

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

Gavin Arnall, assistant professor of romance languages and literatures, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, is recommended for promotion to associate professor of romance languages and literatures, with tenure, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts.

Academic Degrees:

Ph.D. 2016 Princeton University
M.A. 2013 Princeton University
B.A. 2009 Cornell University

Professional Record:

2015-Present Assistant Professor, University of Michigan
2011-2013 Assistant Instructor, Princeton University

Summary of Evaluation:

Teaching: Professor Arnall's teaching record is very strong. He brings to the curriculum his background as a comparatist, working across the Caribbean and South American contexts. He has made a particularly important contribution to the romance languages and literatures (RLL) curriculum by creating courses that forge connections across the Spanish and French sections of our department. Moreover, his courses are consistently interdisciplinary, combining literature, film, philosophy, history, and politics. During nine semesters of teaching at UM, he has offered a series of innovative, intellectually engaging, and well-received courses at the undergraduate and graduate levels. He serves on six Ph.D. committees.

Research: Professor Arnall has a strong record of published and forthcoming scholarly works, including a book, Subterranean Fanon: An Underground Theory of Radical Change, published by Columbia University Press. He is a specialist in Latin American studies and francophone Caribbean studies, and his scholarship explores common problems and questions of political thought and aesthetic movements across regional, linguistic, and disciplinary boundaries. His research is characterized by a deep theoretical engagement with Latin American literature and literary criticism, continental philosophy, postcolonial theory, and above all Marxist thought. Professor Arnall has written extensively about more canonical figures in the latter intellectual tradition like Marx, Lenin, Gramsci, and Mao, and his primary interest is how Marxist ideas have been taken up outside of Western Europe, as in the writings of such figures as José María Arguedas, José Aricó, Aimé Césaire, Raquel Gutiérrez Aguilar, Emilio de Ípola, Subcomandante Marcos, José Carlos Mariátegui, and Frantz Fanon. Professor Arnall's work explores and analyzes the conceptual challenges and opportunities that these political theorists and actors have come up against in their critical engagement with orthodox Marxism and Western thought.

Recent and Significant Publications:

Subterranean Fanon: An Underground Theory of Radical Change. New York: Columbia University Press, 2020.

“Latin American Marxisms: Reading José Carlos Mariátegui and José Aricó Today.” *New Research on Aesthetics and Politics in Latin America*, ed. Gavin Arnall, Special Review Dossier for the *Journal of Latin American Cultural Studies* 29, no. 3 (January 2021): 489-499.

“The Missed Encounter of *Turupukllay*: Marxism, Indigenous Communities, and Andean Culture in *Yawar Fiesta*.” *Revolution and Counterrevolution in Latin America: An Aleatory Dialectic*, ed. Nicolas Allen and Oscar Ariel Cabezas, Special Issue of *Radical Americas* 5, no. 1 (2020): 1-16.

“Remembering the Sixties: On Julio Cortázar’s Hopscotch and Time.” *Modern Language Notes*, Spanish Issue 134, no. 2 (March 2019): 360-381.

Service: Professor Arnall has proved to be an outstanding citizen of the profession and RLL. Within the department, he has served as a member of the Diversity Committee, the Graduate Committee, and the Spanish Undergraduate Curriculum Committee. Furthermore, he has been actively and passionately involved in mentoring and advising both undergraduate and graduate students. He also serves as faculty sponsor for the Marxisms Collective, a Rackham Interdisciplinary Workshop that includes graduate students, faculty, and members from the community. He has provided continuous service to the profession as a referee for four academic journals and an external evaluator for UCLA’s Modern Endangered Archives Program. He has served as the chair, secretary, and Executive Committee member of the “Transdisciplinary Connections: Marxism, Literature, and Society” forum of the Modern Language Association. Moreover, he has organized four panels at major academic conferences including the annual conference of the Modern Languages Association and the Latin American Studies Association since arriving at the University of Michigan.

External Reviewers:

Reviewer (A): “In terms of intellectual rigor, I would say that Professor Arnall’s interpretation of Fanon can be compared to the very sharpest readers who today are transforming the fields of critical theory and radical Black studies, from Fred Moten to Frank Wilderson.”

Reviewer (B): “Arnall’s most important contribution to date is his monograph *Subterranean Fanon: An Underground Theory of Radical Change* (2020), completed with lightning speed, right after Fanon’s writings were newly published in 2015 in a volume containing previously unpublished works. Arnall’s work in this respect is ground-breaking and ahead of his peers: he took on a study of little known materials and made a courageous intervention in the renewed interest in Fanon sparked by the above mentioned publication in an array of academic fields, such as Philosophy, Literature, Social science, Latin American Studies and African Studies.”

Reviewer (C): “He is one of those rare scholars who carries out original research, and does so elegantly and persuasively. In his work, Arnall demonstrates an impressive theoretical sophistication without sacrificing clarity and, for this reason, will be read by students of all levels, specialists and non-specialists.”


Reviewer (D): “What is more, unlike much contemporary political thought, Professor Arnall’s is rigorously grounded in archival research, textual analysis, and historical perspective. I will use this book for years to come as a model of how to think, research, and write for my undergraduates and graduate students.”

Reviewer (E): “I have completed a significant number of tenure review cases over the last 15 years. In my experience, it is rare to find a dossier displaying the quality of research and academic accomplishment that characterize Professor Arnall’s work.”

Reviewer (F): “I would like to highlight an important aspect of Prof. Arnall’s work, one that is often undervalued by academic committees, but that nonetheless is both essential and sets him apart from most other scholars in the field. Prof. Arnall is one of the most important translators of theory and philosophy from Spanish.”

Summary of Recommendation:

Professor Arnall has a very strong record of teaching, research, and service. With a book published, numerous published or forthcoming articles, and a second manuscript under way, alongside established success as a teacher, and significant service and leadership, he has proven to be a highly valued member of the RLL faculty and of the profession overall. The Executive Committee of the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts and I recommend that Assistant Professor Gavin Arnall be promoted to the rank of associate professor of romance languages and literatures, 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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