

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

Christopher L. Hill, associate professor of Asian languages and cultures, with tenure, and associate professor of comparative literature, without tenure, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, is recommended for promotion to professor of Asian languages and cultures, with tenure, and professor of comparative literature, without tenure, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts.

Academic Degrees:

Ph.D.	1999	Columbia University
M.A.	1992	Columbia University
B.A.	1986	Stanford University

Professional Record:

2022-present	Chair, Department of Comparative Literature, University of Michigan
2021-present	Associate Professor of Comparative Literature, University of Michigan
2019-present	Associate Professor of Asian Languages and Cultures, Department of Asian Languages and Cultures, University of Michigan
2014-2019	Assistant Professor of Asian Languages and Cultures, Department of Asian Languages and Cultures, University of Michigan
2014	Free University of Berlin Post-doctoral Fellow, Friedrich-Meinecke-Institut
2012-2014	Associate Director, European Institute, Columbia University
2011	Visiting Associate Professor of Japanese Literature, University of California, Berkeley
2011	École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales Visiting Professor, Division of History and France-Japan Foundation
2010-2011	Adjunct Associate Professor of Japanese Literature, Columbia University
2007-2010	Associate Professor of Japanese Literature, Yale University
2001-2007	Assistant Professor of Japanese Literature, Yale University
2000-2001	Lecturer, Program in History and Literature and Department of East Asian Languages and Civilizations, Harvard University
1999-2000	Post-doctoral Fellow, Reischauer Institute of Japanese Studies

Summary of Evaluation:

Teaching: In the preceding five years, Professor Hill has taught seven different undergraduate courses: a first-year seminar, ASIAN 252: Literature, Film, and the City; ASIAN 302: Modern Japanese Literature; ASIAN 311: Images of the Samurai; ASIAN 312: The Cultures of Postwar Japan; ASIAN 316: Japanese Controversies; ASIAN 321: Modernism and Modern Life in Japan; and the capstone class ASIAN 381: Junior/Senior Projects in Asian Studies, that fulfilled the Upper-Level Writing Requirement (ULWR). These course offerings range in size from more intimate seminars of thirteen to mid-range lecture courses of thirty-four. Professor Hill is also a valued graduate mentor. During his career at the University of Michigan, he has served or is serving on nine dissertation committees (two as co-chair) and five preliminary exam committees.

Research: The centerpiece of the research portion of the curated dossier is Professor Hill's latest monograph, Figures of the World: The Naturalist Novel and Transnational Form (Northwestern University Press, 2020). The dossier also includes his earlier monograph, National History and the

World of Nations: Capital, State, and the Rhetoric of History in Japan, France, and the United States (Duke University Press, 2008) and five essays (three of which appeared in peer-reviewed journals, and one that he has been invited to revise and resubmit). Two of them introduce his third monograph project on Japanese writers in the Bandung moment. All of his work draws on his training in comparative literature, leveraging key Japanese examples to reflect metacritically on the intellectual underpinnings of the study of literary history.

Recent and Significant Publications:

Figures of the World: The Naturalist Novel and Transnational Form. Chicago: Northwestern University Press, 2020.

“Tokyo in Tashkent: Japanese Writers, the Afro-Asian Writers Association, and the Problem of Imperial Responsibility.” Under review.

“American Naturalism’s Worldly History.” *New Centennial Review* 20, no. 3 (Winter 2020): 1-22.

“Misreading Provincializing Europe.” *Práticas da História* 11 (2020): 53-61.

Service: Professor Hill has been a dedicated, hard-working colleague in the department, in the college, and in his multiple fields. He was a delegate assembly member for the Modern Language Association’s Forum on Japanese Literature Since 1900. The Northeast Asia Council of the Association for Asian Studies selected him as a lecturer for a program that sends top Asian studies scholars to universities and colleges lacking the capital to issue invitations on their own. Professor Hill has performed manuscript reviews for top presses in all his fields, as well as juried grant competitions in Europe. He has served on two of the department’s standing committees for undergraduate and graduate teaching, chaired a tenure review panel, and served as the director for the Japanese Language Program. He was also elected to the department’s Executive Committee and served as the director of graduate studies. He is now serving as chair of the Department of Comparative Literature (2022-2025).

External Reviewers:

Reviewer (A): “With the publication of his first book, *National History and the World of Nations* (2008), Hill emerged as a leading scholar of modern Japanese literature, particularly within the domain of comparative and transnational scholarship. I have included the book on my own graduate seminar syllabi more than once, because I feel it is one of the key texts that any scholar of Japanese literature should know and because I think it in particular provides a model for how to include Japanese materials within a comparative literature framework.”

Reviewer (B): “[Professor Hill] has produced an impressive set of publications that have been influential far beyond the field of Japanese Studies. Both among historians of nationalism, and global historians, Hill’s first book is widely known as a field-defining study. Anyone working on the history of nationalism in global contexts will consult his book—in line with works by scholars like Partha Chatterjee, Rebecca Karl, Manu Goswami, and Andrew Sartori.”

Reviewer (C): “Both of [Professor Hill’s] monographs are important and unique contributions to the field of comparative literature and Japanese literature. His writing is reader friendly without suffering any loss of the complexity of his arguments, he simply writes well and precisely.”

Reviewer (D): “Professor Hill will be the first to explore this little known archive. While the Afro-Asian nexus has emerged as a major research area in Postcolonial Studies, no other scholar has engaged it through such a vexed lens. Professor Hill’s *Representations* essay, ‘Crossed Geographies’—another unexpected discovery featuring Frantz Fanon and Japanese Catholic writer,

Endo Shusaku, both traveling to Lyon in 1950s—shows just how richly rewarding this archive is. This new book promises to be at once supremely scholarly and supremely sharp-edged. I can think of very few colleagues with comparable range, energy, and versatility.”

Reviewer (E): “So far there have been very few scholars who have been able to make such an argument as well, or with as much range, as [Professor Hill]. The fact that he has Japanese, and the strangely privileged and even ‘original’ role Japan played as a historical force in the development of concepts of modernity and modernism (serving as a model for writers in France, the US, Austria, and China, among other places) means that a scholar with the ability to integrate Japanese literary history into a more general theory of literary development will have a great deal of material to use, and will be able to make a very strong case against the diffusionist models of literary history.”

Reviewer (F): “Specialists in Japanese literature can tell you the value they place on that part of [Professor Hill’s] work. Speaking as someone who is basically a comparative-literature person with strong commitments to Chinese literature, I can say with no hesitation that this is original, thoughtful work of high caliber that should be taken as a model of both literary history and the history of ideas.”

Summary of Recommendation:

Professor Hill is a leading figure in the fields of Japanese studies and comparative literature. His research is an example of committed and serious scholarship, his teaching has been wide-ranging and interdisciplinary, and he has assumed leadership roles in his two departments, in the college, and in his multiple fields. The Executive Committee of the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts and I recommend that Associate Professor Christopher L. Hill be promoted to the rank of professor of Asian languages and cultures, with tenure, and professor of comparative literature, without 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

May 2023