

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

Arvind-Pal S. Mandair, associate professor of Asian languages and cultures, with tenure, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, is recommended for promotion to professor of Asian languages and cultures, with tenure, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts.

Academic Degrees:

Ph.D.	1999	University of Warwick (U.K.)
M.A.	1994	University of Warwick (U.K.)
Ph.D.	1989	Aston University (U.K.), Chemistry
B.Sc.	1985	Council for National Academic Awards (U.K.)

Professional Record:

2017–present	Associate Professor of Asian Languages and Cultures, University of Michigan
2011–2017	Associate Professor and Tara Singh and Balwant Kaur Chattha and Gurbar Singh and Kirpal Kaur Brar Sikh Studies Endowed Professor, University of Michigan
2006–2011	Assistant Professor Tara Singh and Balwant Kaur Chattha and Gurbar Singh and Kirpal Kaur Brar Sikh Studies Endowed Professor, University of Michigan
2001–2006	Assistant Professor of Religion and Philosophy, S.K.K. Bindra Chair in Sikh Studies, Hofstra University
2004	Visiting Assistant Professor, S.U.N.Y at Stony Brook
1999–2001	Research Fellow, Department of Religion, University of London (S.O.A.S)

Summary of Evaluation:

Teaching: Professor Mandair has taught a wide range of undergraduate courses both in the area of Sikh Studies and more broadly on topics in religion and South Asian Studies. He has developed two new interdisciplinary courses that the department sees as especially innovative: a comparative course on race and caste in India and the U.S., which fulfills the race and ethnicity requirement; and a course on “Neurocultures and Asian Philosophies of the Mind,” which draws on his earlier expertise in the natural sciences as well as his current research interests. He has been a particularly effective graduate instructor and helped to create the department’s introductory seminar on Theory and Methods for first-year doctoral students.

Research: Professor Mandair is widely considered the top scholar of Sikhism writing outside South Asia today. His first book, Religion and the Specter of the West: Sikhism, India, Post-Coloniality and the Politics of Translation (2009), was lauded by all the external letter writers as a field-defining work of historical reconstruction. His main academic intervention is the excavation of the ideological and political back history of Sikhism as a “world religion” in order to expose its roots in colonial-era debates about the nature of religion and Western dismissal of native Indian philosophical traditions. Professor Mandair has been extremely productive since tenure, with three new monographs-in-production, a textbook, a slim volume introducing non-

specialists to Sikhism, a massive edited encyclopedia volume, another co-edited state-of-the-field volume, and nearly two score journal articles and chapters in his dossier.

Recent and Significant Publications:

Geophilosophical Encounters: Sikh Philosophy, Decolonial Praxis and Diasporic Logics.
Abingdon: Routledge, forthcoming.

Spiritual Warriors: Violence & Non-Violence in Sikhism. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, forthcoming.

Editor. Sikhism: Encyclopedia of Indian Religions. Volume 8. New York: Springer, 2017.

Sikhism: A Guide For the Perplexed. London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2013.

Service: Professor Mandair has served in important departmental positions since receiving tenure, including one term on the department's Executive Committee, two years on the Curriculum Committee, and one year co-chairing a tenure and promotion case within the department. He acts as a public intellectual to the Sikh diasporic community through a steady stream of workshops and conferences that have brought lay and academic community members together in productive dialogue.

External Reviewers:

Reviewer (A): "No-one working in Sikh studies, or the study of religions more widely, could afford to ignore Professor Mandair's ideas once encountered. I am struck particularly by the extent to which he has managed to make the study of Sikhism ... applicable and relevant to the research interests of scholars of any area in the study of religions as well as Asian studies (in its widest global sense)."

Reviewer (B): "Professor Mandair has high regard among his peers ... And within Sikh Studies his work stands out. Indeed, it seems to me that there is a dearth of good scholarship and philosophical reflection here and Professor Mandair's contribution is to be welcomed in this regard."

Reviewer (C): "[Geophilosophical Encounters] reveals Professor Mandair's unique contribution of producing a non-secular critical theory that at once illuminates religious texts and their political valence. While Professor Mandair will have his critics—and I do think his conceptualization of diasporicity will be provocative—there is little doubt that this is a scholar who makes powerful and original contributions to the study of religion. ... [H]e has also come to be seen as a person who has created a new field of study, as Sikh Studies, and given it an intellectual agenda and space through the journal *Sikh Formations*."

Reviewer (D): "[Professor Mandair's] prolific output has gone hand in hand with high quality in the research monographs and in the teaching guides. I doubt if there is a scholar working in Sikh Studies, or interested in Sikhism, who has not used Professor Mandair's publications; and this would apply equally to the very accessible and readable material produced for students ... For me, he is the *most* original mind working in Sikh Studies today."

Reviewer (E): “Mandair is without doubt the leading Sikh scholar of his generation. However, to describe him in this fashion alone is to diminish his wider contribution to the field of South Asian Religious Studies. I consider Mandair to be one of the key interlocutors in contemporary attempts to extricate our understanding of South Asian traditions from the cognitive imperialism that continues to frame representations of Asia according to the conceptual frameworks of western, Christian and secular (post-Christian) thought.”

Reviewer (F): “Throughout his career [Professor Mandair] has been skillfully incorporating a variety of frameworks from the humanities and social sciences, and with his new interest in consciousness studies, he is now expanding his methodologies into the natural sciences as well. His incorporation of postmodern theory, translation studies, decolonial studies, theories of violence, diaspora studies, consciousness studies to Sikh materials is indeed enticing.”

Summary of Recommendation:

Professor Mandair is the leading scholar of his generation in Sikh Studies, a highly prolific scholar of religion and philosophy more broadly, and an innovative instructor whose interdisciplinary approach in the classroom mirrors his scholarly accomplishments. The Executive Committee of the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts and I recommend that Associate Professor Arvind-Pal S. Mandair be promoted to the rank of professor of Asian languages and cultures, with tenure, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts.



Anne Curzan, Dean
Geneva Smitherman Collegiate Professor of
English Language and Literature, Linguistics,
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Arthur F. Thurnau Professor
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