

PROMOTION RECOMMENDATION

The University of Michigan-Dearborn

College of Arts, Sciences, and Letters

Imran Aijaz, associate professor of philosophy, with tenure, Department of Language, Culture, and the Arts, College of Arts, Sciences, and Letters, is recommended for promotion to professor of philosophy, with tenure, Department of Language, Culture, and the Arts, College of Arts, Sciences, and Letters.

Academic Degrees:

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| Ph.D. | 2009 | Philosophy, University of Auckland, Auckland, New Zealand |
| M.A. | 2005 | Philosophy, University of Auckland, Auckland, New Zealand |
| B.A. | 2003 | Philosophy, University of Auckland, Auckland, New Zealand |

Professional Record:

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| 2016-present | Associate Professor, University of Michigan-Dearborn, Dearborn, MI |
| 2010-2016 | Assistant Professor, University of Michigan-Dearborn, Dearborn, MI |
| 2006-2010 | Fixed Term Lecturer, University of Auckland, Auckland, New Zealand |

Summary of Evaluation:

Teaching: Professor Aijaz's teaching is excellent. Since winter 2018, Professor Aijaz has taught 31 sections representing a wide array of key courses in philosophy and the Honors Program: ancient philosophy (four sections), medieval philosophy (four sections), Islamic philosophy (two sections), philosophy of religion (five sections), and analytic philosophy (one section), as well as critical thinking (one section) and introduction to philosophy (two sections). He has also made excellent and valued contributions to three key courses in the Honors Program, Honors (HON) 300 (five sections), 301 (three sections), 302 (four sections).

Professor Aijaz's contributions to the curriculum of the Honors Program deserve special note. He has succeeded in broadening the scope of three of the core courses of the program (HONS 300, 301, 302) by introducing Jewish and Islamic texts into the discussions of ancient and medieval philosophy and religion, significantly enhancing the inclusiveness of the honors curriculum.

Professor Aijaz's courses demonstrate a dedicated, resourceful, and engaging teacher, and he has very effectively conducted a range of courses in both philosophy and in the Honors Program. Students and external observers agree that his teaching is well organized, engaging, interactive, and effective.

Research: Professor Aijaz's research is excellent. Professor Aijaz's research lies in the field of analytic philosophy of religion, and his distinctive contribution is to bring the perspective of Islamic philosophy and religion into this field. His research and writings bring new perspectives to longstanding topics in the philosophy of religion, including the rationality of religious belief. His contributions to this field are clear, well argued, and original. Since his promotion to associate professor in 2016, Professor Aijaz has published a Routledge monograph, Islam: A Contemporary Philosophical Investigation, three peer-reviewed journal articles, and two book chapters in leading new volumes in the philosophy of religion and Islam (in production with Oxford University Press and Routledge). These research products demonstrate an important and cumulative research agenda in the fields of philosophy of religion, Islamic studies, and global philosophy of religion.

Professor Aijaz's monograph, Islam: A Contemporary Philosophical Investigation, provides a well-respected discussion of key issues concerning the religious content of Islam and its relation to contemporary philosophy of religion. The book is clear and engaging and provides a basis for posing important new questions about religious pluralism. The articles and chapters give substance to Professor Aijaz's agenda of shedding light on the religious content of Islam and establishing points of contact between Islam and analytic philosophy of religion. Professor Aijaz uses the tools of analytic philosophy to deconstruct the meanings of "faith" and "doubt" and makes use of this analysis to consider issues of belief and skepticism in Islam. The arguments offered in these articles are clear and plausible, and the topic is of great importance in a world in which faith and reason sometimes seem in tension. The book chapters illustrate the clarity and insight that Professor Aijaz brings to his contributions to the philosophy of religion, and both represent significant steps forward in integrating more fully the religious beliefs of Islam with concepts and issues raised in analytic philosophy of religion.

Professor Aijaz's work has achieved an increasingly wide international audience, with papers and keynote addresses in Malaysia, British Columbia, Great Britain, and Japan, and his work has gained extensive visibility in the John Templeton Foundation's Global Philosophy of Religion project. It is also noteworthy that Professor Aijaz endeavors to make his work accessible to a wide public. His interview in the television series *Closer to Truth* is an exemplary contribution to "public philosophy."

Recent and Significant Publications:

Aijaz, Imran, Islam: A Contemporary Philosophical Investigation, Routledge, 2018.

Aijaz, Imran, "The Diderot Objection to Plantinga's Reformed Epistemology," *Religious Studies*, 2023, pp. 1-24.

Aijaz, Imran, "The Philosophy of Antiphilosophy in Islam," *European Journal of Analytic Philosophy*, Vol. 18 No. 2, 2022, pp. 5-24.

Aijaz, Imran, "The Skeptical Muslim," *Religious Studies*, 2022, 1-20.
doi:10.1017/S0034412522000348.

Aijaz, Imran, "Islam and The Problem of Divine Hiddenness," in Islamic Philosophy of Religion: Analytic Perspectives, Mohammad Saleh Zarepour (Ed.), Routledge (forthcoming).

Aijaz, Imran, "Islamic Faith and Knowledge of God," in Global Dialogues in the Philosophy of Religion: From Religious Experience to the Afterlife, Yujin Nagasawa and Mohammad Saleh Zarepour (Eds.), Oxford University Press (forthcoming).

