

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

Wessam Elmeligi, assistant professor of Arabic, Department of Language, Culture, and the Arts, College of Arts, Sciences, and Letters, is recommended for promotion to associate professor of Arabic, with tenure, Department of Language, Culture, and the Arts, College of Arts, Sciences, and Letters.

Academic Degrees:

Ph.D.	2000	Literature and Language, Alexandria University, Alexandria, Egypt
M.A.	1997	Literature and Language, Alexandria University, Alexandria, Egypt
B.A.	1993	Faculty of Arts, Alexandria University, Alexandria, Egypt

Professional Record:

2019-present	Assistant Professor, University of Michigan-Dearborn, Dearborn, MI
2012-2019	Assistant Professor (not tenure-track), Macalester College, Saint Paul, MN
2006-2012	Chair and Associate Professor (tenured), Alexandria University-Damanhour, Alexandria, Egypt

Summary of Evaluation:

Teaching: Professor Elmeligi is rated excellent in teaching. His approach to teaching above all is student-centered, and he values both intellectual rigor and creativity, truly embodying the teacher-scholar model. Likewise, his teaching narrative highlights the uniqueness and diversity of our students, fully embracing our campus' national, international, and heritage learners, as well as traditional and nontraditional students, and the multilingual landscape of Dearborn. As the only tenure track faculty in Arabic, Professor Elmeligi has taught a range of courses in Arabic and comparative literature, from introductory courses like Arabic (ARBC) 101 and 102, to courses in translation like ARBC 310, 312, and Comparative Literature (COML) 303, to literary criticism in COML 301.

Professor Elmeligi's performance in the classroom has yielded very high student evaluations, with averaged scores from his past two years of teaching ranging from 4.57 to 4.88, which is impressive given that the scope of his teaching includes upper-level courses as well as required introductory courses. Over the years, like all successful teachers, Professor Elmeligi has revised his curricular choices in response to student comments and suggestions. Students have overwhelmingly appreciated Professor Elmeligi's approachability in the classroom (and online), writing comments like, "He went beyond to make sure students feel comfortable and capable," "He made everything engaging and interesting," and "Even though we were learning a whole different language it didn't feel overbearing." Professor Elmeligi's enthusiasm and commitment are also evidenced by outcomes such as the 2021 Stevens Initiative Grant to design a global virtual exchange program for language teaching, which led to the publication of a joint article.

In addition to his teaching duties, Professor Elmeligi has developed several new courses in service of two new certificate programs, one in Arabic translation and one in comparative

literature, as well as a new major in Arabic, efforts that have bolstered the presence of the Arabic language on our campus. He has also designed two new courses for the College of Arts, Sciences, and Letters (CASL) Foundations program, including Foundations course 1308: Comics, Graphic Novels and Manga, that has been very popular with students, filling each of the three times it has been offered. Professor Elmeligi's tireless efforts in curriculum programming are highlighted in more detail below as part of his service profile.

Research: Professor Elmeligi is rated excellent in research. As a nationally and internationally recognized scholar in Arabic studies, when he came to the University of Michigan-Dearborn in 2019, he had already published work as a tenured faculty member in Egypt. His research narrative explains his work at that time as focusing on graphic novels, the Arabic novel, women's studies, and popular culture, and employing theoretical frameworks such as narratology to psychoanalysis. Professor Elmeligi's research contributions during his review period at the University of Michigan-Dearborn have shown both depth and breadth in the areas of Arabic and comparative literature, resulting in two monographs, three journal articles, four book chapters, and several translations. His work is innovative, timely, and addresses critical issues in the field that are of great benefit to audiences across critical and cultural studies-related disciplines. Much of his work applies a contemporary analysis to bodies of classical and historical texts. His two monographs, *Cultural Identity in Arabic Novels of Immigration: A Poetics of Return* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2020) and *Dystopia in Arabic Speculative Fiction: A Poetics of Distress* (Routledge, 2023), represent a clear, progressive vision for a poetics of literary theory for reading Arabic Literature in the English language.

Professor Elmeligi has articulated a strong, demonstrated purpose for his scholarly work, one that has two complementary trajectories. First, his research seeks to redress "the lack of availability of Arabic creative work compared to other literatures studied in English," an effort that includes Arab women authors as well as understudied genres like science fiction. The second trajectory has been to develop a poetics, or a theoretical framework, for understanding these dynamic cultural products in contemporary contexts. Likewise, the translation work he does in service of his research often highlights texts that otherwise might not receive this deserved attention. For example, out of the sixteen texts he analyzed in *Dystopia in Arabic Speculative Fiction*, eleven had not yet been translated into English. The importance of this effort is reflected in how Professor Elmeligi approaches teaching and service as well. He is a strident advocate for the Arabic language and its historical and contemporary relevance to English speaking spaces.

Recent and Significant Publications:

Elmeligi, Wessam. (2023). *Dystopia in Arabic Speculative Fiction: A Poetics of Distress*. Routledge.

Elmeligi, Wessam. (2020). *Cultural Identity in Arabic Novels of Immigration: A Poetics of Return*. Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield.

