

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

Paulina L. Alberto, associate professor of history, with tenure, and associate professor of Spanish, with tenure, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, is recommended for promotion to professor of history, with tenure, and professor of Spanish, with tenure, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts.

Academic Degrees:

Ph.D.	2005	University of Pennsylvania
B.A.	1997	University of Pennsylvania

Professional Record:

2012–present	Associate Professor, Department of History and Department of Romance Languages and Literatures (Portuguese and Spanish), University of Michigan
2005–2012	Assistant Professor, Department of History and Department of Romance Languages and Literatures (Portuguese and Spanish), University of Michigan

Summary of Evaluation:

Teaching: Professor Alberto is a valuable and multi-faceted contributor to the teaching programs of both History and Romance Languages and Literature (RLL). In History, she receives some of the highest evaluation numbers in the entire unit for her courses on Latin America. She was also one of two co-developers for “What is History” (Hist 101), an innovative gateway course that now serves as the primary introduction to history as a discipline. Since its inception, this course has enrolled nearly a thousand students, including large numbers from STEM fields. In 2017, Professor Alberto won LSA’s Matthews Underclass Teaching Award for her work in developing and teaching this course; she has also co-authored a self-reflection piece on the experience of teaching “What is History” for the American Historical Association’s national magazine, *Perspectives*. Graduate students speak movingly of how her classes have changed their lives because she offers them a chance to think deeply about difficult race and ethnicity topics, modeling her own thinking and self-questioning lines of inquiry. Both undergraduates and graduate students praise her commitment to innovative pedagogy, as well as her creation of comfortable and inclusive learning environments. In RLL, moreover, Professor Alberto has been a leader in developing and sustaining the Portuguese language program at UM.

Research: Since her last promotion, Professor Alberto has been a highly productive, internationally visible, and respected scholar in her fields of modern Latin American history, comparative race-making, and questions of national belonging in Brazil and Argentina. Her publication record since tenure includes a co-edited collection, Re-thinking Race (Cambridge UP, 2016); nine single-authored essays (five in peer-reviewed journals, four in edited volumes); two co-authored essays in edited works; a brand new book, Black Legend: “El Negro” Raúl Grigera and Racial Storytelling in Modern Argentina, forthcoming from Cambridge UP; and a collaborative public history project, “From Africa to Patagonia,” which helped to launch our Humanities Collaboratory initiative at UM. External reviewers describe her previous scholarship

as placing her in the “top tier” of Brazilianists working today. Since tenure, her many articles, chapters, and forthcoming monograph have extended this reputation to the national context of Argentina (a process visible in her receipt of the 2017 James Alexander Robertson Prize for the year’s best article in *The Hispanic American Historical Review*). Professor Alberto has conducted fine-grained, primary source-based research in vastly different regions of Latin America, primarily Portuguese-speaking Brazil and in Spanish-speaking Argentina (and in so doing has become widely acknowledged as an authority on both contexts). She has been repeatedly recognized by respected academic bodies for her recent work, including a Burkhardt Fellowship for Recently Tenured Faculty from the American Council of Learned Societies, and a full-year fellowship from the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Recent and Significant Publications:

Black Legend: “El Negro” Raúl Grigera and Racial Storytelling in Modern Argentina. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, Afro-Latin America Series, under contract and forthcoming in 2021.

“Liberta by Trade: Negotiating the Terms of Unfree Labor in Gradual Abolition Buenos Aires (1820s-30s).” *Journal of Social History* 52, no. 3 (Spring 2019): 619–651.

“El Negro Raúl: Lives and Afterlives of an Afro-Argentine Celebrity (1886-Present).” *Hispanic American Historical Review* 96, no. 4 (November 2016): 669-710. James A. Robertson Memorial Prize (Conference on Latin American History).

Alberto, Paulina, and Elena, Eduardo, eds. Rethinking Race in Modern Argentina. New York and Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016

Service: Professor Alberto has contributed thoughtful service in multiple contexts at UM. In History, she has served on the Executive Committee and is currently the associate director of graduate studies. In RLL, her service/leadership has focused on building the Portuguese language program at UM, along with terms on the DEI and Undergraduate Committees. Additional contributions have included service on the LSA steering committee for the “Understanding Race” theme semester and the “Brazil Initiative” for the International Institute.

External Reviewers:

Reviewer (A): “Her prizewinning *H[ispanic] A[merican] H[istorical] R[evue]* article, ‘El Negro Raúl,’ is brilliant: innovative, beautifully written, deeply insightful, and heartbreaking. I can’t think of any other scholarly article that has made such a deep impression on me in a long time.”

Reviewer (B): “By any measure, Prof. Alberto is a well-established researcher. She is today one of the main referents in the sub-field of Afro-Latin American history, as her publishing record and collaboration projects show.”

Reviewer (C): “Alberto ... has made key contributions to the histories of race, ideology, culture, and nation in Latin America. It is quite simply impossible to talk about the fast-growing field of Afro-Latin American Studies without making reference to her scholarship.”

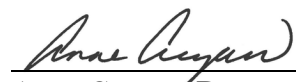
Reviewer (D): “It is rare to see a manuscript that so effectively weaves together the threads of an author’s intellectual trajectory. We can see here the influence of deep pedagogical thinking about stories, narratives, and their historical force, along with the influence of the social and micro-historical trends that have so richly informed the Brazilian, Cuban, and Atlantic histories of slavery since the 1980s ... Paulina Alberto is a brilliant and prolific scholar, already regarded as a generous collaborator and interlocutor in several academic fields. She is at the absolute top ranks of her field.”

Reviewer (E): “I find it laudable that so many [of her publications] have been translated into Portuguese and Spanish, and at times both. This can be taken as a statement of her integration into scholarly networks in both countries and her desire—seen in her talks, conferences, and her co-edited book—to play a role in shaping scholarly debate in the countries to which she has devoted her scholarly and intellectual energies.”

Reviewer (F): “*Black Legend* will be a model for the many scholars who have been paying attention to the narrative as well as creative methodological approaches ... This book is a significant accomplishment, and one that will certainly enhance Paulina Alberto’s reputation in Latin American racial relations studies and multiple subfields of history.”

Summary of Recommendation:

Professor Alberto’s scholarly impact on the comparative histories of race-making in modern Latin America has been profound. Her penetrating examinations of Brazil and Argentina reveal not only how racial narratives and processes emerge, but how they expose and unsettle dominant ideologies of racial exceptionalism. Professor Alberto’s publications are widely acknowledged as some of the most influential in her fields. She also has proven herself to be an exceedingly talented classroom teacher in both History and Romance Languages and Literatures. The Executive Committee of the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts and I recommend that Associate Professor Paulina L. Alberto be promoted to the rank of professor of history, with tenure, and professor of Spanish, with tenure, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts.



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

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