

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

Aliyah R. Khan, assistant professor of English language and literature, and assistant professor of Afroamerican and African studies, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, is recommended for promotion to associate professor of English language and literature, with tenure, and associate professor of Afroamerican and African studies, with tenure, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts.

Academic Degrees:

Ph.D.	2012	University of California, Santa Cruz
M.F.A.	2006	Hunter College, City University of New York
B.A.	2002	Hunter College, City University of New York

Professional Record:

2013 – present      Assistant Professor, Department of English Language and Literature, and  
Department of Afroamerican and African Studies, University of Michigan

Summary of Evaluation:

Teaching – Professor Khan is an outstanding teacher with consistently high course evaluation ratings. Since joining the faculty at the University of Michigan, Professor Khan has taught twelve distinct courses between the two departments. The majority of these were new courses of her own design. Several of her courses fulfilled the university’s Race and Ethnicity (R&E) requirement and others the Upper-Level Writing Requirement (ULWR). Her courses blend popular culture with theory, poetry with graphic novels, the British literary canon with blockbuster movies (Captain Marvel), post-colonial literature with Puccini’s *Madame Butterfly*, and poet Claudine Rankine with artist Kara Walker. Students repeatedly praise Professor Khan for being highly knowledgeable, organized, and enthusiastic. Many felt that her courses were some of the best they had taken at the university. Professor Khan has also taught two graduate courses, one on post-colonial literature and another on animal studies, with very positive results.

Research – Professor Khan’s monograph, *Far from Mecca: Globalizing the Muslim Caribbean*, will be published by Rutgers University Press in 2020 as part of its Critical Caribbean Studies series. She has also published three peer-reviewed articles and four works of non-academic writing. *Far From Mecca* is unusual in that it is not a revision of Professor Khan’s dissertation, but is rather an entirely new project that she began following her appointment as an assistant professor in 2013. The monograph is a provocative and persuasive interrogation of the complex and woefully under examined historical and literary presence of Muslims in the Caribbean. Drawing on an interdisciplinary mix of archival research, oral interviews, close readings of literary texts, musical performances, and cultural practices, Professor Khan positions Muslim communities in the Caribbean as both a component of and resistant to Caribbean hybridity and creolization and both shaped by and distinct from Islam’s global Ummah. Professor Khan’s three journal articles similarly combine historical inquiry with literary analysis to examine key issues in Caribbean culture and politics, including issues of women’s labor protest, indigeneity, and homosexuality. Professor Khan is now working on a second project on hurricanes as a “definitive

metaphor” for the intersections of politics, culture, and environment in Caribbean societies. Her first article from this project, “Trade Winds: The Middle Passage of Atlantic Hurricane Migrancy,” is under review at a peer-reviewed literary journal.

#### Recent and Significant Publications:

Far from Mecca: Globalizing the Muslim Caribbean, Rutgers University Press, Critical Caribbean Series, in production, release date April 17, 2020.

“Protest and punishment: Indo-Guyanese women and organized labor,” *Caribbean Review of Gender Studies*, 12, 2018, pp: 269-98.

“Voyages across indenture: From ship sister to mannish woman,” *GLQ*, 22(2), 2016, pp. 249-80.

“Indigeneity and the Indo-Caribbean in Cyril Dabydeen’s Dark Swirl,” *Studies in Canadian Literature/Etudes en littérature Canadienne*, 40(1), 2015, pp: 205-26.

Service – Professor Khan has compiled an impressive service record, serving on the Department of English Language and Literature’s Executive Committee, Graduate Admissions Committee, and Salary Committee. In the Department of Afroamerican and African Studies, she has served on the Curriculum Committee and the Racial Climate Task Force, and as the organizer of two speakers’ series. She has also served as a mentor for Rackham’s Michigan Humanities Emerging Research Scholars Program (MICHHERS) and on the advisory board for the Arab and Muslim American Studies Program.

#### External Reviewers:

Reviewer (A)

“... ‘Far From Mecca’ provides a trenchant reading of the Islam Caribbean in relation to contemporary global discourses of Islam. The Caribbean is both an important part of present-day discourses and has its own histories that frame the present.”

Reviewer (B)

“*Far from Mecca* is a major work, which captures better than existing work the complexities of Islam in the Caribbean—its Moorish beginnings, its African roots and their erasure during the slave period, the arrival of Indian Muslims during the period of Indian indentured labor, the competition between the various schools of Islam, the challenges of creolization and national integration in the post indenture period, issues of racial and religious conflict within projects of Caribbean nation-building, and finally the impact of the current Islamic revival, which has its center in the Middle East.”

Reviewer (C)

“...her proven leadership in and commitment to promoting diversity on your campus is to be commended. She has served on a Racial Climate Task Force and participated in a working group on Arab and Muslim student campus climate. In addition, she publishes creative non-fiction as a way of reaching non-academic audiences and has spoken on Chicago’s Radio Islam and at Guyana’s Jubilee Independence day celebrations.”

Reviewer (D)

“...[Far from Mecca] is substantial and substantive, encompassing a wide range of cultural artifacts and production, focused on the Caribbean but reaching out across the globe for its argument and scope. It represents an important and original contribution to Caribbean literary studies and to cultural studies of Islam.”

Reviewer (E)

“The book centers on the figure of ‘fullaman’—a label that designates Muslims of any race. Dr. Khan discusses the ‘fullaman’ as ‘a fluid, performative identity’ that manifests an inherent tension between creolization (integration to local culture) and religious belonging (membership in the global ummed). The central question of the book revolves around the idea of sustaining one’s Muslim identity while ‘becoming’ Caribbean as a citizen and a political subject.”

Reviewer (F)

“By attending to people at the margins of the Anglophone Caribbean—Muslims in particular, but also women, queer, and indigenous communities—Khan’s work does not merely alter the demographics of Caribbean literary study, but also radically shifts the received sense of what Anglophone Caribbean literature *is*.”

Reviewer (G)

“As a literary scholar who probes historical and ethnographic archives, Khan is adept at an interdisciplinary and intersectional analysis that I have rarely seen before. While these words interdisciplinary and intersectional are often the hallmark of humanistic scholarship today, it is rare to see such a seamless and thoughtful engagement with theory, method, and evidence as in Khan’s scholarship.”

Summary of Recommendation:

Professor Khan’s interdisciplinary scholarship and teaching are redefining the parameters of Caribbean studies and are thus broadening the intellectual and pedagogical reach of both the Department of English Language and Literature and the Department of Afroamerican and African Studies. The Executive Committee of the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts and I recommend that Assistant Professor Aliyah R. Khan be promoted to the rank of associate professor of English Language and Literature, with tenure, and associate professor of Afroamerican and African studies, with tenure, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts.



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Anne Curzan, Dean

Geneva Smitherman Collegiate Professor of  
Women’s Studies, Linguistics, and Education  
Arthur F. Thurnau Professor  
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts

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