

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

Brian A. Stewart, assistant professor of anthropology, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, is recommended for promotion to associate professor of anthropology, with tenure, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts.

Academic Degrees:

D. Phil.	2008	University of Oxford
M.St.	2001	University of Oxford
B.A.	2000	University of Vermont

Professional Record:

2013 - present	Assistant Professor, Department of Anthropology, University of Michigan
2013 - present	Assistant Curator, University of Michigan Museum of Anthropological Archaeology

Summary of Evaluation:

Teaching: Professor Stewart's courses range from undergraduate lectures to graduate seminars and cover comparative approaches to hunter-gatherer archaeology, African archaeology, and the anthropology of humanity's evolution—from the origins of hominins in eastern Africa through more recent hunter-gatherer adaptations during the modern Holocene epoch. He has received uniformly strong scores on his teaching evaluations, and students consistently praise his clarity, organization, and dedication to engaged classroom learning. He is an outstanding mentor, and in the time he has been at Michigan he has chaired five doctoral committees and served as a member of several others. Students comment on his conscientiousness in helping them develop new and independent research projects, in publishing results, and in their notable success obtaining grant funding for their dissertation research from prestigious organizations such as the National Science Foundation, the National Geographic Society, and the Leakey Foundation.

Research: Professor Stewart is an anthropological archaeologist whose research focuses on the evolution of human behavioral or adaptive plasticity, a feature that enabled *Homo sapiens* to begin migrating out of Africa about 100,000 years ago and spread over the ensuing millennia to practically every corner of the globe. This uniquely human trait, which Stewart refers to as a "generalist-specialist" niche, must have evolved in Africa prior to our species' dispersal from the continent, a result of selection pressures overcome by hunter-gatherer populations during the past 500,000 years. His ongoing, multi-disciplinary field research in southern Africa—centered in Highland Lesotho and the Namaqualand Desert of South Africa—sheds extraordinary new light on this process and its global consequences by concentrating on several interrelated themes that are essential to any broader understanding of how we came to populate the planet through the transmission of complex and quickly shared values and behaviors (i.e., culture). These themes include: (1) human adaptation to inhospitable environments, including high elevation settings; (2) the evolution of human social networks; and (3) the organization of hunter-gatherer domestic space. Professor Stewart's approach to each of these themes is based on original and highly

innovative fieldwork and analyses that give empirical weight to his broader theoretical conclusions. He has obtained generous funding from the National Science Foundation, the National Geographic Society, and the Leverhulme Trust. Professor Stewart has been extremely productive since arriving at the University of Michigan. He has published, co-edited a book that is already regarded as a foundational achievement, a solo-authored book manuscript in press, 13 peer-reviewed journal articles, and five peer-reviewed book chapters.

Recent and Significant Publications:

Stewart, Brian A., Yuchao Zhao, Peter J. Mitchell, Genevieve Dewar, James D. Gleason, and Joel D. Blum. "Ostrich eggshell bead strontium isotopes reveal persistent macroscale social networking across late Quaternary southern Africa." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 117, no. 12 (March 2020): 6453–6462.

Roberts, Patrick and Brian A. Stewart. "Defining the 'generalist-specialist' niche for Pleistocene *Homo sapiens*." *Nature Human Behaviour* 2 (July 2018): 542–550.

Jones, Sacha C. and Brian A. Stewart, eds. *Africa from MIS 6–2: Population Dynamics and Paleoenvironments*. Dordrecht, Switzerland: SpringerLink, 2016.

A Foraging Nexus: Space, Subsistence and Society at Dunefield Midden. Under review with Cotsen Institute of Archaeology Press, University of California, Los Angeles.

Service: Professor Stewart's service to the department, museum, university, and the profession has been outstanding. In the department, while Professor Stewart has been an active member of the Curriculum, Executive and Website Transition Committees, his more substantial contribution has been as a member of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee for the past four years. This latter group has been instrumental in responding to concerns of students and faculty and developing strategies, solutions, or approaches to moving forward on difficult topics in a challenging time. His involvement has helped the committee to implement multiple ways of enhancing awareness of DEI issues and developing a structure for training, reporting grievances, and applying for funding for DEI initiatives. Within UMMAA, Professor Stewart has served on multiple committees over his tenure here, including the Executive Committee, the Social Media Working Group, and the Graduate Curriculum Committee, as well as involvement in developing the museum's digital database. In addition, his curatorial service has been extensive, managing the archaeological and ethnographic collections from the African continent and using them for undergrad teaching and research.

External Reviewers:

Reviewer (A): "Dr. Stewart combines in very interesting ways rigorous approaches grounded in the 'hard sciences' (i.e., isotope geochemistry) with socially-oriented approaches to how humans use material culture to navigate often complex social worlds. I consider this a 'best practice' in how Paleolithic archaeology should be done."

Reviewer (B): "I think that Professor Stewart is currently at the top of the field among his peer group working on Late Pleistocene archaeology in southern Africa, and there are many talented and hardworking individuals there. I think he might well be the most energetic among that group and in collaboration with others, produces some of the most exciting research results."

Reviewer (C): “To my knowledge there are no other contemporaries of Dr. Stewart who is [sic] performing at this level who have demonstrated this standard of knowledge of the literature, understanding of the theoretical foundations of hunter-gatherer archaeology, and command of analytical methods and techniques. I strongly believe he will continue to expand the analytical approaches and understanding of hunter-gatherer archaeology in the future.”

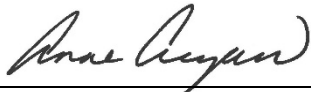
Reviewer (D): “His ability to lead cross-disciplinary teams to successfully publish results in high-impact journals shows achievement above the norm compared to peers in the same field, and demonstrates his promise of continuing success and influence on the global scientific community.”

Reviewer (E): “I have also had the opportunity to review the Professor Stewart’s 400-page book [manuscript], ‘A Foraging Nexus: Space, Society and Subsistence at Dunefield Midden,’ in review with Cotsen Institute of Archaeology press (UCLA)...I can not [sic] think of any other book-length works on African archaeological sites that employ such rigorous spatial studies, material culture analyses and faunal studies with such great effect. Here we are treated to an innovative and alternative way of interpreting Later Stone Age archaeological sites...”

Reviewer (F): “He has keen insights into the nature of human technological evolution and has broad geographic and methodological scopes of expertise. You could randomly pick any of his papers from a pile and get a winner.”

Summary of Recommendation:

Professor Stewart has established a strong international reputation as an anthropological archaeologist who offers new ways of understanding how humans came to dominate the globe. His new book is poised to be a landmark text for its integration of spatial analysis, material science, and KhoeSan ethnographic literature. He is a dedicated teacher and mentor, engaged in public-facing scholarship and actively working to redress lingering imbalances in the field and in academia. The Executive Committee of the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts and I recommend that Assistant Professor Brian A. Stewart be promoted to the rank of associate professor of anthropology, with tenure, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts.



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