Professor Rebecca J. Scott, the University of Michigan’s Charles Gibson Distinguished University Professor of History, has been chosen winner of the Frederick Douglass Book Prize, which is awarded for the best book on slavery or abolition.

Scott won for her book *Degrees of Freedom: Louisiana and Cuba after Slavery* (Harvard University Press, 2005). The book examines the paths to freedom taken in two sugar-producing societies, and the post-slavery orders constructed in each. It draws upon manuscript materials in archives in Louisiana and Cuba to explore both the structures of coercion that continued after slavery, and the strategies that former slaves and their allies used to challenge those structures. The prize is awarded by Yale University’s Gilder Lehrman Center for the Study of Slavery, Resistance, and Abolition, sponsored by the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History.

The other two finalists for the prize were Steven Deyle for *Carry Me Back: The Domestic Slave Trade in American Life* (Oxford University Press), and Richard Follett for *The Sugar Masters: Planters and Slaves in Louisiana’s Cane World, 1820-1860* (Louisiana State University Press).

The $25,000 annual award is the most generous history prize in the field. The prize will be presented to Scott at a dinner in New York City in February.

This year’s three finalists were selected from a field of nearly 80 entries by a jury of scholars that included Mia Bay of Rutgers University, Larry E. Hudson Jr. of the University of Rochester, and Jane Landers of Vanderbilt University. The winner was selected by a review committee of representatives from the Gilder Lehrman Center for the Study of Slavery, Resistance and Abolition, the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, and Yale University.

“Rebecca Scott’s *Degrees of Freedom: Louisiana and Cuba after Slavery* is a worthy recipient of the Frederick Douglass Prize,” said Hudson, an associate professor of history at the University of Rochester. “Its examination of the political obstacles to black freedom in post-emancipation Cuba and Louisiana provides an innovative and exciting approach to comparative history that will influence the study of the black experience for decades to come.”

The Frederick Douglass Book Prize was established in 1999 to stimulate scholarship in the field of slavery and abolition by honoring outstanding books. It is named for Frederick Douglass (1818-95), a slave who escaped bondage to emerge as one of the great American abolitionists, reformers, writers, and orators of the 19th century.

*Degrees of Freedom* also won two other awards:

- The Gulf South Historical Association’s annual book award, which was presented to Scott at the association’s annual conference in October. The association is a consortium of Gulf Coast area schools including the University of South Alabama, the University of West Florida, Pensacola Junior College, the University of Southern Mississippi, Southeastern Louisiana University, Texas Christian University, and Texas A&M at Galveston.
- The American Studies Association’s John Hope Franklin Prize, the association’s highest honor, as the best book of the year in the field of American Studies.