

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

Noah L. Nathan, assistant professor of political science, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, is recommended for promotion to associate professor of political science, with tenure, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts.

Academic Degrees:

Ph.D.	2016	Harvard University
M.A.	2012	Harvard University
B.A.	2009	Harvard College

Professional Record:

2016 – Present Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, University of Michigan

Summary of Evaluation:

Teaching – Professor Nathan has developed three courses—two undergraduate and one graduate course. In response to a call for more ULWR courses, Professor Nathan developed a course on “Electoral Politics in the Developing World,” and has taught this course three times. He has twice taught a small seminar course on “Experimental Approaches to the Political Economy of Development.” Particularly notable is his emphasis on students’ doing political science, rather than just learning about it. In his ULWR course, this is done in the form of an original research paper that students develop throughout the semester. In the experiments course, students spend the last part of the course designing their own randomized control trial. Both of these projects require that Professor Nathan devote a lot of one-on-one time to students; this is a core part of his pedagogy. Graduate students see him as modeling professionalism in every way; they say they learn something almost every time he talks. Students say he is gracious, he is insightful, and he encourages them to stretch in new directions.

Research – Professor Nathan addresses several daunting challenges that many developing countries are confronting: processes of modernization, rapid and often unplanned urbanization, the growth of the middle class, and limited state capacity to supply infrastructure and education. Professor Nathan’s research methodically and systematically explores the political consequences of these challenges on the style and substance of appeals by politicians to voters in newly democratizing countries, on entrenched patterns of clientelism versus more programmatic policies, on party systems, and on voter behavior and preferences. Professor Nathan’s theoretical model identifies a self-reproducing trap whereby voters and parties reproduce a cycle of clientelistic politics.

Recent and Significant Publications:

Ichino, Nahomi and Noah Nathan. “Crossing the Line: Local Ethnic Geography and Voting in Ghana.” *American Political Science Review* 107(2) (2013):344-61.

Electoral Politics and Africa's Urban Transition: Class and Ethnicity in Ghana. New York: Cambridge University Press. Cambridge Studies in Comparative Politics. 2019.

“Electoral Consequences of Colonial Invention: Chiefs, Brokers, and Distribution in Northern Ghana.” *World Politics* 71(3) (2019): 417-456.

Atwell, Paul and Noah Nathan. “Channels of Influence or Maps of Behavior? A Field Experiment on Social Networks and Cooperation,” Forthcoming, *American Journal of Political Science*. 2020.

Hicken, Allen and Noah Nathan. “Clientelism’s Red Herrings: Dead Ends and New Directions in the Study of Non-Programmatic Politics.” *Annual Review of Political Science* 23(1) (2020): 277-294.

Service – Professor Nathan has been an active contributor to public goods for the department, the university, and the profession. Within the department, Professor Nathan has served on the Emerging Scholars Conference organizing committee, on the admissions committee, and as faculty co-coordinator of the Comparative Politics Workshop for two years. He has served on a number of university committees, including the post-doctoral selection committee for the Weiser Center for Emerging Democracies and the selection and steering committees for the African Social Research Initiative. Professor Nathan has served as the co-head of the MPSA African Politics Section, the award committee for the QMMR Sage Best Paper Award, and is the co-founder of the Midwest Workshop in Empirical Political Science (MWEPS).

External Reviewers:

Reviewer (A): “Nathan’s (and his coauthors’) new approach to the politics of clientelism makes a novel and crucial contribution to the literature, opening up a more fruitful way of examining patron-client politics – one that is probably more in line with our studies of programmatic politics (which also relies on some kind of iterated exchange of policy for votes without any monitoring).”

Reviewer (B): “By leveraging the knowledge that he has about Ghana and using it to find ways to address questions of deep interest for political scientists, Nathan has contributed significantly to our knowledge of the political world.”

Reviewer (C): “[Nathan's] answer is that the weak state creates a vicious circle, or ‘trap:’ politicians cannot deliver ambitious, well-designed public goods, so the voters who want them do not bother to vote, and politicians instead appeal to uneducated voters who are more easily satisfied with particularistic benefits and appeals to ethnicity. It is a tragic situation, deftly analyzed, clearly argued, and supported with mounds of original evidence.”

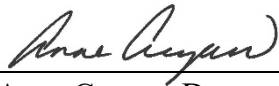
Reviewer (D): “Nathan finds and documents a fascinating contrast between traditional chiefs in Ghana whose positions were created by British colonialism and those whose positions reflect longstanding (pre-colonial) customary authorities; and he presents evidence that the constructed authorities are less accountable and produce fewer development goods for voters.”

Reviewer (E): “[Nathan]... produces work of the highest quality, uses careful empirical approaches, and addresses the most compelling questions around the political economy of development, steering clear of the temptations to substitute method for substance.”

Reviewer (F): “Nathan forcefully argues against the prevailing modernizationist view that urbanization and middle class growth undermine clientelism and foster programmatic politics...The evidence Nathan brings to bear is a wide-ranging mix of fine-grained demographic data, surveys, survey experiments, content analysis, focus group, and elite interviews. It is not easy to collect, analyze, and convey such disparate types of evidence, but he does so seamlessly.”

Summary of Recommendation:

Professor Nathan brings tremendous credit to the University of Michigan with his cutting-edge and careful scholarship, his dedicated and effective mentoring and teaching, and his investments in leadership, governance, and service. The Executive Committee of the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts and I recommend that Assistant Professor Noah L. Nathan be promoted to the rank of associate professor of political science, with tenure, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts.



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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