

Sign Language Studies

Book Review Guidelines

Sign Language Studies considers the following genres for book reviews:

- Scholarly monographs and contributed volumes on sign language linguistics and/or sociolinguistics, deaf history, deaf education, deaf studies, deaf literature studies, sociology, anthropology, psychology
- Nonfiction—memoirs, biographies, autobiographies
- Fiction and poetry
- Alternative media—videotexts, online multimedia texts

Format

General:

- Double-spaced 12 pt. Times Roman text.
- Length: 800–1,200 words (does not include references)
- Include a one-sentence author biography for the reviewer.

Example:

Christina Young is an associate professor in the Department of History at the University of Virginia.

Bibliographic Citation:

The book review should begin with a bibliographic citation of the book under review following the format below:

Author/Editor's name(s). (Translator's name, if required). Book title. Publisher (Page count, price, ISBN, additional format, price, ISBN). URL or DOI if available.

Example: Mary H. Wright. *Sounds Like Home: Growing up Black and Deaf in the South. Twentieth Anniversary Edition*. Gallaudet University Press (282 pages, \$32.95, paperback: ISBN 978-1-944838-58-4, ebook: ISBN 978-1-944838-59-1).

Content

Writing a scholarly book review requires careful analysis, critical thinking, and the ability to communicate your thoughts and opinions effectively. Here is a step-by-step guide to help you write a scholarly book review:

1. **Read the book thoroughly:** Begin by reading the book from start to finish. Take notes while reading, paying attention to the main arguments, evidence, and the author's writing style. It's essential to have a clear understanding of the book's content.

Questions to ask while reading:

- What is the author's main argument that they want to get across?
 - What are the smaller arguments the author argues contribute to the main one? Are you persuaded that these more specific reasons support the author's wider thesis? If not, why not? (This is also an excellent time to think about any key terms the author uses or invents to discuss a specific problem or occurrence. How do they improve upon what we already know?)
2. **Understand the book's context:** Research the author's background, their previous works, and the broader context in which the book was written. Consider the book's genre, its significance within the field, and any relevant historical, cultural, or social aspects that may inform your review.
 3. **Structure your review:** Start by providing a concise summary of the book, highlighting its main themes, arguments, and contributions. Then, organize your review by discussing specific aspects of the book in separate sections, such as the author's methodology, the strength of their arguments, the quality of evidence, the writing style, and the overall impact of the book.
 4. **Provide evidence and examples:** Support your evaluation with specific evidence from the book. Quote relevant passages, cite specific examples, and reference any data or research the author presents. Use these examples to illustrate your points and provide a solid foundation for your analysis.
 5. **Engage with the text critically:** Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the book. Consider the author's arguments, the evidence they provide, and their overall effectiveness in conveying their ideas. Identify any gaps or limitations in the book's approach, and analyze how it contributes to the existing body of knowledge.
 6. **Situate the book within the field:** Assess the book's contribution to the broader scholarly conversation. Determine whether the book introduces new insights, challenges existing theories, or offers a fresh perspective on the subject matter. Discuss how the book aligns with or diverges from other works in the field and its potential impact on future research.

7. **Develop a clear and coherent argument:** Present your analysis in a logical and organized manner. Use clear language and concise sentences to convey your thoughts effectively. Make sure to back up your assertions with evidence and examples from the book.
8. **Balance objectivity and subjectivity:** While a scholarly book review requires objectivity, it's also acceptable to include your own subjective opinions and reactions. