

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

Sofya Khagi, associate professor of Slavic languages and literatures, with tenure, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, is recommended for promotion to professor of Slavic languages and literatures, with tenure, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts.

Academic Degrees:

Ph.D.	2006	Brown University
M.A.	1999	Dartmouth College
B.A.	1996	University of Rochester

Professional Record:

2014-Present	Associate Professor, Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures, University of Michigan
2008-2014	Assistant Professor, Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures, University of Michigan
2006-2008	Post-doctoral Research Fellow/LEO Lecturer, Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures, University of Michigan

Summary of Evaluation:

Teaching: Professor Khagi teaches Russian literature at all levels, from first-year seminars to graduate seminars, including large core courses with Upper Level Writing Requirements and specialized courses on particular genres, periods, and individual writers. Altogether, she has taught fifteen courses and served as the chair or member of nine dissertation committees. Her courses cover the period of Russian literature from the 18th to the 21st century. She has contributed to the reinforcement and remodeling of some of the department's more traditional, philologically-oriented courses, while also offering original, new courses in areas of particular interest to her—the undergraduate course on fantasy and science fiction, her iteration of the senior seminar in Russian, as well as an introductory course in the Baltic cultures. The department is excited for her to develop more courses in this area, fitting with the long-term planning to build the department's scholarly and pedagogical strength in the multiethnic and multicultural areas of Eastern Europe and Eurasia.

Research: Professor Khagi's research field is Russian literature and culture, with special attention to its thematic and stylistic diversity, ranging from the 18th through the 21st century. While her first book, now in the second edition, explored a particular philosophical tradition in Russian poetry, her second monograph is a detailed, wide-ranging, and penetrating study of Viktor Pelevin, one of Russia's most-read, most-discussed, and most contentious contemporary authors. Her articles further reinforce her scholarly breadth and depth, offering original readings of some of the most important works of Russian poetry, prose, and film. Most recently, she has expanded her research interest to Russophone literature outside the Russian Federation, by examining her native Latvia as a case study. Her new research project is particularly relevant today. It promises to not only become an important contribution to the field of literary studies,

but will also deepen our understanding of the politically and socially sensitive problems of Russian culture and identity in the Baltic countries. These countries are located on the eastern periphery of the EU and NATO where the Russian minorities are sometimes perceived, both by local nationalists and by the Russian authorities in Moscow, as a tool of Russia's interventionist strategy.

Recent and Significant Publications:

Pelevin and Unfreedom: Poetics, Politics, Metaphysics. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2020.

“Parameters of Space-Time and Degrees of (Un)freedom: Dmitry Bykov’s *ZhD*.” In Geo-Political Identity Making in Post-Soviet Russian Speculative Fiction, ed. Mikhail Suslov and Per-Arne Bodin, 281-300. London: I. B. Tauris, 2019.

“Alternative Historical Imagination in Victor Pelevin.” *Slavic and East European Journal* 62, no. 3 (Fall 2018): 483-501.

“Genre Film, Spectacle and the Strugatskii Brothers in Fyodor Bondarchuk’s ‘The Inhabited Island.’” *Science Fiction Film and Television* 8, no. 2 (Summer 2015): 199-217.

Service: Professor Khagi has served as the department’s diversity advocate and a member of the Executive Committee. In this capacity, she was involved in organizing graduate recruitment events which raised the visibility of the department nationally and helped increase the diversity of the applicant pool. In August 2020, she started her three-year term as the director of graduate studies and has been performing her service, enthusiastically and efficiently, in the challenging situation of the ongoing pandemic. She also performs extensive service to the profession by organizing panels at professional conferences and reviewing submissions for leading academic journals and publishers.

External Reviewers:

Reviewer (A): “Doctor Sofya Khagi is a scholar of high merit, both in the quantity and in the quality of her scholarly production. Two of her submitted works are outstanding: the monograph on Victor Pelevin and her article on Mandelstam and Florenskii.”

Reviewer (B): “Khagi has written an excellent book, which is now about to be published. She had also produced a number of very good articles, edited a collection, and is organizing a conference. I see no obstacle to her promotion. She has more than earned it.”

Reviewer (C): “All of these scholars [in her cohort], Dr. Khagi included, are representatives of a recent generation of scholars who are positioning Russian literary studies in close conversation with recent trends in the humanities (post-humanism, cultural and social history, a reinvigorated modernist studies, to name a few). Dr. Khagi is perhaps more advanced than any of these scholars in her trajectory, given that she is the first among them to complete a second monograph.”

Reviewer (D): “With the two books, an edited journal forum and an edited volume of essays, published articles on Russian and Baltic cultural topics, and numerous papers read in a variety of settings, Khagi has already earned a reputation for excellent, imaginative scholarship, and the ability to effectively present her ideas. From her record, she also seems to be a dedicated teacher and organizer of panels and conferences. She ranks very high in the cohort of mid-career Slavists, and there is literally no chance of her slowing down any time soon.”

Reviewer (E): “Looking over the dossier as a whole, I am impressed by both the quality and quantity of work. Many scholars just continue working in the same familiar areas after getting tenure. Some branch out, widening the scope of their analysis. But very few change directions this radically. When I consider the work that she did earlier, I am struck that she has not only become a specialist in a new period and new genres, but she has mastered an entirely new set of secondary texts. Taken as a whole, she covers an astonishing amount of ground.”

Reviewer (F): “Few American (or European) Slavistics scholars of contemporary literature could, I think, match the understanding of the manifold ‘subterranean’ social, political and cultural layers in the literary works she analyzes and the shared, but not openly divulged, codes used by writers signaling their ideological positions.”

Summary of Recommendation:

Professor Khagi is an outstanding scholar of international standing who has made significant contributions to the study of Russian literature from the 18th through the 21st century. She has published two monographs and a series of articles on Russian literature and film and has been engaged in new areas of research in Russophone literatures since her last promotion. She has an exceptional teaching record and maintains a high profile in service to the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures and the profession. The Executive Committee of the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts and I recommend that Associate Professor Sofya Khagi be promoted to the rank of professor of Slavic languages and literatures, with tenure, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts.



Anne Curzan, Dean
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May 2021