Service: Professor Aijaz is rated significantly capable in service. He has made substantial service contributions to the discipline, department, college, and university since promotion to associate professor. He has been a highly collaborative colleague and a willing contributor in both the philosophy discipline and the Honors Program and has contributed to the vitality and success of both programs. He co-led the philosophy discipline's three-to-four credit conversion process; he conducted numerous lecturer reviews and annual faculty reviews in the philosophy discipline; he conducted classroom observations for colleagues; and he participated in several faculty searches. At the department level, he served as a representative of the faculty senate and served as the Department Executive Committee member, and subsequently the humanities representative. At the college level, he provided invaluable service within the Honors Program (planning, curriculum change, events); he is currently serving as the College of Arts, Sciences, and Letters Parliamentarian; and he has taken a lead role in organizing and managing study-abroad programs to Athens and Spain, a highly labor-intensive task. At the campus level, he has served on the Academic Integrity Task Force and the Academic Integrity Board; and he has organized many events of interest to philosophers and the

broader community. Professor Aijaz has been active and willing in taking on some of the work of the campus. He has also provided service to the profession through manuscript reviews for professional journals.

External Reviewers:

Reviewer A: “Based on this current review of his very impressive list of publications over the past 7 years, and especially since I last accessed his work in 2019, I plan to increase the extent to which I cite his work on Islamic religious diversity in the next encyclopedia update. . . . His work and his ability to make it accessible to those without a deep understanding of Islam are considered of significant value by others whose opinions and established reputations I respect. I currently place Aijaz in the top tier of scholars working in his areas of interest. And given both his track record and obvious continuing interest in these areas, I see no reason to assume he will not continue his successful scholarly activity.”

Reviewer B: “I am intimately acquainted with several of Professor Aijaz’s writings. Many of his writings are very important pieces. He is one of a very few scholars working at the crossroads of Islamic Philosophy/theology in a way that is informed by modern western scholarship in Philosophy. It is unusual to read writings in Islamic Philosophy that are treated with the rigor and sophistication that Aijaz brings to the table. Reading his work is a breath of fresh air. I believe that the world is crying out for Muslim scholars that are reflective and professional in this way. Not only then does academia need scholars like him, the world at large desperately does too. As such, I cannot overstate the potentially enormous scholarly impact of his work.”

Reviewer C: “Professor Aijaz’s scholarship is of consistently high quality, and he stands out in the field of Islamic philosophy as a contemporary analytic philosopher who publishes widely across various parts of the broad field of philosophy. While there are many outstanding intellectual historians and textual scholars in the Islamic tradition, there are very few Islamic philosophers who engage in contemporary philosophical debates. This is especially true for topics such as the analysis of faith, religious experience, and religious epistemology, which have long been primarily addressed by Christian scholars in the West. Professor Aijaz’s work is significant in that it demonstrates that these topics are similarly relevant to the Islamic tradition and that Islamic philosophy has much to contribute to the ongoing debates surrounding them. His rigorous analysis and incisive arguments not only illuminate the Islamic philosophical tradition but also engage with contemporary Western philosophy in a productive and mutually enriching way.”

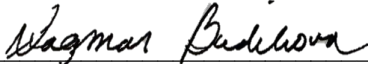
Reviewer D: “In my opinion, the work that Imran has published is of uniformly high quality. The book is excellent, and not overshadowed by other contributions to the series to which it belongs. The journal articles and book chapters are also of a uniformly high standard. The two papers that appeared in *Religious Studies*—perhaps the best of the journals in philosophy of religion—are very good. . . . An apparent pattern in the citations is that the works that are devoted to topics in Islamic philosophy fare less well than the works that are devoted to topics that are of interest to Christian philosophers. My own view is that this reflects the state of the discipline—particularly in North America—rather than deficiencies in the work on topics in Islamic philosophy.”

Reviewer E: “Prof Aijaz has made important contributions to publications and events for the Global Philosophy Project that Prof Yujin Nagasawa has led. If I understand correctly, Prof Aijaz has been associated with the GPP for the past three years, and there is no question that this has helped, and will continue to help, lift his profile internationally. This is just the sort of thing that will put him above many of his peers. A second (and related) thing that I think is important to keep in mind when

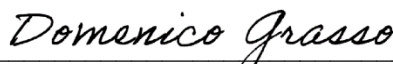
assessing his overall contribution and promise for continuing development is this: His main general area or field of research is analytic philosophy of religion, which has been heavily dominated for so long in the West (English-speaking world) by an almost exclusive focus on Christianity -- its conception of God and a host of issues and problems arising from it. Working in areas that are outside it, or perceived to be outside it, has made publication (especially in lots of the standard places) harder. But despite this, he has published in very good places. And, thankfully, there are strong signs that the hegemony of Christian philosophy of religion may be waning.... I read his *Islam: A Contemporary Philosophical Investigation* and thought it was impressive. The bulk of the book is a sustained critical examination of Islamic fideism.”

Reviewer F: “[Professor Aijaz] strikes me as constituting an important intervention in the growing conversation between analytic and Islamic philosophy especially with respect to religion – and the overlap there with philosophical theology of an analytic mode is clear. I should add that my own approach is skeptical of the universalizing claims of the analytic tradition; I am interested in the development of intercultural and global philosophy that aims to decolonize the category and study of philosophy and hence am not beholden to the analytic tradition or even to ‘analytic’ as a method.... The book is skewed towards three issues: the challenges of different types of fideism to a philosophical understanding of Islam, the rationality of Muslim belief, and the challenge of skepticism and doubt.”

Summary of Recommendation: Professor Aijaz successfully combines these qualities in ways that have significantly influenced both students and academic colleagues in his teaching and research, and often in his service contributions as well. We are pleased to recommend, with the support of the College of Arts, Sciences, and Letters Executive Committee, Imran Aijaz for promotion to professor of philosophy, with tenure, Department of Language, Culture, and the Arts, College of Arts, Sciences, and Letters.



Dagmar Budikova, Dean
College of Arts, Sciences, and Letters



Domenico Grasso, Chancellor
University of Michigan-Dearborn

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