

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

Se-Mi Oh, assistant professor of Asian languages and cultures, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, is recommended for promotion to associate professor of Asian languages and cultures, with tenure, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts.

Academic Degrees:

|         |      |                                          |
|---------|------|------------------------------------------|
| Ph.D.   | 2008 | Columbia University                      |
| M.Phil. | 2004 | Columbia University                      |
| M.A.    | 2001 | University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign |
| B.A.    | 1999 | University of California, Los Angeles    |

Professional Record:

|              |                                                                                     |
|--------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 2015–present | Assistant Professor, Asian Languages and Cultures, University of Michigan           |
| 2011–2015    | Assistant Professor, East Asian Languages and Literature, University of Wisconsin   |
| 2010–2011    | Assistant Professor Faculty Fellow, East Asian Studies, New York University         |
| 2011         | Adjunct Assistant Professor, East Asian Languages and Cultures, Columbia University |
| 2009–2010    | Visiting Lecturer, Asian Languages and Cultures, University of Michigan             |

Summary of Evaluation:

Teaching: Since coming to the University of Michigan in 2015, Professor Oh has successfully taught five undergraduate classes. These include one of the department’s existing Korean studies courses, ASIAN 376 (“Controversies in Contemporary Korea”), and four new courses she has developed and/or completely redesigned. Professor Oh’s course offerings contribute effectively to the department’s strong set of courses on Korea. Her teaching statement shows her to be a thoughtful and creative instructor. Recently, she has also served as the primary advisor for two undergraduate honors theses, in addition to acting as a secondary reader for four others. Through the Big Ten Academic Alliance Korean Studies e-School, a course-sharing initiative supported by the Korea Foundation, Professor Oh has also offered her courses remotely to students at Big Ten campuses where there are currently no Korea-related content courses being taught, including the University of Maryland and Purdue University.

Research: Professor Oh is a cultural historian of modern Korea who specializes in the city. Her research, which spans urban humanities and visual studies, is informed by cultural studies’ imperative to theorize the question of power embedded in the historical foundations and epistemological conditions of cultural forms. Professor Oh’s monograph, City of Sediments: A History of Seoul in the Age of Colonialism, is in production at Stanford University Press, a leading press in the field. Her publication record also includes two chapters in peer-reviewed edited volumes; one peer-reviewed article forthcoming in the *Journal of Asian Studies*; a peer-reviewed translation from Korean with introduction; and a Korean-language chapter in an edited

volume. Taken together, these works form an impressive, if not voluminous, dossier that represents one of the most exciting bodies of work being done in the field of modern Korean cultural history today in terms of its range, rigor, sophistication, and originality.

Recent and Significant Publications:

City of Sediments: A History of Seoul in the Age of Colonialism. Redwood, CA: Stanford University Press, forthcoming (expected date of publication: April 11, 2023).

“Remembrance of Nanjido: Space, History, and Archive of the World Cup Park.” *Journal of Asian Studies* 82, no. 2 (forthcoming, May 2023).

“Alluvium of Dreams: 1969 Master Plan and the Development of Youido.” In *Cultures of Yushin: South Korea in the 1970s*, edited by Younju Ryu, 193-220. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2018.

“The Cat’s Cradle: Middle Class Optics of Desire in Kim Ki-Young’s *The Housemaid*.” In *Transgression in Korea: Beyond Resistance and Control*, edited by Juhn Ahn, 123-138. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2018.

Service: Since 2015, Professor Oh has served on nine major review committees for lecturers in the Korean Language Program. Among departmental committees, she served on the Graduate Program Committee each year between 2015 and 2021. This year, she is serving on the Curriculum Committee; in ALC, members of this committee have weekly advising meetings with students and input information into the LSA Advising system. She is serving as a faculty diversity ally during the current academic year and participated in the MICHHERS program in 2018, 2019, and 2022. Outside the university, she has served on the editorial board for the *International Journal of Korean History* since 2015. She has provided manuscript reviews for Columbia University Press, Cornell University Press, and a number of journals, including the *Journal of Asian Studies*, the flagship journal for the field. Professor Oh is a core faculty member of the Nam Center for Korean Studies.

External Reviewers:

Reviewer (A): “After careful examination of her profile, my recommendation is for Dr. Oh to be granted tenure and to be promoted to the rank of associate professor. While I initially noticed the smaller quantity of her publications compared to that of her peers in the field. Nevertheless, I have concluded that the high *quality* of her work, as well as the value of her future projects for the field, compensates for this.”

Reviewer (B): “Professor Oh is a careful, innovative, and practice-oriented scholar of Korea, urban, and cultural studies. She brings questions to studies of the past that have not been asked before, and draws sensory experiences from her readers as they see, hear, feel, and even move, along with her as she *reads* the city Seoul over the past century. I have not seen scholarship on modern Korea that demonstrates the command of Korean historiography and cultural studies in the way [Professor Oh] does. She traverses disciplinary boundaries as well as time periods which I find refreshing and energizing. Scholars from fields spanning urban, film, visual (including art history), linguistic, and Asian studies will find something of value and resonance between [Professor Oh’s] and their own work.”

Reviewer (C): “I must start out by saying that, of all the book manuscripts I have had a chance to review for recent tenure cases at East Asian Languages and Cultures Departments at leading research universities, Prof. Oh’s book stands out for its original concepts, dense research, and sophisticated writing.”

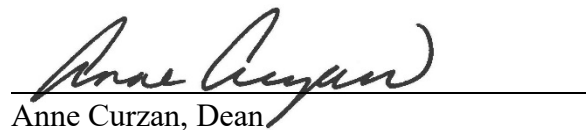
Reviewer (D): “[Professor Oh] demonstrates herself to be seriously committed to advancing the fields that she is engaged with, both in terms of theoretical and analytical analyses, as well as her capacity for startlingly creative treatment of what in other hands might remain quite conventional topics...[Professor Oh’s] monograph is one of the most ambitious intellectual projects that I have encountered in the last ten or so years and easily a major work, in terms of its breadth and scope of coverage, depth and rigor in analysis, and potential impact in the fields.”

Reviewer (E): “On the strength of the high quality of Professor Oh’s scholarship, I believe that she merits tenure and promotion... *City of Sediments*, certainly, has the look of a book from which many flowers will grow: I can think of no other work that so well melds textual analysis with a consideration of (colonial) Korea’s sensory landscape, and the diversity and richness of topics [Professor Oh] examines in its course branch into a wealth of potential topics for her and for her students.”

Reviewer (F): “I have never seen such a close integration of research into her course design. She is certainly a Korea specialist, but she is doing ‘area studies’ in a new and exciting way. I get the distinct impression that she has found a way to both teach about her area and broaden her subject in all her classes to explore ideas drawn from different disciplines.”

Summary of Recommendation:

Professor Oh is a rising star in the field of modern Korean studies, a dedicated teacher, and a good, generous citizen of her unit and the university. The Executive Committee of the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts and I recommend that Assistant Professor Se-Mi Oh be promoted to the rank of associate professor of Asian languages and cultures, 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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