

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

Bénédicte M. Boisseron, associate professor of Afroamerican and African studies, with tenure, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, is recommended for promotion to professor of Afroamerican and African studies, with tenure, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts.

Academic Degrees:

Ph.D.	2006	University of Michigan
ESL Certificate	1998	Université Paris VII, France: C.A.P.E.S
Diplôme d'Études Approfondies	1997	Université Paris VII, France
Maîtrise and Licence, English	1995	La Sorbonne Nouvelle and Université Paris VII

Professional Record:

2018 - present	Associate Professor, Department of Afroamerican and African Studies (DAAS), University of Michigan
2012 – 2017	Associate Professor of French and Francophone Studies, Department of Modern and Classical Languages and Literature, University of Montana
2006–2012	Assistant Professor of French and Francophone Studies, Department of Modern and Classical Languages and Literature, University of Montana

Summary of Evaluation:

Teaching – Professor Boisseron’s teaching reflects her strong interdisciplinary training and sophisticated pedagogical commitment. Since arriving at Michigan in 2018, she has taught six courses in DAAS, filling crucial gaps in the curriculum and expanding the focus of teaching. The relationship of race theory, literary studies, and animal studies now has a coherent presence in the DAAS curriculum. She has also broadened the DAAS curriculum by transforming the ways in which ideas are incorporated and disseminated in the classroom, and by enriching digital education in DAAS. She has directed the DAAS Honors Program. While not in a unit that has a graduate program, she has served on several committees in Comparative Literature and she has advised DAAS’s Humanities Collective, which provides scholarly support to graduate students interested in the interconnection of race and the humanities.

Research – Since promotion to tenure, Professor Boisseron has published a path-breaking book, *Afro-Dog: Blackness and the Animal Question*, and a series of articles that effectively bridge studies of the African Diaspora with the emerging field of animal studies. Professor Boisseron has created a unique scholarly platform in literary studies. This is exemplified by the manner in which she blends an empirical point of focus (animality) with methodological complexity (historical-comparative and contemporary literary analysis). She conducted historically-grounded and intersectional literary analysis to examine how colonial subjection persists in the modern era, bringing France, the Caribbean, and the United States into a compelling comparative focus. In doing so, she also demonstrated the significance of rhetoric in shaping historical and contemporary understandings of the imbrications of species and race.

Recent and Significant Publications:

Afro-Dog: Blackness and the Animal Question, Columbia University Press, 2018.

“After Jacques Derrida (More to Follow): From A-cat-emic to Caliban,” *Yale French Studies*, 2015, pp. 95-109.

“Afro-Dog,” *Transition Magazine*, Harvard University, Hutchins Center, 2015, pp. 15-31 (featured in *The Best American Essays 2016* (ed. J. Franzen, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2016, in the section “Notable Essays and Literary Nonfiction of 2015”).

“The dreaded comparison revisited: Animal and Black Human Rights,” *A Companion to World Literature*, Wiley Blackwell, ed., K. Seigneurie, forthcoming 2020.

Service – Professor Boisseron serves as the director of the Honors Program in DAAS and as an elected member of its Executive Committee. She has served on DAAS’s Black Digital Humanities Committee and the LSA Faculty Advisory Group on Inclusive Classrooms. She has served on the LSA ADVANCE Advisory Board and the Institute for the Humanities Executive Committee.

External Reviewers:

Reviewer (A)

“[Professor Boisseron’s] contributions to scholarship are outstanding, her dedication obvious, her writing lucid and uncompromising. She is also exemplary in her participation in a wide-range of lectures, conferences, and, above all, her popular writings, as well as in her commitment to undergraduate teaching and graduate studies. Most of all, she has not lost sight of what it means to write, with urgency, through these harsh times. I warmly support her without reservation. . . . Her work is already an indispensable reference point for all of us concerned about the prospects of teaching and writing and knowing in the twenty-first century.”

Reviewer (B)

“Given the complexity and breadth of Animal Studies, her engagement with this material is impressive, and she has produced a carefully crafted and compelling work that is sure to be at the center of debates within this field. Her ability to bring a wide range of critical and historical contexts to bear on the question of the animal, and to foreground a complex series of questions around the constitution of racial discourse and its influence on lived experience, is impressive.”

Reviewer (C)

“Bénédicte Boisseron is a fine scholar and an important and new voice in critical race and animal studies. She is also her own intellectual, *sui generis*, derivative of no one and not at all overly ‘taken’ by one particular theorist or another. This fact produces a voice that is distinctive and original, the mark of a true scholar-intellectual. I think there is no doubt that more work is to come and that as more and more US scholars have the occasion to read her, she will be very influential for an entire generation of scholars and activists interested in a new kind of intersectionality that tirelessly complexifies, rather than simplifies and tries to ‘resolve,’ the difficult nexus of race and species.”

Reviewer (D)

“Thank you for the opportunity to review and provide my assessment of Professor Bénédicte Boisseron’s portfolio for promotion to full professor at your institution. . . . Taken together, the

elements of Professor Boisseron's portfolio attest to her standing as an ambitious, creative, and thoughtful scholar. Remarkably interdisciplinary, Professor Boisseron is coherent in her interests and approach. Her work takes a number of bold and generative risks and connects with several very timely humanist debates."

Reviewer (E)

"I expect her work to make her a leader in the intersection of Africana and Animal Studies and without question the leading voice in bringing them together with Afro-Francophone Studies."

Reviewer (F)

"...Dr. Boisseron is, in my view, an exceptionally accomplished scholar whose work has influenced the fields of African American studies, posthumanism, history, philosophy, Caribbean studies, literature, French studies, comparative race studies, and animal studies. She is a bold and creative theorist whose intellectual power is demonstrated by, among other things, her singular capacity to bring so many different fields, literatures, and kinds of 'texts' (philosophical, poetic, cinematic, literary, legal, and more) into productive, exciting relation with one another. She also teaches an English speaking audience about critically important French philosophies, films, novels, and legal discourse, thus profoundly enriching the debates she engages, which tend to be Anglocentric. Following up on her very well-received and award-winning first book, Dr. Boisseron has written a second superb book (Afro-Dog), and she has begun work on a third major book project. She has already established a national reputation in the fields mentioned above, and her continuing productivity and the outstanding quality of her scholarship will only enhance her reputation and standing. This is an impressive and strongly upward trajectory."

Summary of Recommendation:

Professor Boisseron has effectively bridged studies of the African Diaspora with the emerging field of animal studies. She has created a crucial and novel scholarly platform in literary studies for examining how black bodies have been associated with animals in racist and other kinds of racialized portrayals. She has expanded the curriculum in DAAS, creating a space for animal studies and digital studies, while also supplementing Afro-diasporic studies. The Executive Committee of the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts and I recommend that Associate Professor Bénédicte M. Boisseron be promoted to the rank of professor of Afroamerican and African studies, with tenure, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts.



Anne Curzan, Dean
Geneva Smitherman Collegiate Professor
of English Language and Literature, Linguistics,
and Education
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College of Literature, Science, and the Arts

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