

Comparative Literature Studies
BOOK REVIEW AND REVIEW ESSAY GUIDELINES

LENGTH: There are three formats in the *CLS* book review section. The most common are regular book reviews, followed by review essays and book forums.

Regular Book Reviews (approx. 1,000 – 1,500 words) of recent scholarly monographs (published no more than three years ago), and sometimes edited collections, written by scholars in the relevant field(s). Reviews should include a detailed description and evaluation of the book, as well as reflections on who will find it useful. Regular book reviews are published in every issue of *CLS*, with occasional exceptions made for special or guest-edited issues. Authors are given 3-6 months to write reviews.

Review Essays: Also referred to as “review articles,” these are longer essays (2,000 – 4,000 words) in which the author discusses a selection of recently published works (2-5) between which they make some connection that leads to reflections on the state of the field(s) in question.

Book Forums: Review clusters featuring 3-5 short pieces (1,000 – 2,000 words) on a recently published book, with an invited response by the author(s). As with regular book reviews, authors are given 3-4 months to write their contributions, to allow time for the author of the book discussed to write their response.

AUDIENCE: *CLS* has a diverse readership that cuts across many fields of specialization. This creates two challenges for reviewers. First, please keep the breadth of this readership in mind when writing your review: part of your task as a reviewer will be to make the contributions (or possible weaknesses) of a particular book intelligible to an audience not necessarily deeply familiar with the field(s) in question.

Second, your review should also follow the scholarly conventions and standards of the field(s) with which the work under review is concerned. This includes, for instance, citing the original language title and year of publication for works under discussion in the work of scholarship reviewed.

CONTENT: Reviews should accomplish three things (in order of importance, though not necessarily of presentation):

1. Give readers an understanding of the book’s contents and argument(s)
2. Place the book within the critical context of its topic and make connections between the book and larger questions in the field(s)
3. Evaluate the book’s achievement and potential interest to readers

STYLE: A review should be interesting even if the book under discussion is dull. We do not object to controversy, provided that the criticisms are substantive and grounded in the merits of the work. Disagreements should be aired objectively, without reference to the reviewer’s personal feelings or author’s supposed motives.

PROMPTNESS: Please submit your book review within three months to six months after receiving your review copy. Accepted reviews will be scheduled for publication as soon as possible—usually within the next year.

Please note that reviews that are received substantially later than the stated deadline risk being rejected on the grounds that the book under review is no longer current.

FORMAT: Please type the bibliographic information at the top of the page in the following format:

Title. By Author Name. City of Publication: Press Name, Year.

Also include your name and affiliation at the end of the review, in the following format:

Name

University

CLS adheres to the guidelines of the most recent edition of *The Chicago Manual of Style* with some exceptions. For example, we use the endnote style, but we do not ask for a separate list of “Works Cited” or bibliographies.

More importantly, *CLS* does not generally print endnotes for book reviews (rare exceptions are made on a case-by-case basis). If you desire to reference a secondary work, we generally ask that you please incorporate the citation parenthetically in the text. Immediately following the title, provide the city of publication, the publisher’s name, and the year of publication. The page number is placed at the end of the sentence, if applicable.

However, we understand that there are times when in-text citation will not suffice. We advise reviewers to try to work within the parameters of in-text citation and to consult with the editors if they want to include endnotes.

SUBMITTING YOUR REVIEW: Once your review is ready, it should be submitted directly to the *CLS* editorial management system (EMA), available here:

<http://www.editorialmanager.com/cls/>. The initial submission will include the publication agreement; however, be aware that your review will still go through a standard edition (and possible revision) process, conducted through the editorial management system.

EDITING: The editors read all book reviews and may request revisions before accepting a review for publication. An invitation to review is not a guarantee that the review will be accepted. Once a review is submitted, please allow 2-3 months for feedback from the editors.

QUESTIONS: All correspondence about book reviews, including any questions you may have in the process of writing the review, should be sent to cls-reviews@psu.edu.

Thank you for your contribution to *Comparative Literature Studies*