

GETTING PUBLISHED: A Presentation by the [University of Pennsylvania Press](#)
October 23, 2001

ACQUISITIONS

Eric Halpern, Director

Today's talk will be a quick tour of the press.

The Press accepts 1 out of every 10 manuscripts that they see. This seminar will provide tips on how to maximize your chances for acceptance by a university press. It all begins with coming up with a manuscript that is attractive to a press.

Choosing a topic

Walda Metcalfe, Social Sciences Editor

Dissertations need to be converted to book manuscripts. Bookstores and libraries don't want books that look like dissertations. Two good books are *The Thesis and the Book* and *Getting It Published*.

Abandon the structure of the dissertation. Don't over-document. Show your mastery of the literature. Remember why you were fired up by this project in the first place. Save some juicy parts of your research and have them be part of your book. Pursue the topic you have mastered.

Choosing a publisher

Jerome Singerman, Humanities Editor

When do you make a contact? You probably don't want to discuss a dissertation in progress or an unrevised dissertation. The only exception is if you have a very hot topic. Then publishers will be very interested, no matter at what stage it is.

How do you choose the press? Find out who publishes the authors you cite or buy as well as who publishes series in your field. Know who publishes what topics. Look for recent books because presses shift their interests.

Go to the presses themselves. You can find them in the AAUP directory as well as at this web site: www.aaupnet.org. Contact the right person: NOT the director, NOT the managing editor. Find the right editor and write to that person.

The cover letter should include a thumbnail description of your project. It should answer why the press should care about it. The length of the manuscript ideally should be 70,000-words minimum and a 100,000-words maximum. Proofread the letter and mail it. Some presses won't read e-mail. If you are at an academic meeting with a book exhibit, try to meet with the editors there.

The editorial process

Robert Lockhart, History and American Studies Editor

The evaluation process can take a significant amount of time or as little as a month or two.

Press will submit the project to two external readers (people in your field and not connected to the press). They make recommendations. The process is anonymous. Have an idea of who would be good readers. The readers' reports take 6-8 weeks, sometimes longer. Be proactive without being bothersome. You will be asked to respond to the readers' reports.

At the Penn Press there is an internal review committee made up of the director and department heads where the project is presented and the merits are discussed including potential market, financial impact, and print runs. If the project is approved it goes to the Faculty Editorial Board which is made up of faculty from various departments that reflect University of Pennsylvania Press interests such as history, English and art history. They meet each month and can approve the project for a contract, can approve an advance contract even if it needs to go back to the preliminary reader after a full revision, and can reject it outright.

After an author makes revisions, there will be an editor who will read the revised chapters.

MANUSCRIPT EDITING

George Lang, Editing and Production Manager

A well prepared manuscript

You need clean, simple text. Get rid of the funky stuff. Spell-check. Do not justify and do not embed anything. Most university presses use *The Chicago Manual of Style*. Be sure to number artwork consecutively. Do not send photocopies of photographs. Copy editors are under great time pressure so be sure to send them a clean manuscript.

Copyediting and what to expect from an edited manuscript

The project editor assigns your book to a copy editor who ideally has some experience in your field. The editing may take place on screen or on the paper manuscript. You have 4-5 weeks to review the copy editing. This will be your last chance to make changes.

Then the manuscript goes to the typesetter and it will be 3-6 weeks before you can review the proofs. If you wish to make changes to the typeset work, you, the author, will receive the charges for those changes.

Usually the author is responsible for the indexing. You can contract it out.

DESIGN AND PRODUCTION

George Lang, Editing and Production Manager

The cover is designed, the book is produced and it goes to the warehouse.

MARKETING AND SALES

Bruce Franklin, Rights and Publicity Manager

The author is the most important part of marketing.

Direct Mail and Advertising

Debra Liese, Direct Mail and Advertising Manager

She handles the public face of the press including direct mail previews, print advertising and seasonal catalogs.

It is very important for authors to pay attention to filling out their author questionnaires. That summary about the book is very important. Your responses on the questionnaire also directs where your book will be advertised. So it's important to be aware of the realistic market for your book.

Rights and Publicity

Francisco Aguirre, Rights and Publicity Assistant

Handles reprint rights and translation rights. He also organizes events and sends out review copies. Some books have great bookstore potential.

Ramon Smith, Marketing Assistant

Coordinates book exhibits. He contacts Barnes & Nobles, Border's, and centralized buyers. Sometimes authors can speak at independent bookstores. An Amazon.com ranking can mean something.

Question Session

Journal articles vs. book? Do not publish more than 10% of your research or it will diminish your book. At the same time, an article in a leading journal can give a seal of approval to the book.

An author can send inquiries to more than one press at a time.

Footnotes are expensive to produce.

A dissertation is research-driven; a book is argument-driven.

Getting Published: Resources

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Gross, Gerald, ed. *Editors on Editing: What Writers Need to Know About What Editors Do*. 3rd ed. Grove Press, 1993.

Harman, Eleanor and Ian Montages, eds. *The Thesis and the Book*. University of Toronto Press, 1976.

Powell, Walter W. *Getting into Print: The Decision-Making Process in Scholarly Publishing*. University of Chicago Press, 1988.

University of Chicago Press, *The Chicago Manual of Style*. 14th ed. University of Chicago Press, 1993.