

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

Giorgio Bertellini, associate professor of screen arts and cultures, with tenure, and associate professor of romance languages and literatures, without tenure, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, is recommended for promotion to professor of screen arts and cultures, with tenure, and professor of romance languages and literatures, without tenure, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts.

Academic Degrees:

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| Ph.D. | 2001 | New York University  |
| M.A.  | 1994 | New York University  |
| B.A.  | 1991 | Universita Cattolica |

Professional Record:

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| 2010 – present | Associate Professor, Department of Screen Arts and Cultures and Department of Romance Languages and Literatures, University of Michigan        |
| 2004 – 2010    | Assistant Professor, Department of Screen Arts and Cultures and Department of Romance Languages and Literatures, University of Michigan        |
| 2001 – 2004    | Post-doctoral Fellow, Michigan Society of Fellows, and Visiting Assistant Professor, Program in Film and Video Studies, University of Michigan |

Summary of Evaluation:

Teaching – Professor Bertellini is a dedicated teacher who sees himself as a mentor for both undergraduate and graduate students. At the undergraduate level, he has taught elective courses on Italian cinema and Italian-American film and culture, serving the Department of Screen Arts and Cultures and the Department of Romance Languages and Cultures. Student evaluations mark Professor Bertellini as a demanding teacher and consistently praise his enthusiasm. Through his support of the Undergraduate Research Opportunity Program (UROP), he has mentored more than twenty students. At the graduate level, Professor Bertellini has taught one of Screen Arts and Cultures' core requirements as well as seminars on film stardom and propaganda in film. His greatest strength as a teacher has been his work with Ph.D. students, whose evaluations of his teaching and mentoring are very high. Students frequently express appreciation for Professor Bertellini's encouragement to pursue their own research topics and for the intellectual freedom and trust this gives them. Individualizing his intellectual guidance is arguably the central aspect of his interaction with Ph.D. students.

Research – Professor Bertellini is one of the leading figures in Italian and U.S. silent cinema studies. Since his promotion to associate professor, Professor Bertellini has been a prodigious scholar, publishing multiple peer-reviewed essays and fifteen chapters in edited anthologies. In addition, he edited the award-winning collection, Italian Silent Cinema: A Reader, which is considered a major contribution to Italian cinema studies and early cinema studies. He also revised and translated from Italian to English his 1996 version of Emir Kusturica (University of

Illinois Press, 2015), a manuscript dedicated to the Sarajevo-born director. His new book manuscript, The Divo and the Duce, analyzes the mediatized and publicity-based construction of Hollywood star Rudolph Valentino and Fascist dictator Benito Mussolini.

Recent and Significant Publications:

The Divo and the Duce: Promoting Film Stardom and Political Leadership in 1920s America, University of California Press, under contract.

“Manipulation and authenticity: The unassimilable Valentino in 1920s Argentina,” in Cosmopolitan Film Cultures in Latin America, 1896-1960, R. Navitski and N. Poppe, eds., Indiana University Press, 2017, pp. 67-85.

“Dramatizing the Italina-Turkish War (1911-1912): Reports of atrocities, newsreels, and epic films between Italy and the USA,” Early Popular Visual Culture, 14(2), 2016, pp. 1-23.  
Italian Silent Cinema: A Reader, John Libbey/Indiana University Press, 2013.

Service – Professor Bertellini has shown strong leadership in the Department of Screen Arts and Cultures over the past few years, working on critical and difficult tasks. He chaired the department’s first national search in the area of screenwriting, the department’s Self-Study Committee, and the Promotion for Artists Committee. He has contributed extensively to the profession by translating the work of important Italian scholars and directors and by editing collections. His book reviews, encyclopedia entries, catalogues, and translations situate him as a leader in the field of early cinema studies.

External Reviews:

Reviewer (A)

“...[Professor Bertellini’s] monograph, in my view, provides a paradigm-shifting contribution in the ways it shows, not only how both cinema and politics in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century benefitted from a sophisticated use of publicity, but also the extent to which the two were already interconnected and reciprocally contributing to developing ways of entering and dominating the public sphere.”

Reviewer (B)

“Professor Bertellini produces work of the highest quality—and plenty of it. Overall, his work is characterized by the presentation of novel research questions, probing archival research, and lively style—he has a storyteller’s sensibility. Through numerous articles, his award-winning book on the picturesque (Italy in Early American Cinema), and his stunning new manuscript The Divo and the Duce, he has established himself as the authority on transactions between U.S. and Italian cinema cultures before the Second World War.”

Reviewer (C)

“...[The Divo and the Duce is] the sprawling, erudite kind of volume that one takes to the beach for a week or curls up with by the fire. It was a pleasure to read such a well-written and formidably researched work that reveals surprisingly deep connections between American and Italian history, popular culture, and the worlds of business and finance, especially the then-nascent industry of ‘public relations.’”

Reviewer (D)

“Divo and Duce, astonishingly relevant to our contemporary moment, is not only a penetrating analysis of celebrity politics but a deeply documented overview of how, beginning in the 1920s, historical forces conspired to produce this feature of democratic government. Here is the paradox of democracy: that the public enjoying an expansion of civic (and consumption) options would be the public most ‘primed to embrace the authority of the celebrity,’ as he writes in his conclusion.”

Reviewer (E)

“Dr. Bertellini’s attention gravitates towards opportunities for defamiliarization, seizing on buried archival evidence that disrupts the alleged self-containment of national cultures and canonical histories. He shows over and over how contact with foreign elements exposes fissures within national media cultures, particularly along already contested issues such as immigration, ethnic and national identities, and celebrity culture’s interrelationships with political culture.”

Reviewer (F)

“Highly original and convincingly argued, his analysis not only enriches the field of star studies within Cinema Studies, but he makes also a significant contribution to political history. This is all the more important, as political historians (at least in my experience in Europe) tend to severely underestimate the role of media culture outside the narrow realm of explicit propaganda.”

Reviewer (G)

“Through his publications and active professional presence, Professor Bertellini has definitely become a pre-eminent scholar nationally and internationally in the study of Italian cinema and silent cinema. ... It is deeply satisfying to see an award-winning, internationally visible scholar who has made significant contributions to the discipline be willing and able to so successfully take his research in challenging new directions.”

Summary of Recommendation:

Professor Bertellini is a central scholarly figure in the Department of Screen Arts and Cultures’ film studies area. He has been an important voice in the department, developing strategies to fortify the curriculum’s international perspective. The Executive Committee of the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts and I recommend that Associate Professor Giorgio Bertellini be promoted to the rank of professor of screen arts and cultures, with tenure, and professor of romance languages and literatures, without tenure, 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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