

PROMOTION RECOMMENDATION
The University of Michigan-Dearborn
College of Arts, Sciences, and Letters

Amy Brainer, assistant professor of women's and gender studies, and assistant professor of sociology, College of Arts, Sciences, and Letters, is recommended for promotion to associate professor of women's and gender and studies, with tenure, and associate professor of sociology, with tenure, College of Arts, Sciences, and Letters.

Academic Degrees:

Ph.D.	2014	University of Illinois at Chicago, Chicago, IL
M.A.	2009	University of Illinois at Chicago, Chicago, IL
B.A.	2005	North Park University, Chicago, IL

Professional Record:

2014 – present	Assistant Professor of Women's and Gender Studies and Sociology, Women's and Gender Studies Program and Department of Behavioral Sciences
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Summary of Evaluation:

Teaching: Professor Brainer has made important contributions to the curriculum of both women's and gender studies and sociology by developing several new courses such as Sexualities, Genders and Bodies, and Sexuality and Human Rights in a Changing World, and redesigning other key courses. Her creation of the LGBTQ studies certificate represents an important milestone for the University of Michigan-Dearborn campus. Professor Brainer is a very successful teacher, as evidenced by student teaching evaluations, peer observations, and the continual effort to fine-tune her pedagogy. She has highly positive student evaluations across the board with students appreciating her knowledge, inclusiveness, and hard work inside and outside the classroom to ensure that every student gets the same opportunities to learn and succeed. She also gets high marks on her enthusiasm, organization, clarity of expectations, responsiveness to student needs, and high standards. Peer observations corroborated that she is a thoughtful and reflective teacher and showed appreciation for the structure and organization of her classes and her ability to maintain high rigor while at the same time creating an inclusive and engaging classroom. Her deep concern for teaching improvement is evidenced by, among other things, redesigning all her classes to make each assignment more transparent and serving as the liaison with the Hub for Teaching and Learning Resources (HUB) for assignment redesign to teach other faculty best practices. Her passion to help students succeed is evidenced not only by her careful attention to every aspect of pedagogy but also by the many independent studies she has supervised and her involvement as faculty adviser of two student groups: Pride, and She's the First.

Research: Professor Brainer has established a stellar publication record, as corroborated by the glowing praise of her research contributions by all external reviewers. While her crowning glory

is the publication of the book Queer Kinship and Family Change in Taiwan, she has also published three peer-reviewed articles in highly reputed journals and two peer-reviewed chapters in key edited collections since her appointment at University of Michigan-Dearborn. All the publications are sole-authored. Her book is already being nationally recognized in several ways, including the receipt of the highly prestigious 2019 Ruth Benedict Prize for Outstanding Single-Authored Monograph by the American Anthropological Association's Association for Queer Anthropology (AQA), an invited interview on NPR, an invited Author Meets Critics session at the North American Taiwan Studies Association Annual Conference, and regular invitations to present at panels at several conferences. Also, of note is the interdisciplinary aspect of her research as evidenced by publications and conference presentations in venues ranging from conferences and journals in sociology, sexuality studies, women's and gender studies, to family studies and Taiwan studies. In addition, Professor Brainer has already launched on her next book project on queer trajectories in family-based immigration, promising continued high productivity and meaningful contributions to multiple fields.

Not only is Professor Brainer's work becoming influential within her fields, but she is going well beyond the requirements of the position to actively share her insights with activist and community groups. As an example, she organized a workshop and symposium in Taiwan in concert with the Taiwan Tongzhi Hotline Association and International Gay and Lesbian Association-Asia. Her strenuous efforts to disseminate her research beyond the walls of academia position her as an emerging public intellectual whose contributions are already being recognized by various groups, from student organizations on the University of Michigan-Dearborn campus to activist groups in Taiwan.

Recent and Significant Publications:

Brainer, A. (2019). Queer Kinship and Family Change in Taiwan, New Brunswick, N.J., Rutgers University Press.

Brainer, A. (2018). New identities or new intimacies? Reframing 'coming out' in Taiwan through cross-generational ethnography. *Sexualities* 21(5-6): 914-931.

Brainer, A. (2017). Materializing 'family pressure' among Taiwanese queer women. *Feminist Formations* 29(3): 1-24.

Brainer, A. (2017). Mothering gender and sexually nonconforming children in Taiwan. *Journal of Family Issues* 38(7): 921-947.

Brainer, A. (2017). Patrilineal kinship and transgender embodiment in Taiwan, In H. Chiang and Y. Wang (Eds.), Perverse Taiwan (pp. 110-128), New York: Routledge.

Brainer, A. (2015). Growing up with a lesbian, gay or bisexual sibling," In B. Risman and V. Rutter (Eds.), Families as They Really Are (pp. 164-181), New York: W.W. Norton & Co.

