

Elements of a Proposal

You should consider your proposal to be a public document. In some cases, a proposal is sent to reviewers and you should present your work with that potential audience in mind. Your proposal should feature the following elements:

Working Title

Propose an engaging and accurate title (and subtitle, if necessary) for your work.

Rationale

Take two paragraphs to state why your manuscript should be published. This statement should address the importance of the topic, the quality and character of your presentation, the state of current scholarship, and the interest of readers inside and outside the academy.

University of South Carolina Press

State why this is a book that should be published by University of South Carolina Press. In doing so, relevant comparisons to books already published by USC Press are useful. If there is a book series at the Press for which you would like your project to be considered, make that clear and also state why the work is a candidate for this series.

Description

Provide an overview of the work and emphasize themes, concepts, and narrative development.

Annotated Table of Contents

Break out the book into its constitutive elements—e.g., chapters, introduction, conclusion. Provide chapter titles and offer a short description of each element. In addition to sketching the contents of the chapters, take care to show how each chapter moves the account forward. Make sure to include provisional chapter titles. If the work is to feature a substantial number of illustrations, charts, or tables, make a point of stating how they will be featured and contribute to the overall account.

Sources

Offer a short overview of key archives and data that will be used in the work. Do not include a full bibliography and do not review secondary literature.

Readership

State who will read the work. Be conservative when identifying readers and make sure that you are clear that the work will satisfy scholars in your discipline. Be sure to address whether you think the work could be used in the classroom and, if so, in what specific classes it might be adopted.

Comparable and Competing Works

Provide an overview of books that are like your work and might be considered comparable with your work. (Include, if appropriate, books published by University of South Carolina Press.) In cases of competition, you should supply publication information for each competing work (e.g., publisher, price, length, and date of publication) and a short statement as to how your project is distinct from that work.

Specifications

Describe the manuscript in terms of its length and number of illustrations. The length of the manuscript should be measured in words (not pages). Inform me as to how many of those words are in the main text and how many are in the notes. Illustrations should be identified as photographs, line drawings, or charts.

Schedule

State when you expect to have a complete manuscript that will be ready for scholarly review. If relevant, you should briefly describe the work that needs to be done to reach that point and your schedule for completing that work. Inform me as to when representative chapters would be ready for early review.

Author Biography

Provide a short paragraph that summarizes your qualifications as an author.

Michael J. McGandy

Director

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