Elmeligi, Wessam. "Islands, Rooms, and Queues: Three Tropes in Arabic Science Fiction." *Journal of Science Fiction*, 4(2), 2021.

Khattab, Mona and Wessam Elmeligi. "Mediation and the PandeTheatre: Digital Performativity in the Smart staging of Brilliant Mind." Special Issue on PandeMedia. *How Covid-19 has Affected the Role of Media in Society. Mediekultur*, 2023, Volume 38, no. 73, pp. 50-72.

Elmeligi, Wessam. "I Was Their American Dream by Malaka Gharib: Theory and Visual Analysis." In *Muslim Women's Writing from across South and Southeast Asia*. Feroza Jussawalla and Doaa Omran (Eds.). Routledge. 2022.

Elmeligi, Wessam. "Surviving Reality: Dystopian Speculative Fiction and the Rise of a New Arabic Novel." In *Altered Space: Essays on the Global Transformation of Science Fiction*. Gary Westfahl (Ed.). McFarland. Forthcoming. accepted 1/26/2023.

Service: Professor Elmeligi is rated excellent in service. In his advocacy for Arabic-speaking students on campus, which highlights the tenor of his overall service contributions, Professor Elmeligi has regularly been a name reader in commencement ceremonies. As a native speaker of Arabic in Dearborn, he understands the validation students feel when hearing their name read when graduating. Professor Elmeligi calls this one of his favorite service activities. Such dedication has culminated in him being appointed as the new director of the Center for Arab American Studies in July 2023. Professor Elmeligi's service contributions have helped make him a highly visible presence on campus.

Professor Elmeligi has taken on a degree of service far beyond what would normally be expected, particularly when it comes to growing Arabic language studies. Professor Elmeligi has designed three programs. The first is the Arabic translation certificate, which has gained traction quickly and attracted students from outside the university due to its online offerings. The second program is the comparative literature certificate, designed in collaboration with Professor and Provost Gabriella Scarlatta. These two programs culminated in the introduction of a new Arabic major.

Professor Elmeligi has also made the time to join several campus and college committees: the Dearborn Discovery Committee, the Foundations Committee, and the Enrollment and Retention Task Force. He has also served on the CASL Executive Committee and the Department Executive Committee. Professor Elmeligi's contributions to the university have judiciously viewed service as an opportunity to create a foundation for continued support of Arabic-speaking students, students studying Arabic language and culture, his colleagues, and the greater Dearborn community.

External Reviewers:

Reviewer A: "Dr. Elmeligi's first monograph deals with the concept of cultural identity in relation to mobility and the question of return... In the second monograph ... Dr. Elmeligi analyzes Arabic dystopian fiction in relation to authoritarianism and distress as well as manifestations of inequity in speculative fiction production in Arabic... It is my belief that Dr. Elmeligi's promotion file compares favorably with other candidates in the same peer group."

Reviewer B: "His research covering the field of Arabic science fiction—an understudied topic in contemporary Arabic literature carries a lot of potential ... His scholarly and professional record attests to a rising scholar capable of making an impact in the future, and worthy of tenure promotion."

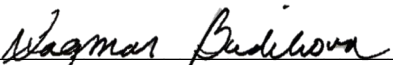
Reviewer C: “A quick look at his work shows diversity... His research it [sic] in three fields, namely modern Arabic literature (fiction), Classical poetry and visual criticism. All three fields are important, and his perspective are [sic] fresh and much needed.”

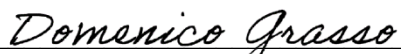
Reviewer D: “*Cultural Identity in Arabic Novels of Immigration: A Poetics of Return* makes a solid contribution to an extensive, existing body of work exploring the notion of emigration in general. My takeaway is that this book is quite informative and will prove to be of significant use to students and scholars pursuing intradisciplinary links between identity, migration studies, and humanities.”

Reviewer E: “Dr. Elmeligi is a well-established scholar and quite an influential figure in his field. His scholarly activities constitute a formidable force that is quickly reshaping the future of research on Arabic literature, particularly in the areas of classical women’s poetry, immigration narratives, and the dystopian novel. Given the groundbreaking approaches presented in his work, it is my assessment that it will soon become difficult to engage in research in these areas without drawing on his work.”

Reviewer F: “Dr. Elmeligi’s published work contributes to the study of Arabic literature in multi-faceted, credible scholarship; opens up potential for work by more scholars on the topics he broaches; is interdisciplinary and innovative; and shows promise for continuing development. Scholarly yet eschewing jargon in favor of lucid readability, his written work is attentive to the literary implications of location, economic class, psychological conditions, and cultural identities. Dr. Elmeligi produces scholarly analysis of worthwhile but less-known works in addition to scholarship on works that have already generated scholarly work. This is one of the ways in which his scholarship excites the field and stirs up more scholarly work.”

Summary of Recommendation: Professor Elmeligi is an exemplary teacher-scholar. He cites this model in his narratives, but also evidences it in his work as a prodigious researcher, an innovative teacher, an enthusiastic program leader, and an ideal colleague. It is with strong support of the College Arts, Sciences, and Letters Executive Committee that we recommend Wessam Elmeligi for promotion to associate professor of Arabic, 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

May 2024