Service: Professor Brainer has provided meaningful service at every level of the university and has done so in a way that integrates her service, research and teaching. To give an example of her willingness to contribute at every level, by her fourth year she was serving on three university-wide, two college-wide, one departmental, and six program committees. The quality of the service has also been notable. One of the student organizations for which she serves as the faculty advisor, PRIDE, received the Student Leadership Award for Diversity and Inclusion, a

testament to her work in helping that organization thrive. As another example of her dedication, she is serving as the first director of the LGBTQ studies certificate, and in this role she organized a campus kick-off that drew over a 100 attendees. As another example, she developed a new mentoring program for sociology majors that is an incredibly valuable contribution to the discipline that has faculty and students connecting with each other. She has also been very active in her service to the profession, serving as a reviewer for prominent journals in her field and serving on the program committees for conventions hosted by the Society for the Study of Social Problems and by the American Sociological Association.

External Reviewers:

Reviewer A: “Professor Brainer’s publications make important conceptual contributions to the scholarship on Taiwanese and Chinese families, non-Euro-American queer communities, and gender and sexual diversity...the three journals are all respected publication venues, with *Sexualities* standing out as one of the top journals in sexuality studies...This article [in Perverse Taiwan] bridges the fields of trans studies and queer Sinophone studies, situating Professor Brainer’s work at the center of cutting edge, interdisciplinary scholarship on gender and sexuality in culturally Chinese societies...[Her book] *Queer Kinship* represents what I see as the best of self-reflexive ethnographic writing...Prof. Brainer’s research on queer lives and family relationships in Taiwan has clearly positioned her as a member of an international community of gender and sexuality scholars focused on Asian sexualities and queer studies.”

Reviewer B: “Dr. Brainer’s book, *Queer Kinship and Family Change in Taiwan*, is an exceedingly well-written example of transnational scholarship at the intersection of studies on sex and gender, sexualities, and the family...Dr. Brainer’s writing is deeply reflexive and analytic...As such, this book is remarkable not only for its substantive contributions to a broad cross-section of research areas, but also for its meditations and instructions on feminist epistemological and methodological approaches to research...I have assigned this chapter [in Families as They Really Are] many times in my undergraduate classes and students seem to deeply relate to the vignettes Dr. Brainer presents in this piece...In addition to publishing award-winning, externally-funded, boundary-breaking scholarship in peer-reviewed journals and university and trade presses, and presenting this work at dozens of academic conferences across the globe (Canada, Poland, Taiwan, and the United States – including Puerto Rico), Dr. Brainer has also presented her work at public forums in Taiwan and the United States and been interviewed for (or authored) publicly-available pieces in open-access, online forums. I view this commitment to research accessibility and broader dissemination as a key component of feminist teacher-scholar engagement.”

Reviewer C: “I was impressed when reading her research how she is able to incorporate scholarship from feminist, queer and East Asian studies into her sociological analysis... Dr. Brainer’s work makes an important intervention in U.S. family and LGBTQ sexuality studies by centering a non-Western context. In her analysis of the family relationships of sexually and gender nonconforming people in Taiwan, Dr. Brainer is able to help readers understand the nuance and complexity of that context alongside also ‘translating’ that context so to speak to Western readers...I see her analyses (in the book and articles) based on the study in Taiwan with sexually and gender nonconforming people and their family members foregrounding a key

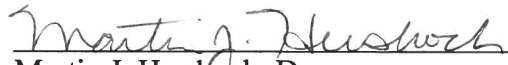
insight that exemplifies a sociological approach at its best: families are a system embedded in broader historical and cultural context.”

Reviewer D: “Dr. Brainer is working in a significant and understudied area – queer and trans people’s family relationships, negotiated within embodied opportunity structures and cultural imperatives. This focus is valuable for both academic and lay reasons. Academically she offers theoretical and substantive insights that push our knowledge into more nuanced and globalized understandings of sexuality and family. At the same time, LGBTQ people and their loved ones may read Dr. Brainer’s work for confirmation and advice...Dr. Brainer’s analysis is sharp – in each chapter, she spins observation, researcher reflexivity, and theory into a coherent thread; and then weaves these threads into an intricate tapestry. The result is an impressive scholarly contribution that undermines clichés about Asian families, gender and western-centric coming out stories.”

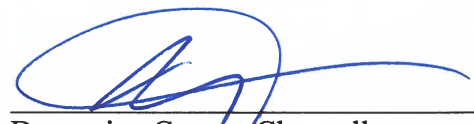
Reviewer E: “Taken together, Dr. Brainer’s body of research challenges the presumption of white, North American families as the norm or unmarked category within theories of queer sexuality and kinship...It is important to note that all her publications appeared in prestigious venues in her three areas of specialization (e.g. sociology of families, gender studies, and sexuality studies)...Dr. Brainer is a promising scholar who will be a major figure nationally and internationally in the coming years in the fields of sociology of families, sociology of gender and sexualities, as well as in Asian (Taiwan) Studies.”

Summary of Recommendation:

Professor Brainer is a reflexive and thoughtful teacher, an innovative interdisciplinary scholar with a groundbreaking research agenda, and a highly valued member of the university community. We are very pleased to recommend, with strong support of the College of Arts, Sciences, and Letters Executive Committee, Amy Brainer for promotion to associate professor of women’s and gender studies, with tenure, and associate professor of sociology, with tenure, College of Arts, Sciences, and Letters.



Martin J. Herschok, Dean
College of Arts, Sciences, and Letters



Domenico Grasso, Chancellor
University of Michigan-Dearborn

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