

The Medill Imprint of the Northwestern University Press

**The Medill School of Journalism Series:
Visions of the American Press**

PROPOSAL GUIDELINES

What follows is intended to assist you in conceiving and writing a proposal for your book in our "Visions of the American Press" series. We do hope it proves of some use to you. Should, however, questions arise in the course of completing your proposal, please don't hesitate to contact David.

I. Title of the Work:

Please use, at least as a starting point, the full title from our title list; e.g. "America's Enduring Issue: The Press and Race."

II. Author (name and contact info):

Self-explanatory, but the more complete (including home info) the better; for example:

David Abrahamson
Northwestern University
Medill School of Journalism
1845 Sheridan Rd. *(Note: please insure that this is a FedEx-able street address)*
Evanston, IL 60208
847-467-4159
Fax 847-332-1088
Email d-abrahamson@northwestern.edu
Home:
2025 Sherman Ave.
Evanston, IL 60201
847-332-2223

III. General Description of the Work:

A few overall aspects of the series as a whole that might usefully be kept in mind:

(a) Though each book in the series is grounded either thematically or in a specific historical period, the underlying purpose of each volume will be to explore how the journalistic events under discussion both reflected and shaped the social, cultural and political realities of the moment. The hope is that the text will connect the journalistic facts, events and trends to the larger societal context in which they occurred -- and in the process explaining, in effect, why the journalism mattered.

(b) In the last chapter of your work, we very much would like to invite you to relate the journalistic outcomes and effects of your study subject to the issues and concerns of the media today. We have a fairly explicit "reformist" agenda for the series, so it will be completely appropriate to ask what lessons from your study period have the media learned? What lessons remain to be learned? What will it take for them to be learned? Can they ever be learned?

(c) Using, as we may have discussed, the Penguin "Lives" series as our model, we have some hope that the books in the series not only will be candidates for adoption as supplementary course material, but also will appeal to a somewhat broader lay readership. As a result, it will, to whatever extent possible, be important to "tell a story." So plotting this narrative arc, tracing in advance the dramatic thrust of the story, will be one of the major organizational objectives of the proposal.

IV. Work's Central Argument:

This may be the most important section of the proposal, because this is where the book's point of view, its thematic perspective on the subject, is delineated. And because we very much want the work to be an interpretive synthesis rather than an example of monographic primary research, it is essential that it be organized to offer -- and support -- a central argument.

A. 25-word version:

In the interest of utmost clarity, the goal here to state the work's thesis in two or three sentences.

B. 250-word version:

This should be a fleshed-out explication of the 25-word version of the work's central argument immediately above.

V. Table of Contents (chapter headings with 50-word descriptions):

Again, using the Penguin "Lives" series as a guide, we expect the book will have approximately 200 pages. With a book trim size of 5-1/2 inches by 7-1/2 inches, the manuscript will have to be only 60,000 words. We'll also include end notes and a bibliography.

In defining and organizing your chapter structure (you will probably find that, given the length of the book, eight to ten chapters will likely prove to be the right number), please remember to reserve the last one for the "contemporizing" objective outlined in III.(b) above.

In addition to defining and titling your chapters, please include a brief description of each chapter's content and theme.

VI. Existing Books on Subject (with brief discursive bibliographic summaries):

Self-explanatory, and quite important.

VII. Thoughts on Target Audiences:

We're not trying to ask you to pose as a publishing marketing expert here, but it would be most helpful to have your insights on (a) the kinds of courses for which your book would be a possible

supplementary reading text, and (b) other audiences within the general public to whom we may want to promote the book.

VIII. Schedule and Length:

Assuming a turn-around of only few months or so on our part for the vetting and approval of your proposal, please estimate what date (to the nearest month, between June 2004 and August 2008) you might want as a deadline for delivering the manuscript. We of course realize -- and should emphasize -- that this is a very rough estimate on your part.

We are very comfortable with the prospective length (and size) we hope to use in the series. But if, for some reason, you are convinced that the 60,000 manuscript length is not workable for your book, please let us know the length that you feel is more reasonable, as well your rationale.

IX: Summary Biography of the Author (please also include full vita as an attachment):

Please include a summary biography of yourself, not to exceed 50 words. Also, please attach a full curriculum vita.