

Guidelines for Submitting a Book Proposal

Pluto Press is always interested in receiving proposals for new books. The following guidelines are designed to ensure that your proposal reaches us with as much relevant information as possible; the proposal you submit is the basis on which we judge a book's suitability, and it is also what we send to specialist reviewers. If we have the right information, the job of assessing the quality of your work and offering constructive criticism and comment is that much easier. Not every section will necessarily be relevant: if you have queries, we will be happy to discuss them with you.

PROPOSED TITLE AND SUBTITLE

Although provisional at this stage, a good title is enormously helpful - and vital in the marketing of your book. It should be explicit, informative and descriptive; remember that this is how readers will find the book online, and in bibliographies and reference lists it may be the only indication of content.

RATIONALE

A brief statement of aims:

1. The main argument and objective of the proposed book
2. Why you feel it's needed and what drove you to write the book
3. Why you feel you are the right person to write it
4. What makes it particularly suitable for the Pluto list

In addition, **please clearly state what makes your book original in a concise list consisting of no more than three key points.** If you wish to expand on these points after the list, please do so.

SYNOPSIS AND TABLE OF CONTENTS

Please provide:

1. A table of contents with chapter headings and (provisional) main subheadings (where appropriate).
2. A couple of paragraphs describing the content of each chapter. Taken together, these chapter descriptions should convey a clear sense of the book's coverage and argument.
3. In the case of edited volumes, a list of contributors and their affiliations should also be supplied.

FORMAT

1. How long do you estimate that the manuscript will be (as a total word count, which should include notes and references and bibliography where appropriate)? Our preference would be for a manuscript of between 50,000 and 80,000 words.
2. Do you plan to incorporate black and white illustrations - line drawings, photographs, etc? Please bear in mind that we require authors to cover the cost of clearing any permissions involved and the supply of reproducible artwork. We cannot usually include colour illustrations as production costs are prohibitive.

DELIVERY

When do you plan to submit the complete manuscript? If you are proposing an edited volume, please factor in the additional time required to secure the contributions, review the manuscript and propose revisions, and then for the contributors to re-write their chapters - it's invariably longer than you think!

Please also indicate whether any draft chapters can be provided at this stage to assist us in evaluating the proposal. We may need a draft chapter before we can make a decision on the proposal.

MARKET

Identify as accurately as possible the intended market for your book, listing:

1. Main subject area(s) - i.e. what section of a book shop would this book be sold in?
2. Main national markets for the book e.g. UK, USA, etc.
3. Type and level of readership. If yours is an academic book, is it for school students, undergraduates or post-graduates? If it is written for professionals in a particular field, please describe that field and how the book would be used within it. If the book is for a non-specialist readership, please describe that readership in some detail and indicate how you think that readership can be reached.
4. For academic books - what courses could the book be used on? Please be as precise as you can, where possible naming specific courses/classes at specified institutions. Also please indicate whether the book will become required reading in any course that you yourself teach.

REVIEW OF COMPETITIVE BOOKS

Briefly review the competition:

1. What else is out there (author, title, publisher and year of publication).
2. How does your own proposal differ, what does it add to the field, how does it fill a gap?

We need to be able to place your work in a wider context, and to get a feel for where it fits. In comparing and contrasting the strengths and weaknesses of other titles, you can help us to highlight what makes your own work special.

AUTHOR

Please give a brief description of your career history. Provide details of any previous publications (including online and journals) relevant to this book proposal, with full bibliographic information of any previous books you have published, including publisher, publication date and price – any sales or reprint information you have would be very helpful as well. And do please supply any other information that you think relevant (e.g. Twitter followers, conference and media appearances, etc) to demonstrate that you have a prominent profile amongst the target markets for the book.

PROMOTION

It is becoming increasingly important for authors to help publishers in selling, publicising and marketing their books. Please indicate, in as much detail as you can, the role you and your associates can play here. How can you use your networks to publicise the book? Can you support the book through writing articles and making media and conference appearances around publication – and if you can, what would you plan to do and what relationships can you utilise? What online avenues (social media, web sites, email lists, etc) can be used to publicise the book? Are there specialist sales channels that we should use for the book? Are there organisations that might be willing to buy copies of the book to sell on? Please answer in as much detail as possible.

SUBMITTING YOUR PROPOSAL

Please submit your proposal by email to one editor only. Pluto's editors, with their commissioning areas, are listed below:

David Castle (davidc@plutobooks.com) British and European Politics, History, Geography, Anthropology, Environment, Critical Management Studies, Economic Alternatives, Technology and Science, War and Conflict

David Shulman (davids@plutobooks.com) International Relations, American Politics, American Studies, Latin American and Caribbean Studies, Middle East Studies, Economics, Political Economy, Radical Traditions, Social and Political Movements, Labour Studies, Race and Ethnicity, Gender and Sexuality, Political and Social Theory

Neda Tehrani (nedat@plutobooks.com) Equality and Welfare, Policing, Prisons and Security, Borders and Migration, Feminist Activism, Gender History, Colonial History, Asian Studies, African Studies, Policy Studies, Urban Studies

REVIEW PROCEDURE FOR NEW PROPOSALS

1. An editor will read your proposal and assess whether it is a possible candidate for Pluto's list. If the editor thinks that the proposal might be suitable for a book series, it will be assessed by the editor(s) of that series.
2. The editor might ask you for some further information to include in the proposal. If they think the project has potential, but is not quite right for us at present, they may suggest

changes to the proposal which will need to be implemented before we can take the project forward.

3. Once the editor is happy with the proposal, it is sent out for peer review. We select a number of individuals (commonly three or four) whom we regard as experts on the issues to be addressed in your book. These readers will assess the proposal for originality, rigour, style and marketability. If yours is an academic title, these reviewers will be fellow academics who are teaching and/or researching in roughly the same fields as you.
4. It typically takes 6-8 weeks for all the reports to be received. When they are, they will be sent to you for your comments (although the identities of the reviewers will of course be withheld).
5. If comments from the readers are largely positive, then the proposal should reach the final and most important stage of the review process – the editorial board. Your commissioning editor has to persuade their colleagues that Pluto should publish your book. To do this, they will marshal all the material at their disposal, including the proposal, the readers reports and your responses to these, and they may well come back to you for further pieces of information as well.

The editorial board makes the final decision on all book proposals. It is quite possible for you to get to this stage and for the proposal still to be declined. However, if you have reached this point then you can be sure that your editor believes in your project and will be working hard to get the book signed up.

6. In many cases the board does not accept or reject a proposal the first time they discuss it, but asks for further work to be done. Common requests are for a new sample chapter, a revised proposal, or a more detailed marketing plan. Your editor will advise you on this, and when this work is completed then your editor will be able to bring the proposal to a second meeting of the editorial board, when a final decision should be made.
7. If your proposal is accepted, you will be offered a book contract, and your editor will finalise all the necessary details with you. You will be asked to abide by the word length and deadline which you gave in your proposal – manuscripts can and have been rejected for being late or overly long.
8. Once we have received your finished manuscript, it will be read by your editor or someone appointed by them. If your book is part of a series, it will be reviewed by a series editor or a scholar appointed by them. Academic manuscripts can be put through blind peer review.
9. Following the review, the editor will probably request changes before the manuscript can be put into production. If the editor concludes that the manuscript falls far short of the book as proposed in the original book proposal, Pluto reserves the right to reject the manuscript and cancel the contract.
10. Once they have received your revised manuscript, your editor will give the manuscript a final check and if all is in order then they will move the manuscript into copy editing and production.