move beyond, the contradiction on which classic witnessing stands. The *modality* of the possible is her primary operator here: what would it mean to be a witness, not to what is or is not the case...but to what *possibly* is?”

Summary of Recommendation:

Professor Jenckes is an excellent scholar of contemporary Latin American literary and cultural studies. She is also a highly valued and committed teacher in the Spanish undergraduate and graduate programs, and is always willing to serve in departmental administration. The Executive Committee of the College of Literature, Sciences, and the Arts and I recommend that Associate Professor Katharine M. Jenckes be promoted to the rank of professor of Spanish, with tenure, Department of Romance Languages and Literature, College of Literatures, 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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