

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

Melanie S. Tanielian, assistant professor of history, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, is recommended for promotion to associate professor of history, with tenure, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts.

Academic Degrees:

Ph.D.	2012	University of California, Berkeley
M.A.	2007	University of California, Berkeley
B.A.	2004	University of California, Berkeley

Professional Record:

2012 – present      Assistant Professor, Department of History, University of Michigan

Summary of Evaluation:

Teaching – Professor Tanielian has been a valuable contributor to the Department of History through her classroom teaching and innovative pedagogy at the undergraduate level, while building a comparable presence in the graduate program. She helps anchor the undergraduate Program in International and Comparative Studies (PICS), where she does half of her teaching. In PICS, she teaches a required lecture course on “Theory and Practice of Human Rights,” smaller topics courses include war and genocide, gender and sexuality in the Middle East, and social movements. She wins student respect for her rigorous joining of conceptual to case study perspectives, and for integrating multiple kinds of historical documents in both seminars and lecture courses. Her syllabi encourage critical thinking even in the large and fast-moving lecture courses, inviting students to examine analytically the oversimplified assumptions they may bring to their studies. Non-classroom venues include the Bentley Historical Library, field trips, web-based projects, and digital learning under a Rackham Global Initiative Seminar. Her part in the Michigan in the World initiative (spring 2015) included especially bold pedagogical innovation. The Department of History sees Professor Tanielian as an outstanding specialist with breadth and vision, around whom the curriculum can continue to grow in the future.

Research – Professor Tanielian’s scholarship not only has range and depth, but also has conceptual sophistication. Her articles and her monograph, The Charity of War: Famine, Humanitarian Aid, and World War I in the Middle East, have already made considerable impact within Middle Eastern history and in comparative studies of home fronts during the First World War, the widening trans-regional analysis of late-Ottoman transition, and the global study of famine, provisioning, and international humanitarianism. Together with her longer-term interest in transnational histories of public health and mental illness surrounding the First World War, Professor Tanielian’s work represents a substantial contribution to the current wave of scholarship on the history of the Modern Middle East, which seeks ambitiously to integrate social, cultural, and political history. Her research, which is implicitly comparative in conception and scope, works against the grain of earlier orthodoxies in her field by recovering the complex political dynamics of social and cultural history once investigated from a provincial and city-based local perspective.

### Recent and Significant Publications:

“Disease and public health (Ottoman empire/Middle East) in 1914-1918, *International Encyclopedia of the First World War*, U. Daniel, et al. (eds.), issued by Freie Universität in Berlin, 2014, DOI: 10.15463/ie1418.10466.

The charity of war: Famine, humanitarian aid, and World War I in the Middle East, Stanford University Press, 2017.

“Feeding the city: the Beirut municipality and civilian provisioning during World War I,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 46(4), 2014, pp. 737-758.

“Politics of wartime relief in Ottoman Beirut,” *First World War Studies*, 5:1, 2014, pp. 69-82.

Service – Professor Tanielian has assembled a diverse and impressive record of service. She has served both on the Honors Committee and the Undergraduate Committee in the Department of History, and on the search committee for the Alex Manoogian Chair; she has also played a central role in the Eisenberg Institute of Historical Studies, including service on its Steering Committee (2016-2018). She has a key role in both the Armenian Studies Program and PICS, and she has been active in the Center for Middle Eastern and North African Studies.

### External Reviews:

Reviewer (A)

“...Dr. Tanielian is one of the scholars [in her cohort] who are making a significant contribution to our understanding of wartime and its aftermath in the Arab East. ... By limiting her research to Beirut and the Mt. Lebanon area [in The Charity of War...], Dr. Tanielian was able to go into depth and narrate a very convincing and well-documented story of wartime relief that had not been told. ...Tanielian is in command of the literature on the history of war and society and situates her work well within its major concerns and debates.”

Reviewer (B)

“I was so impressed with Dr. Tanielian’s work that I invited her to speak at my institution... [Her] work stands at the crossroads of several new fields in Middle East studies and she has been an integral player in their development. ...[I]t is quite an accomplishment to publish with the *International Journal of Middle East Studies*... Dr. Tanielian’s primary strength lies in her deep and meticulous dive into archives related to her subjects. ...[H]er manuscript, The Charity of War, and her peer-reviewed articles offer a rich depository of data that scholars will be mining for years.”

Reviewer (C)

“The book’s main themes and concerns fit well in the current wave of scholarly interest in the Ottoman front(s)... The relative newness of this arena of research is reflected in the fact that all [but one] received their Ph.D.s since 2012 and...have published less than Prof. Tanielian.”

Reviewer (D)

“Professor Tanielian has built an impressive record of achievement in research and publication, which meets and exceeds the normal expectations at her rank anywhere, and certainly at my own institution... ...[The Charity of War] is a scrupulously researched, carefully thought out and sophisticated study of the way in which Ottoman society’s most vulnerable members experienced World War I... This monograph will make a real contribution to the way in which historians

perceive the history of the Middle East during World War I; it will also contribute a new model of writing the history of societies caught in war, atrocity, and deprivation. ... Professor Tanielian's co-curated exhibition, 'Now or Never,' ... was a brilliantly curated exhibit that told a compelling story, that displayed carefully chosen manuscripts, correspondence, and documents, with sensitively written wall text and flawless design."

Reviewer (E)

"The *Charity of War* is the most comprehensive and original account of the humanitarian crisis in Lebanon during World War I to date. It contributes to our understanding of the Ottoman home front, and the war as it was experienced by ordinary people. ... I consider Dr. Tanielian to be one of the best scholars in her cohort and predict that she will be a leading figure in the field."

Summary of Recommendation:

Professor Tanielian is an original, ambitious, and outstanding scholar; a superb teacher; and a wise and energetic citizen of our intellectual community. The Executive Committee of the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts and I recommend that Assistant Professor Melanie S. Tanielian be promoted to the rank of associate professor of history, with 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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