

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

Christopher L. Hill, assistant professor of Asian languages and cultures, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, is recommended for promotion to associate professor of Asian languages and cultures, with tenure, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts.

Academic Degrees:

Ph.D.	1999	Columbia University
M.Phil.	1992	Columbia University
A.B.	1986	Stanford University

Professional Record:

2014 – present	Assistant Professor, Department of Asian Languages and Cultures, University of Michigan
2014	Post-doctoral Fellow, Friedrich-Meinecke-Institut, Free University of Berlin
2014	Adjunct Associate Professor, Japanese Literature, Columbia University
2012 – 2014	Associate Director, Blinken European Institute, and Associate Research Scholar, Weatherhead East Asian Institute, Columbia University
2011	Visiting Associate Professor of Japanese Literature, University of California, Berkeley
2011	Visiting Professor, Division of History, École des Hautes Études
2010 – 2011	Adjunct Associate Professor of Japanese Literature, Columbia University
2007 – 2010	Associate Professor of Japanese Literature, Yale University
2001 – 2007	Assistant Professor of Japanese Literature, Yale University
2000 – 2001	Lecturer, Department of East Asian Languages and Civilizations, Harvard University
1999 – 2000	Post-doctoral Fellow, Reischauer Institute of Japanese Studies, Harvard University

Summary of Evaluation:

Teaching – Professor Hill has brought a new dimension to the teaching of modern Japanese literature in the Department of Asian Languages and Cultures (ALC). While he continues to teach the core literature courses established by his predecessors, he has also created new courses that engage the department's recent emphasis on inter-Asian connections. Among his new offerings are ASIAN 321 "Make It New: Modernism and Modern Life in Japan" and ASIAN 312 "After Defeat: The Cultures of Postwar Japan." In winter 2016, Professor Hill led fourteen students from ASIAN 312 to Tokyo and Hiroshima through the Global Course Connections program. Professor Hill has offered two graduate seminars in ALC, both on aspects of modern Japanese history and literature, and both emphasizing theory and methodology. He has served on four dissertation committees, the mentoring committees of two Ph.D. students, and he has directed two M.A. theses for the Center for Japanese Studies.

Research – Professor Hill's first monograph, National History and the World of Nations, was

positively reviewed in journals from an array of different fields. The book explores the emergence of nationalist literature in three different contexts – nineteenth-century Japan, France, and the United States – and is considered a model of comparative literary studies. His contributions to conversations about the history of ideas are paradigm shifting, to the point that his work is discussed prominently in recent scholarship and in a call for papers for the annual conference of the American Comparative Literature Association. His recently completed manuscript, Figures of the World: The Naturalist Novel and Transnational Form (under review), is poised to change discussions around transnational literature. He uses his expertise in several languages to recalibrate the relationship between the writing cultures of Japan, France, and the United States as objects of study, using his formidable skills in close reading to understand the stakes of these creative expressions at a global scale.

Recent and Significant Publications:

“Figures of the World: The Naturalist Novel and Transnational Form,” manuscript under review.

“Haven’t we met? On the scales of connection,” *Verge*, 3(2), 2017, pp. 86-89.

National History and the World of Nations: Capital, State, and the Rhetoric of History in Japan, France, and the United States, Duke University Press, 2008.

“Crossed geographies: Endō and Fanon in Lyon,” *Representations*, 128, 2014, pp. 93-123.

Service – Professor Hill has an excellent record of service locally and to the wider research community. He served on two search committees during his first year with ALC, five lecturer reviews during his next three years, and was elected twice to the ALC Executive Committee. The Center for Japanese Studies (CJS) has called on him to serve on their M.A. Admissions Committee, Grants and Fellowships Committee, three years on the Malm Prize Committee, and one year on the CJS Publications Committee. At the university level, Professor Hill participated in the search for a new head of Michigan’s Asia Library. His visibility and standing in the profession are reflected in the stature of the journals that have asked him to review manuscripts, including *PMLA* (the flagship publication of the Modern Languages Association), the *American Historical Review*, *Positions*, and *The Journal of Japanese Studies*. Professor Hill’s selection for the Distinguished Speakers Bureau of the Association for Asian Studies, the most important professional organization for Asian Studies, is an honor befitting a top scholar whose work appeals to those coming from many areas and disciplines.

External Reviews:

Reviewer (A)

“...I expect Figures of the World to be a strong candidate for major book prizes in both Asian Studies and Comparative Literature. ...this is one of the two or three most important books in my field over the past decade, and I look forward eagerly to the debates it will no doubt set off in both Japanese and comparative literature studies... I am, quite frankly, jealous: I wish I had written this.”

Reviewer (B)

“Too much praise, I fear, will ring hollow, but in this case I truly believe it is all warranted. If I had the luxury of starting an ideal literature department of the future with a hand-chosen ‘dream team,’ Professor Hill –a total package of literary and linguistic range, collegiality, commitment to teaching, and impactful and productive scholarship –would absolutely be on it.”

Reviewer (C)

“Hill is clearly unconventional, in the best sense. He is by training a scholar of Japanese and comparative literature, and he employs the method of close reading. Yet he also speaks to historians—particularly to transnational historians... I am often skeptical of literary scholars who claim also to practice history, but Hill is genuinely interdisciplinary.”

Reviewer (D)

“Through his scholarly work on Japan in a comparative and global context, Hill has established himself as one of the premier scholars in the field, someone whose innovative work cuts across disciplinary and regional boundaries. I base my evaluation primarily on the impact of his work on the field of Japan studies...but it should be acknowledged that his work’s impact goes well beyond the confines of this one field.”

Reviewer (E)

“I can say with no hesitation that...[Figures of the World] is original, thoughtful work of the highest caliber that should be taken as a model of both literary history and the history of ideas. ...to have him shaping the next generation of scholars will put Michigan in an enviable place on the map of literary studies.”

Reviewer (F)

“...[Hill] is one of the most accomplished scholars of Japanese literature in the United States, with a reputation that extends into Japan and Europe. His first book, National History and the World of Nations is deeply erudite and also conceptually expansive. It displays confident mastery of Japanese, French, and American literature and history, as well as lucid and subtle use of a sophisticated set of conceptual tools that allows him to formulate – and carefully execute – a significant thesis that has both local and broad implications about the relationship among literary form, the writing of history, nationalism and colonialism.”

Summary of Recommendation:

Professor Hill is one of the leading practitioners and theorists of comparative literature, and the author of two outstanding monographs. He is a conscientious teacher and an energetic member of his department. The Executive Committee of the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts and I recommend that Assistant Professor Christopher L. Hill be promoted to the rank of associate professor of Asian languages and cultures, with tenure, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts.



Elizabeth R. Cole, Interim Dean
Professor of Women’s Studies, Psychology,
and Afroamerican and African Studies
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts

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