



# 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. Please outline:

- The main argument and objective of the proposed book.
- Why you feel it's needed and what drove you to write the book.
- Why you feel you are the right person to write it.
- 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:

- A brief description of the book - what is it about? Please write no more than 150 words.
- A table of contents with chapter headings and (provisional) main subheadings (where appropriate), and a paragraph or two describing the contents of each chapter.
- In the case of edited volumes, a list of contributors and their affiliations should also be supplied.

## **FORMAT**

- 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 40,000 and 80,000 words.
- 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:

- Main subject area(s) - i.e. what section of a book shop would this book be sold in?
- Main national markets for the book e.g. UK, USA, etc.
- Type of readership. If your book will be written for activists, please describe the kind of activist it is meant for, and give examples of organisations, movements or campaign groups that these activists might be involved in. If your book is designed for an educational purpose, is it for school students, undergraduates or post-graduates, and what courses might the book be used on? 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.

## **REVIEW OF COMPETITIVE BOOKS**

Briefly review the competition:

- What else is out there (author, title, publisher and year of publication)
- 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**

Please indicate, in as much detail as you can, the role you and your associates can play in promoting your book. 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 can 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 BOOK PROPOSAL**

Please submit your book 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, Environment, Economic Alternatives, Radical Policies, Technology and Science, War and Conflict

**David Shulman** (davids@plutobooks.com)

Radical Traditions, Social and Political Movements, Black Studies, Race and Ethnicity, Gender and Sexuality, Labour, Economics, Political Economy, Political and Social Theory, International Relations, US Politics, American Studies, Latin America and the Caribbean, the Middle East

**Neda Tehrani** (nedat@plutobooks.com)

Equality and Welfare, Policing, Prisons and Security, Borders and Migration, Feminist Activism, Gender History, Cities, Colonial History, Asia, Africa

## **REVIEW PROCESS FOR NEW BOOK 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 usually sent out for external 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.
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.

6. 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.
7. 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.
8. 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.
9. 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 someone appointed by them. Academic manuscripts can be put through blind peer review.
10. 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.
11. 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.