

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

Jaeun Kim, assistant professor of sociology, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, is recommended for promotion to associate professor of sociology, with tenure, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts.

Academic Degrees:

Ph.D.	2011	University of California, Los Angeles
M.A.	2006	University of California, Los Angeles
M.A.	2003	Seoul National University, South Korea
B.A.	2001	Seoul National University, South Korea

Professional Record:

2014 – present	Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology, University of Michigan
2013 – 2014	Assistant Professor, Departments of Sociology and Anthropology, George Mason University
2012 – 2013	Post-doctoral Fellow, Shorenstein Asia Pacific Research Center, Stanford University
2011 – 2012	Post-doctoral Fellow, Center for the Study of Religion, Princeton University

Summary of Evaluation:

Teaching – Professor Kim is an excellent teacher. She has taught a range of courses, including a large introductory course, a lower division specialty course, and an undergraduate and a graduate seminar. Faculty described her courses as rigorous and said students learn a lot and often become majors after taking them. She has mentored a handful of graduate students and supervised three honors thesis writers. Beyond classroom teaching, she co-led a graduate workshop in culture, history, and politics, and led a substantial revision of the core graduate reading list in race, ethnicity, and immigration. She also has participated in research panels and events for students.

Research – Professor Kim’s book, Contested Embrace: Transborder Membership Politics in Twentieth Century Korea, is the centerpiece of her dossier. In it, she uses extensive historical and ethnographic data to analyze transborder membership politics in and around the Korean peninsula. In this work she explores when and why a state claims a certain transborder population as “its own,” and in turn how these populations participate in the creation of transborder ties as they seek to shape the terms of their membership. She demonstrates that transborder membership is a highly contested and unstable political achievement produced by the interaction of the state and its transborder population. The book has won multiple awards. Professor Kim is currently working on her next major project, which focuses on asylum seeking on religious grounds among migrants to the US. She is planning a book from this work, Redemption: Asylum Seeking on Religious Grounds in the Era of Involuntary Immobility. The data collection is nearing completion and three articles from this project are already published or in press.

Recent and Significant Publications:

“Ethnic capital, migration, and citizenship: A Bourdieusian perspective,” in *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 42(3), advance on-line publication doi:10.1080/01419870.2019.1535131, 2019.

“Migration-facilitating capital: A Bourdieusian theory of international migration,” *Sociological Theory*, 36(3), 2018, pp. 262–288.

“‘Ethnic capital’ and ‘flexible citizenship’ in unfavorable legal contexts: Stepwise migration of the Korean Chinese within and beyond Northeast Asia,” in *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies, Special Issue, Strategic Citizenship: Negotiating Membership in the Age of Dual Nationality*,” 2018, Advance Online Publication, Doi:10.1080/1369183X.2018.1440489.

Contested Embrace: Transborder Membership Politics in Twentieth-Century Korea, Stanford University Press, 2016.

Service –Professor Kim has been an excellent participant and contributor to committees, on recruitment, and in department events. She has also provided important service to the Nam Center for Korean Studies and to the American Sociological Association, serving as a regular reviewer on book award committees and organizing a mini-conference of the Association of Korean Sociologists.

External Reviews:

Reviewer (A)

“...Prof. Kim will be a major figure in sociology in general, and especially in studies of migration, identity, and NE Asia.”

Reviewer (B)

“The Sharlin Award is the most prestigious award granted by the association. ... To win the Sharlin prize, Jaeun competed against several substantial, one might even say capstone, contributions by extremely renowned scholars. ... I have no doubt that she will be a leading voice in her areas of expertise for many years to come.”

Reviewer (C)

“The text is an instant classic in its combination of ethnographic sensibility and profound understanding of macro politics. It further stand out for comparisons involving ethnic Koreans in, from, or controlled by multiple countries, including South Korea, North Korea, China, Japan, and Russia, thus evidencing the author’s deep expertise in the region.”

Reviewer (D)

“*Contested Embrace*...1) focuses on a part of the world that is relatively understudied by social scientists working on these subjects; 2) challenges narratives derived from studies limited to the Atlantic world; 3) incorporates a micro-level analysis based on ethnographic field work with a macro-level analysis based on transnational comparison; 4) shows the importance of both bureaucratic procedure and on the ground improvisation by social actors to the outcomes in question; while also 5) attending to the impact of geopolitics on citizenship claims.”

Reviewer (E)

“In querying transborder membership of ethnic Koreans, Kim has succeeded, better than almost any work of sociology, in seeking to capture the fluctuations of identifications and identities without losing sight of the reified but powerful organizations and institutions of the state apparatuses. ...I would rank her at the top. She is clearly the leading sociologist of Korea of her generation.”

Reviewer (F)

“The judgment of the profession has been unequivocal: *Contested Embrace* places its author in the very top ranks of her field. That was also my own assessment when I first read the book.”

Reviewer (G)

“Kim is one of those scholars who produces very important, theoretically generative work on a deep topic. Her contributions have been very well received and her new work will be too. I think Michigan should definitely promote her to tenure. She is a terrific scholar with a very promising trajectory going forward.”

Summary of Recommendation:

Professor Kim is an outstanding scholar who has produced an award-winning book and has a second well underway. Her contributions to transnational sociology are significant. She has been an excellent teacher and has provided service to the department, university, and discipline. The Executive Committee of the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts and I recommend that Assistant Professor Jaeun Kim be promoted to the rank of associate professor of sociology, with tenure, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts.



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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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