

## Reviewer Guidelines for *Chicago Review* | 2016

1. *Make an assessment.* Does the book do something new or interesting? Does it make an important contribution? If this is an established writer, does the book signal a change in his/her work? Does it continue a longstanding project? If this is a new writer, what is it about his/her work that should get our attention? Assume the reader knows *what* you think about the book but will require that you tell *why* you think what you do.

2. *Contextualize.* Where does the poet/novelist/short story writer/critic/scholar, etc. fit in the contemporary scene? In what ways is his/her book in dialogue with contemporary thought, moods, or movements? How does the book relate to the author's other books or other work? Try to imagine your reader. What information will the typical *Chicago Review* reader expect and/or need while reading your review? Provide publication dates. If applicable, discuss the career. If it helps to support your assessment or critical claim (see below), discuss relevant social, political, or historical factors.

3. *Make a critical claim.* We want you to have a central point to make about the book and to make it cogently, persuasively. In addition to your critical claim, your readers will want an intelligent defense of it. Backing up your claim with reasons and evidence (see *quotations* below) allows you to present readers with an argument to engage with. An argument will give your review a rhetorical structure, and it will invite your readers to think along with (or against) you. The arguments the best reviews make shy away from the form, "This book is important," and tend towards the form, "This book is important *because...*"

4. *Work with Quotations.* Quoting the work provides two things: evidence for your critical claim and a sampling of the book in question. Pay careful attention to the quoted passages; only quote as much of the text as you're going to analyze and assess in your own prose. Scientific studies commissioned by *CR* have shown that block quotations are the least-read sections of the magazine. A brief but smart close reading of the passage under question can help correct this deficiency.

5. *Avoid Jacket-Cover Prose.* This is a review, not an announcement or a pitch. Do not write as though you want to be blurbed. Avoid cliché, hyperbole, and reviewerly syntax.

LENGTH: *Chicago Review* accepts reviews of varying lengths: from notes (500-1000 words) to regular reviews (1200-1800 words) to review essays (2000-5000 words).

STYLE: Please include citations—including page numbers. We will format your review if accepted.