

## **BOOK REVIEW GUIDELINES**

### **PURPOSE**

The purpose of a book review is to provide readers with information so that they may make an informed decision about reading the book. A book review should provide an appropriate balance between the description and analysis. It is the reviewer's job to describe the main points of a book, and to offer critical analyses of its strengths and weaknesses. A book review should:

- Provides a review that is both fair and thoughtful.
- Describes the book in a thorough manner.
- States what the reviewer likes and dislikes about the book and why.

### **INSTRUCTIONS**

- 1) Read: Read the book carefully. Take notes on parts that have a special impact.
- 2) Quality of Writing: Look for the author's writing style, organization, and purpose, and for the book's substance. Is the writing style understandable for the intended audience? The writing style should be clear—not too terse, verbose, or full of jargon.
- 3) Knowledge Building: Provide details about the book's relation to the knowledge base. Does the book contribute to the existing literature and knowledge on the subject? If so, how? Why or why not?
- 4) Strengths and Weaknesses: Address both the strengths and weaknesses when critiquing the book, offering both praise and criticism. Does the review discuss both strengths and weaknesses of the book, using examples when appropriate?
- 5) Use of Quotations: Selected quotations from the book may be used to support the points made by the reviewer. Direct quotations should not be overused. This makes the book review too long and will take away space from the reviewer's analysis.
- 6) Introductory Paragraph: Provide an introductory paragraph that describes the main thesis of the book and its specific objectives.
- 7) Summary of the Content: Provide a brief summary of the main purpose/goals of the book. This can include a discussion of chapters/appendices, etc. Describe the book in enough detail so that the reader is informed of all major points. Are the major topics and information in the book described adequately yet concisely in the review?
- 8) Conclusion: Conclude the book review with a brief summary and an overall assessment of the book. How well did this book achieve its purpose? What audience(s) would find this book useful? How might professionals want to use this book?

## **LENGTH**

- Book review of a single text: 3-5 double-spaced pages (850-1250 words)
- Book review of multiple texts: 4-8 double-spaced pages (1000-2000 words)
- Reflective Essay: 8-10 double-spaced pages (2000-2500 words)

## **FORMATTING**

### **Heading**

The heading should follow this order and exact formatting: Title, author(s) or editor(s), place of publication, publisher, date of publication, ISBN, number of pages.

MANAGING AND ORGANIZATIONS: AN INTRODUCTION TO THEORY

AND PRACTICE, by Stewart Clegg, Martin Kornberger, and Tyrone Pitsis.

*Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2005, ISBN: 0-761-94389-7, 562 pp.*

### **Other Specific Style Guidelines**

- Double-space, Times Roman 12 pt font, MSWord with 1” margins
- Number the pages (page 1 or 4) in the top right hand margin of the header
- Keep special formatting to a minimum, but italicize all book titles referenced within the text of the review.

### **Use of Citations, Evidence Quotations**

- Follow the guidelines in the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (5<sup>th</sup> Edition) for all citations.
- It is not necessary to provide evidence by using direct quotations from the text(s) to support your claims. If you decide to use direct quotes, include page citations for quoted material--e.g., Smith argues that written communication skills are an important tool for policy practice (Smith, 2000, p. 444).
- Provide a reference list for other publications mentioned in your review.

### **Reviewers Information**

- Reviewer's name and distinction (MSW, Ph.D., etc.)
- Position
- Department or Unit
- Organization

- Use italics and position at the right margin at the end of the review (as shown below in the example)

*Jane Doe, PhD, LCSW*

*Assistant Professor*

*School of Social Work*

*University of Connecticut*

### **Send Your Review to the Journal of Community Practice**

- Fill out the Author Release Form provided by Taylor & Francis, the publisher of the *Journal of Community Practice*. On the form, please identify that the copyright release is for a *book review*, and note the title and author of the book that has been reviewed.
- Email the book review and Author Release Form to Ana Santiago, Managing Editor of the *Journal of Community Practice* at [jcp@acosa.org](mailto:jcp@acosa.org). Include your full contact information when you submit your review. This includes the reviewer's name, address, phone and fax numbers, and email.

### **For More Information**

For sample reviews, please contact Ana Santiago at [jcp@acosa.org](mailto:jcp@acosa.org) Fax: 313-577-8770. For more information, contact Marilyn Sullivan-Cosetti, Book Review Editor. Send suggested books for review to Alice K. Butterfield, JCP Editor at the ACOSA office.

#### **Book Review Editor**

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