

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

Daniel J. Nemser, assistant professor of Romance languages and literatures, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, is recommended for promotion to associate professor of Spanish, with tenure, Department of Romance Languages and Literatures, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts.

Academic Degrees:

Ph.D.	2011	University of California, Berkeley
M.A.	2006	University of California, Berkeley
B.A.	2002	University of Michigan

Professional Record:

2012	Faculty in Residence, Centro Michigan-Cornell-Penn, Seville, Spain
2011 – present	Assistant Professor, Department of Romance Languages and Literatures, University of Michigan

Summary of Evaluation:

Teaching – Professor Nemser has demonstrated teaching excellence in a wide range of undergraduate and graduate courses and a high level of commitment to the teaching of colonial Latin American studies with a particular emphasis on Mexico. His undergraduate courses include historical overviews of colonial Latin America and more specialized seminars. He helps students familiarize themselves with its major literary, cultural, and social trends and hone critical methods for reading literary and historical texts. In addition to being an excellent teacher, Professor Nemser is an outstanding mentor for both undergraduate and graduate students.

Research – Professor Nemser’s intellectual interests include issues of race, biopolitics, “mestizaje,” space, historicity, archaeology, phenomenology, sovereignty/state of exception, and material culture/materiality. These interests allow him to access an interdisciplinary reservoir of cultural, linguistic, and conceptual sources that offer a broad, multifaceted engagement with the field of Colonial Latin America. Professor Nemser’s published book, Infrastructures of Race: Concentration and Biopolitics in Colonial Mexico, questions the way the field has addressed the problem of race, which he understands as being the history of the spatial and technological politics of religious, demographic, cultural, and racial concentration in colonial New Spain. This book has given him a significant voice in the field of Latin American cultural studies.

Recent and Significant Publications:

Infrastructures of Race: Concentration and Biopolitics in Colonial Mexico, University of Texas Press, 2017.

“Eviction and the archive: Materials for an archaeology of the Archivo General de Indias,” *Journal of Spanish Cultural Studies*, 16(2), 2015, pp. 123-141.

“Archaeology in the lettered city,” *Colonial Latin American Review*, 23(2), 2014, pp. 197-223. (Awarded “Best Article in Colonial Latin American Studies by a Junior Scholar” by the Colonial Section of the Latin American Studies Association, 2015).

Service – Professor Nemser has a solid record of service. He has served on the departmental Executive Committee, Graduate Committee, and on the Executive Committee of Medieval and Early Modern Studies (MEMS). He has also served as a Spanish advisor, as a member of the Spanish Curriculum Committee, and on the Lecturer Review Committee. He has been active in mentoring graduate students and in organizing conferences, talks, and symposia. Professor Nemser is an exemplary citizen, who is always ready to serve in the department and beyond.

External Reviews:

Reviewer (A)

“With a focus on Mexico, the key piece of his dossier, *Infrastructures of Race*, examines the construction of race through colonial infrastructures, or better put, infrastructures of concentration resulting from spatial, political, and economic agendas of domination. In four chapters, the book ventures into the historical roots of race and racialization by unveiling and questioning practices and ideologies embraced by early modern coloniality to expand imperial sovereignty. Nemser, against the grain and leaving behind biological and traditional assumptions, examines practices, perceptions, and ideas that shaped the construction of knowledge on race in the colonial spatial order: towns, institutions, neighborhoods, and collections. A central corollary of the book is the idea that race was the result of colonial urbanization efforts hierarchizing space and shaping colonial identities.”

Reviewer (B)

“What distinguishes Nemser’s work...is his incorporation of political philosophy, historical anthropology, and his methodology of close reading with respect to the pastoral writings by the Christian missionaries. From the beginning, Nemser makes explicit in his essays and monograph that his aim goes beyond the reconstruction of the colonial past: the historian’s question of ‘what happened? What is the colonial past?’ in Nemser’s works must always concede ground to the question: ‘what *is* happening?’ or ‘what is the colonial *present*?’”

Reviewer (C)

“The critical work that Dr. Nemser has authored and that support his recognition in the field exhibits an intellectual curiosity that ranges well beyond the topics of his monograph, refereed journal articles and book-chapters, from his mediation on the Iberian slave trade, blackness, primitive accumulation, Biopolitics, the lettered city, Cervantes, and Góngora, among others. I was truly impressed with his excellent article ‘Archeology in the Lettered City,’ for which he was awarded the prize for ‘Best Article in Colonial Latin American Studies by a Junior Scholar’ by the Colonial Section of Latin American Studies Association in 2015.”

Reviewer (D)

“...Prof. Nemser’s book, [*Infrastructures of Race*] convincingly demonstrates through sophisticated archival research and close analysis of primary texts, that race in the colonial Latin American context does not emerge in the 19th century as a result of biological approaches to the study of human nature. Contrary to other historians and literary scholars who have argued that to talk about race in the colonial period is anachronistic and that it would be more appropriate to talk about cultural differences, Prof. Nemser demonstrates that European colonization put in place a series of practices of racial domination that produced categories of race.”

Reviewer (E)

“Daniel Nemser is a brilliant, dynamic scholar who is breaking new ground in the field of colonial and early modern cultural studies. He has shown remarkable productivity, and the fact he has two new publications forthcoming and a new book project on the works as I write this report suggests he is intent on maintaining the same level of productivity. Nemser’s work is original, rigorous, accessible, enormously useful, and desperately necessary. His writing exudes passion, devotion, and tenaciousness. ...I enthusiastically recommend the promotion of Daniel Nemser to Associate Professor with tenure.”

Reviewer (F)

“...Professor Nesmer’s contribution to the field is already making its mark, and I have no doubt that he will be counted among the leading and most influential colonialists in the coming decade. His work is exemplary of the many hats a colonialist must wear and yet brings a fresh, highly articulate theoretical framework to traditional colonialist approaches. His work will also have an impact on critical race theory and the study of biopolitics.”

Reviewer (G)

“The conviction that coloniality matters for present-day debates is at the heart of Prof. Nemser’s scholarship and his teaching, connecting both in ways that are intellectually rigorous and ethically compelling. His research is interdisciplinary, as he draws on anthropology, archaeology, geography, and history, as well as literary and cultural studies, for close readings of a wide range of printed and manuscript sources in Spanish, Latin and Nahuatl.”

Summary of Recommendation:

Professor Nemser is an outstanding scholar of colonial Latin American literary and cultural studies. He is a highly valued and committed teacher in the Spanish undergraduate and graduate programs, and is always willing to serve in the administration of the department. The Executive Committee of the College of Literature, Sciences, and the Arts and I recommend that Assistant Professor Daniel J. Nemser be promoted to the rank of associate professor of Spanish, with tenure, Department of Romance Languages and Literatures, 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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