

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

Ishani Maitra, associate professor of philosophy, with tenure, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, is recommended for promotion to professor of philosophy, with tenure, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts.

Academic Degrees:

Ph.D. 2002 MIT, in Philosophy
A.B. 1995 Harvard University, with Honors

Professional Record:

2012–present Associate Professor of Philosophy, University of Michigan
2007–2011 Assistant Professor, Department of Philosophy and Department of
Women’s and Gender Studies, Rutgers University
2002–2007 Assistant Professor, Department of Philosophy, Syracuse University

Summary of Evaluation:

Teaching: Professor Maitra has successfully taught a wide variety of courses for the department, including bread-and-butter courses such as Philosophy of Law (five times). She includes R&E material in this class that students praise in evaluations for being thought-provoking and balanced. Professor Maitra has introduced a new upper-level undergraduate course on social philosophy of language. Outside of class, she has been involved in more senior theses than anyone else in the department. In addition, Professor Maitra is a highly sought-after graduate mentor and advisor; she is serving or has served on ten dissertation committees and is supervising or has supervised five dissertations.

Research: Professor Maitra is a leading scholar of her generation in the newly-emerging field of social and political philosophy of language. She is known particularly for her groundbreaking work on the ways in which speech can harm and perpetuate injustices such as racism and sexism. She has studied the harmful effects of speech; the nature of lying and its relation to assertion; and other pressing issues in the social philosophy of language. She is helping to make Michigan a leading center for the study of social and political philosophy of language.

Recent and Significant Publications:

McGowan, Mary Kate, and Maitra, Ishani, eds. Speech and Harm: Controversies over Free Speech. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018.

“Hateful Speech and Hostile Environments.” *Australasian Philosophical Review*, forthcoming in 2021.

“Misogyny and Humanism.” *APA Newsletter on Feminism and Philosophy* 18, no. 2 (2019): 14-18.

“New Words for Old Wrongs.” *Episteme* 15, no. 3 (2018): 345-362.

Service: The emphasis in Professor Maitra’s research and teaching on promoting diversity and inclusivity is reflected in her extensive and exemplary service to the department, college, university, and the profession. While serving as the chair of the Graduate Admissions Committee, Professor Maitra oversaw what was for philosophy an unprecedented number of Rackham Merit Fellows. Since joining Michigan, she has served as the Rackham Ally for Diversity and was instrumental in organizing an ongoing COMPASS initiative that introduces a diverse group of undergraduate students to philosophy and attempts to recruit them to Michigan’s Ph.D. philosophy program (with recent success). Finally, Professor Maitra has been consistently active in working to promote the participation of women and people from under-represented groups within the profession.

External Reviewers:

Reviewer (A): “Ishani has made great contributions to the profession, and especially diversity issues. In addition, she is internationally known for her work on the harms and injustice perpetuated by speech ... I’m sure that Michigan values, and will want to acknowledge, her important contributions to research, teaching and service.”

Reviewer (B): “Maitra is one of the four most prominent senior scholars in the social philosophy of language.”

Reviewer (C): “Ishani’s work and ideas are ... making a big impact on the field, as indicated by critical engagement with it in subsequent work. This is easily explained in that ... her views are both truly compelling, and they have been published in the best possible venues in the field. She will certainly continue to produce similarly groundbreaking work.”

Reviewer (D): “I can think of no-one at Maitra’s career stage who is doing more interesting work or who has contributed across a wider range of topics in this area [of social philosophy of language].”

Reviewer (E): “In relation to others working in the same field, Ishani is a leading figure in her generation, and her work is comparable to the very best work of her very best peers, including, for example, Mary Kate McGowan and Elisabeth Camp, both of whom have been full professors with tenure for some time.”

Reviewer (F): “I cannot think of anyone in SPL [social philosophy of language] whose work is better than Ishani’s. In fact, because of Ishani (her scholarship, her depth and breadth of knowledge, and her care and thoroughness as an advisor), along with Michigan’s general strength and reputation for a good graduate climate, Michigan is the clear top choice for graduate study in SPL.”

Summary of Recommendation:

Professor Maitra is an internationally-recognized contributor to her field of research in the social and political philosophy of language. She has been active in promoting diversity and inclusivity both in her teaching and through her service to the department, college, university, and the profession. The Executive Committee of the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts and I recommend that Associate Professor Ishani Maitra be promoted to the rank of professor of philosophy, with tenure, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts.



Anne Curzan, Dean
Geneva Smitherman Collegiate Professor of
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