

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

Tyler R. Whitney, assistant professor of Germanic languages and literatures, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, is recommended for promotion to associate professor of Germanic languages and literatures, with tenure, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts.

Academic Degrees:

Ph.D.	2013	Columbia University
M.A.	2006	Columbia University
B.A.	2003	Haverford College

Professional Record:

2013 – present Assistant Professor, Germanic Languages and Literatures, University of Michigan

Summary of Evaluation:

Teaching – Professor Whitney has developed a cohesive and increasingly successful pedagogical profile in undergraduate teaching. His courses on media, technology, and the history of science introduce students to new and exciting materials and methodologies not previously covered by the department’s curriculum. As a result, his signature courses, such as “Media Matter,” attract students from across campus and consistently have good enrollment numbers. Moreover, Professor Whitney is actively being sought out by graduate students. In addition to co-chairing one dissertation and serving on three dissertation committees, he also worked closely as a faculty mentor in organizing the graduate students’ 2017 conference. There is every evidence to suggest that his research and teaching in the area of media studies will attract more undergraduate and graduate students to the Department of Germanic Languages and Literatures.

Research – Professor Whitney is an interdisciplinary scholar whose work engages with debates across the humanities and social sciences, and between Europe and the United States. His first book, Eardrums: Literary Modernism as Sonic Warfare, is scheduled for publication in 2019 with a premier academic press. Located at the intersection of literary studies, media theory, and the emerging field of sound studies, Eardrums represents at once an exemplary work of cultural history and an innovative expansion of its scope. Other publications include four peer-reviewed articles, one book chapter, and five book reviews. His writings have found ready recognition in the field as well as in other disciplines. He recently started publishing material from a second major research project on the cultural and political history of sound in Nazi Germany and its reception after 1945. The department expects that Professor Whitney’s upward trajectory in scholarly publishing will continue and that, with the forthcoming book, he will emerge as a leader in Germanic studies and sound studies.

Recent and Significant Publications:

Eardrums: Literary Modernism as Sonic Warfare, Northwestern University Press, forthcoming
June 2019.

“Unsound: Auditory erasure in Marcel Beyer’s literary archive of the Third Reich,” *German Studies Review*, forthcoming January 2019.

“Behind Herder’s tympanum: Sound and physiological aesthetics 1800-1900,” in *Goethe Yearbook*, 25, 2018, pp. 11-29.

“Inside the ear: Silence, self-observation, and embodied spaces in Kafka’s ‘Der Bau,’” *Germanic Review*, 92(3), 2017, pp. 301-319.

Service – Professor Whitney’s service contributions have been above average for a junior faculty member in the department. He served on the departmental Executive Committee (2014-2016) and is currently on the Curriculum Committee (2017 – present). He was a faculty advisor for the 2017 Graduate Student Conference on “Mediating the Modern.” In addition, he has participated in two lecturer reviews (2014, 2015) and organized a series of public talks. Outside the department, he served as a faculty advisor for a Rackham Interdisciplinary Group on “Music and Sound Studies” (2016, 2017) and organized an event at the Institute for the Humanities (2016).

External Reviews:

Reviewer (A)

“Where Tyler really shines...is in the qualitative originality of his work and the subfield that it is carving out within German Studies. Tyler has produced a highly coherent body of research, which—while clearly situated within literary studies—is unique in the way it is able to draw on media history and the emerging field of sound studies to help define a subfield of what I might call ‘German Sound Studies.’”

Reviewer (B)

“Whitney’s first book, *Eardrums*...is an achievement of the first order that will become required reading for scholars working in the fields of Media Studies, Sound Studies, and German Studies. ... Given the strength of this outstanding body of scholarly work, I recommend Taylor [sic] Whitney for promotion without qualification.”

Reviewer (C)

“It was especially refreshing to learn about the various local sites that Dr. Whitney is visiting in combination with his courses. Beyond showing his devotion to learning more about the city and campus that houses his department, his excursions to places such as the Orson Welles archive and to national history museums provides students an excellent opportunity to reflect upon the rich cultural offerings of their institution and surrounding area.”

Reviewer (D)

“Given the richness of his research, the innovativeness of his thought, the complexity of his argumentations, and—in a few words—the compelling nature of his entire scholarly record, I will certainly seek to reverse this lack of professional interaction in the years to come and seek him out as a scholar who has much to contribute to the field of German Studies in North America.”

Reviewer (E)

“The book is written in a sophisticated yet accessible style, which makes it a pleasure to read. It has admirable conceptual clarity and rhetorical elegance. The material is organized effectively

and presented with brio, with the individual chapters building compelling arguments while steering clear of overgeneralizations and reductive conclusions. Whitney demonstrates an exceptional grasp of both primary and secondary sources, which he treats with the utmost intellectual care and savvy.”

Reviewer (F)

“I have no doubts whatsoever that Whitney will always strive to redefine his way of thinking and his theoretical concepts in innovative ways. He will continue to produce excellent work, and expand the breadth and range of his research. Although I cannot speak to his performance as an instructor and advisor, I imagine that his way of thinking will not only ignite lively debates in the classroom but also help students formulate their own critical standpoints, even if they contradict his own.”

Reviewer (G)

“This is an excellent, beautifully written and scrupulously researched study. It is not only a welcome addition to the study of literary modernism, it also brings to media theory and sound studies in particular an equally welcome dose of literary sensibility. But what I find most impressive is the mixture of clarity of purpose and caution of argument. The candidate has produced a highly professional research statement: He knows exactly what he has done and he has a clear understanding of what he is going to do.”

Summary of Recommendation:

Professor Whitney is an outstanding researcher, a valued colleague, and an increasingly sought-after teacher who is making important, original contributions to the intellectual and interdisciplinary mission of the department. The Executive Committee of the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts and I recommend that Assistant Professor Tyler R. Whitney be promoted to the rank of associate professor of Germanic languages and literatures, 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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