

PROMOTION RECOMMENDATION
The University of Michigan–Dearborn
College of Arts, Sciences, and Letters

Terri Laws, assistant professor of African and African American studies, College of Arts, Sciences, and Letters, is recommended for promotion to associate professor of African and African American studies, with tenure, College of Arts, Sciences, and Letters

Academic Degrees:

Ph.D.	2015	Rice University, Houston, Texas
M.A.	2010	Rice University, Houston, Texas
M.Div.	2007	Interdenominational Theological Center, Atlanta, Georgia
B.B.A.	1984	University of Cincinnati, Cincinnati, Ohio

Professional Record:

2015-present	Assistant Professor, African and African American Studies, University of Michigan-Dearborn
2015-2019	Assistant Professor, Health and Human Services, University of Michigan-Dearborn
2013-2015	Instructor, Religious Studies and Interim Director, African American Studies, University of Detroit Mercy, Detroit, Michigan

Summary of Evaluation:

Teaching: Professor Laws is rated as excellent in teaching. She has taught five courses: Detroit History and Culture, the African American Religious Experience, Medical Ethics, Medical Sociology, and Black Women, Religion, and Spirituality. She has created four courses that reflect her specialization in religious studies: African American Religious Experience, and Black Women, Religion, and Spirituality, and two courses soon to be offered, Religion, Health, and Medicine, and Religious Roots of Resistance, Rebellion, and Revolt. Her research specialization and community engagement in the area of bioethics contribute to her applied knowledge and effectiveness in the classroom, especially for her Medical Ethics course. Laws has maintained strong student evaluation scores, averaging above 4.25 for the ‘compared to other instructors’ rating. Professor Laws courses engage students in critical thinking that addresses the real world issues such as systemic racism, health disparities, gender inequalities, and the role of religion in society. Peer observations indicate that Professor Laws creates a welcoming classroom that fosters students’ learning of challenging and difficult content.

Research: Professor Laws is rated excellent in research. She has published four articles, three book chapters, two book reviews and currently has a book under contract with Routledge. She has an impressive research record that includes an article in a leading scholarly global periodical the *Journal of Religion and Health* and another in the American Medical Association’s *AMA Journal of Ethics*. Her work rests on the intersection of race, religion and health within the emerging field of African American religion and health. Professor Laws’ scholarship uses culturally specific sources, norms, and practices to contribute to the study of African American religious studies while broadening the field of race, religion, and bioethics to included notions of justice and equity. Professor Laws’ work is extremely relevant as it addresses persistent racial

health disparities especially in light of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on communities of color and the role of religion and religious organizations in the dissemination of public health information and vaccine adherence.

Recent and Significant Publications:

- Laws, T. 2021. Carlin's Pastoral Aesthetics: Bioethics, "Do We Want to Be Made Well?" *Pastoral Psychology*. Invited (accepted 3 August 2021, 10.1007/s11089-021-00976-z).
- Laws, T. 2021. How Should We Respond to Racist Legacy in Health Professions Education Originating in the Flexner Report? *American Medical Association (AMA) Journal of Ethics* 23 (3) March: E271-E275.
- Lacey, K., Mouzon, D. M., Parnell, R. N., & Laws, T. 2020. Severe Intimate Partner Violence, Sources of Stress and the Mental Health of US Black Women. *Journal of Women's Health* 30(1): 17–28.
- Laws, T. 2020. Medical Innovation, Conventional Theology. In J. Slattery (Ed.), *Christian Theology and Modern Sciences*, T&T Clark, London. pp. 249-260. Invited.
- Laws, T., & Enard, K. R. 2020. 'I AM that I AM': The Religion of White Rage, Great Migration Detroit, and the Ford Motor Company. In S. Finley, B. Gray, & L. Martin (Eds.). The Religion of White Rage: Religious Fervor, White Workers and the Myth of Black Racial Progress Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, pp. 58–72.
- Laws, T. 2018. Tuskegee as Sacred Rhetoric: The Focal Point for the Emergent Field of African American Religion and Health. *Journal of Religion and Health* 57(1): 408–419.

Service: Professor Laws' record of service was rated excellent. Professor Laws has made considerable contributions to the disciplines of African and African American Studies, Women's and Gender Studies, Health and Human Services, and Religious Studies. She has been heavily involved in the self-studies of two disciplines and serves on the executive board of the Women's and Gender Studies program. At the college level, she has served on the Practice-Based Learning Task Force, the Academic Integrity Board, and the CASL Faculty Service Task Force. She has actively participated in the campus' Community Read program for several years, both as contributor and panelist, and has served on the campus Advisory Budget Committee. Professionally, she has served on hospital ethics boards and engages in public scholarship through various guest speaking engagements. Finally, Professor Laws also serves as the co-chair of the Bioethics and Religion Unit of the American Academy of Religion. Professor Laws is a highly valued colleague who makes significant contributions on campus and in the community.

External Reviewers:

Reviewer A: "Prof. Laws has carved out an important place in the literature on health disparities within the field of African-American studies. With contributions focusing on Black rhetoric, religious practice, and engagement with biomedicine, she brings both an insider perspective and a critical academic lens to questions that are of central importance but also frequently overlooked."

Reviewer B: "Dr. Laws has put together an outstanding record of scholarly publication, in terms of both quality and quantity. The latter is especially impressive given the recency of her doctoral training and the teach load at UM-Dearborn...[F]rom her record listed on her C.V. and from the

papers of hers that I have read, she does excellent work and I would not hesitate to call her an emerging star.”

Reviewer C: “I find Professor Laws’s [sic] dossier to constitute a clear and compelling case for tenure and promotion to the rank of associate professor. Professor Laws’s [sic] record of scholarly research activity is on par with the expectations for tenure and promotion at all of those institutions... Professor Laws’s [sic] record of research compares favorably to...four leading scholars, who all earned tenure with promotion to the associate professor level at R-1 universities.”

Reviewer D: “Laws’s [sic] research exposes the correlation of science and religion with racial exploitation that maintains health inequities. Recognized as an expert in her field, Laws’s [sic] work is accessible to a broad audience and has the potential to also contribute to collaborative initiatives in the areas of critical race theory and equity, diversity, and inclusion projects... Laws’s [sic] contributions to the field through publications of peer reviewed essays, invited presentations in academic and non-academic settings, and public scholarship position her as a leader among with peers with whom she has similar research interests.”

Reviewer E: “The quality, quantity, focus and scholarly impact of Professor Laws’ work are exemplary. I am extremely impressed with the breadth and depth of academic work that she has put forth and accomplished in her rank as an Assistant Professor and pre-tenure track faculty member.”

Summary of Recommendation: Professor Laws has published high quality research and has shown promise for continued scholarly work. She is an excellent teacher, who is rated highly by students and her peers. She is a valued colleague who has made significant service contributions to the university and the community. It is with the support of the College of Arts, Sciences, and Letters Executive Committee that I recommend Terri Laws for promotion to associate professor of African and African American studies, College of Arts, Sciences, and Letters.



Martin J Hershock, Dean
College of Arts, Sciences, and Letters



Domenico Grasso, Chancellor
University of Michigan-Dearborn

May 2022