

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

Schiess Kile, 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.	2013	Columbia University
M.A.	2007	Columbia University
B.A.	2003	Beloit College

Professional Record:

2016-present	University of Michigan, Assistant Professor
2013-2014	Brown University, Assistant Professor
2012-2016	University of Michigan, Post-doctoral Fellow
2008-2009	Beloit College, Visiting Instructor

Summary of Evaluation:

Teaching: Since coming to the University of Michigan in 2013, Professor Kile has taught seven distinct undergraduate classes focused on China and three graduate seminars. The undergraduate courses range from a large lecture course at the introductory level, enrolling approximately 100 to 150 students (Asian 260: “Introduction to Chinese Civilization”), to 300-level seminars structured around individual texts (Asian 470: Three Kingdoms Lab; Asian 357: “Sensuous Pleasures: China’s Forbidden Novel, Jin Ping Mei”) that enroll between six to eleven students. He has developed two additional 300-level seminars on broader themes (Asian 352: “Gender, Sexuality, and Power in Premodern China;” Asian 353: “Globalizing China” / “China Around the World”), and a topics seminar at the 400 level. These seminars have enrolled between twelve to twenty-two students.

Research: Professor Kile is a scholar of Chinese literature, with a focus on the early modern period, a period understood as spanning the late Ming (c. 1550-1644) and early Qing (1644-c. 1700) dynasties. This period experienced broad and deep social, political, cultural, and technological changes, and Professor Kile uses a range of scholarly approaches to explore the connections among the most significant of these changes. At the center of Professor Kile’s published research is his recent monograph, Towers in the Void: Li Yu and Early Modern Chinese Media (New York: Columbia University, 2023). This is a work of great erudition. Built around close readings of difficult Chinese texts and full of fluent and accurate translations, this monograph showcases Professor Kile’s deep mastery of Li Yu’s extensive corpus. In addition, the forthcoming article, “False Bound Feet and Forged Paintings: Propping Up Gender in Early Modern Chinese Theatre,” moves beyond Professor Kile’s focus on texts. It expands the discussion of media to include nineteenth-century material artifacts. In sum, Professor Kile’s dossier reveals a substantial body of scholarship characterized by its rigorous methodology and innovativeness, and a clear trajectory of future scholarly promise.

Recent and Significant Publications:

Towers in the Void: Li Yu and Early Modern Chinese Media. New York: Columbia University, 2023.

“The Vernacular Stories of the Early Qing (Li Yu).” In How to Read Chinese Fiction, edited by Shang Wei. New York: Columbia University Press (forthcoming).

“False Bound Feet and Forged Paintings: Propping Up Gender in Early Modern Chinese Theatre” In The Methuen Handbook to Gender and Theatre, edited by Sean Metzger and Roberta Mock, 197-218. New York: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2024.

“A Much-Desired Match: Playwriting, Stagecraft, and Entrepreneurship.” In How to Read Chinese Drama, edited by Patricia Sieber and Regina Llamas, 257-284. New York: Columbia University Press, 2022.

“Science Fictions: Early Modern Technological Change and Literary Response.” *Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies* 17, no. 2 (2017): 112-146.

“Seeing through Pictures and Poetry: *A History of Lenses*.” With Kristina Kleutghen. *Late Imperial China* 38, no. 1 (2017): 47-112.

“Transgender Performance in Early Modern China.” *Differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* 24, no. 2 (August 2013): 130-149.

Service: Professor Kile has performed a wide range of service in the department, as well as the wider university. He has served on the department’s executive, curriculum, and graduate program committees, an ad-hoc committee for faculty governance, as well as a search committee member. He has also performed lecturer reviews on behalf of the department. Outside of the department, he has been active as a member of the executive committees of the Lieberthal-Rogel Center for Chinese Studies in the International Institute, as well as the Medieval and Early Modern Studies (MEMS) program. He has also been a student fellowship and grant reviewer for Rackham and the International Institute.

External Reviewers:

Reviewer (A): “The monograph is a masterful blending of Dr. Kile’s theoretical interests in intermediality, literary responses to technological development, representations of gender and the sexed body, and the impact of commercialization of culture on notions of value, and nuanced close reading that place Li Yu and his oeuvre within their historic and aesthetic contexts.”

Reviewer (B): “After reading Professor Kile’s research dossier, including a book, a translation of a Qing play, articles, essays, as well as book reviews, I found Professor Kile to be a remarkably prolific and talented scholar, who at this early stage in his career is already making an impact in the field of early modern cultural studies, particular on Ming-Qing China and media culture. I would recommend him with great enthusiasm for tenure and promotion to Associate Professor—were he here at...”

Reviewer C: “I have examined Professor Kile’s research statement and CV along with many of his publications; in them I see brilliantly articulate productions of a gifted and creative mind. The superior quality of his accomplishments and of his potential for future research seem more than adequately exemplified in the materials you have supplied. In comparison with the

publications of his and of previous generations of scholars in his fields, S. E. Kile has been exceptionally productive of scholarly work of signal importance.”

Reviewer (D): “I am hard-pressed to decide which of Kile’s two works in progress I find more exciting, the monograph, *The Novel and the Globe: Forms of the World in Early Modern China 1592-1843*, or the joint full translation of Li Yu’s *Leisure Notes* (with Tina Lu and Tom Kelly.) ...It will make it possible for the first time for English-language readers to see the work as a whole, and will be extremely useful in teaching.”

Reviewer (E): “Kile has published (and is publishing) an impressive number of essays and translations which explore a host of new insights by thinking through the role literature plays in informing ideas about gender, technology, the body, and science. In an essay soon to be published, ‘False Bound Feet and Forged Paintings,’ Kile rethinks questions of gendered identities and their relationship to objects and bodies by comparing the fake painting as prop in seventeenth-century opera with the material object of stilts used for simulating the bound-feet of women on the nineteenth-century Peking Opera stage... Together these materials are evidence of a scholar who is very active in the field and is consistently building and expanding the limits of both his own work and the field as a whole.”

Reviewer (F): “I have keenly anticipated the arrival of S.E. Kile’s book, *Towers in the Void*, since, like Kile, I spent my (now long ago!) early career in the company of early Qing literary figures. Moreover, for at least a decade, I have heard rumors of Kile’s exceptional talent as an interpreter of the great early Qing humorist and dramatist, Li Yu, of whom I am also a fan.”

Summary of Recommendation:

Professor Kile has made outstanding, substantive contributions to the field with his first book and complementary publications. His teaching is superb. He also remade class assignments that prompted students to use class material to reflect on their own experiences with race, ethnicity, and otherness both in the United States and beyond. He has performed a wide range of service in the department, as well as the wider university. The Executive Committee of the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts and I recommend that Assistant Professor Schiess Kile 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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