

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

Eric P. Swanson, associate professor of philosophy, with tenure, and associate professor of linguistics, without tenure, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, is recommended for promotion to professor of philosophy, with tenure, and professor of linguistics, without tenure, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts.

Academic Degrees:

Ph.D.	2006	Massachusetts Institute of Technology
M.A.	2001	Tufts University
M.A.	1999	Yale University
B.A.	1997	Bard College

Professional Record:

2012 – present	Associate Professor, Department of Philosophy and Department of Linguistics, University of Michigan
2012 – present	James B. and Grace J. Nelson Fellow in Philosophy, University of Michigan
2009 – present	Faculty Associate, Center for Russian, East European, and Eurasian Studies, University of Michigan
2014 – present	Faculty Affiliate, Program in Philosophy, Politics, and Economics, University of Michigan
2014 – present	Faculty Affiliate, Weinberg Institute for Cognitive Science, University of Michigan
2006 – 2012	Assistant Professor, Department of Philosophy, University of Michigan

Summary of Evaluation:

Teaching – Professor Swanson has brought his cutting edge research to the classroom with a new course on social and political philosophy of language. Students consistently evaluate his courses and his instruction highly, including large introductory lecture courses and more specialized seminars. He has advanced diversity, equity, and inclusion by dramatically diversifying the authors assigned in the department's Introduction to Philosophy course. He teaches courses central to the undergraduate and graduate curriculum, and he plays an outsized role for an associate professor on dissertation committees.

Research – Professor Swanson is internationally recognized as a leader in the emerging, highly active field of social and political philosophy of language. His research on the ethics of language use has illuminated how various linguistic behaviors, such as the use of slurs, convey morally problematic meanings. This research has challenged some long-standing assumptions about how language works, and he has developed new tools to analyze problematic language by tying discourse to theories of ideology developed outside of analytic philosophy. His research on meta-ethics offers a novel account of the meaning of value judgments, also tied to richer theories of ideology. Professor Swanson is consistently producing innovative work. His strategy of synthesizing the analytic tools within traditional philosophy of language with ideas from non-

canonical authors rarely read in analytic philosophy bodes well for his trajectory.

Recent and Significant Publications:

“Slurs and ideologies,” forthcoming in *Ideology*, R. Celikates, et al. (eds.), Oxford University Press.

“Omissive implicature,” *Philosophical Topics*, 45(2), 2017, pp. 117–137, DOI: 0.5840/philtopics201745216.

“Critical notice of Jason Stanley’s *How Propaganda Works*,” *Mind*, 126(503), 2017, pp. 937–947, DOI: 10.1093/mind/fzw045.

“Probability in philosophy of language,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Probability and Philosophy*, A. Hájek and C. Hitchcock (eds.), Oxford University Press, 2016, pp. 772–788.

Service – Professor Swanson has successfully served the Department of Philosophy as the chair of graduate admissions, ombudsperson, and course scheduler. He developed computer programs that improved the scheduling process, which enabled better enrollment and classroom management while better serving student, GSI, and faculty preferences. He has served the Weinberg Institute for Cognitive Science by organizing the 2014 Weinberg conference on neurolaw. He is also a co-editor of the *Journal of Philosophical Logic*, an important journal in philosophy.

External Reviews:

Reviewer (A)

“What impresses me most about the overall file is the ambition and scope of Eric’s project, and its promise to open new doors to illuminate the nature of ideology and the political discourse contexts that are his subject matter and – perhaps moreover – to offer new tools...to understand all discourse.”

Reviewer (B)

“Eric is a leading figure in his generation in philosophy of language, where he has published brilliant papers in the most competitive journals in the field. Here he is at the forefront of a sea change in analytic philosophy, bringing the precision of analytic methods to bear on political problems about language use, and conversely using lessons from ethics and politics to force linguists and philosophers to rethink some of their foundational assumptions. In this his work is comparable in its scope, ambition and quality to senior figures in the profession...”

Reviewer (C)

“Swanson has been a productive, insightful, and creative voice in the philosophy of language. ... I have never read a Swanson paper that I didn’t find thought-provoking and useful.”

Reviewer (D)

“The work in his dossier is uniformly significant, often initiating or extending a new and interesting line of research. ...He is recognized both nationally and internationally as someone who is helping set agendas in philosophy of language... ...one of the best and the brightest of the cohort, someone whose work is important...”

Reviewer (E)

“Swanson is an original thinker. ...he has a distinctive take on the issues and brings out features of the problems that others miss. He has a well-integrated and fruitful research program, and his contributions are justifiably influential.”

Reviewer (F)

“Swanson is among the pioneers in a relatively novel direction in Philosophy of Language and Semantics. ... The work of Swanson... and others has led to a sea change in the philosophy of language and semantics, a change that I would have been skeptical about occurring... I find him to be one of the most important and interesting philosophers of his generation and look forward to his upcoming work with great interest.”

Summary of Recommendation:

Professor Swanson is a first-rate philosopher of language who is a leader in the relatively new field of social and political philosophy of language, as well as in his original field of semantics. He is an effective instructor of a wide range of critical courses in the Department of Philosophy's curriculum, and his service to the department has been excellent. The Executive Committee of the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts and I recommend that Associate Professor Eric P. Swanson be promoted to the rank of professor of philosophy, with tenure, and professor of linguistics, without 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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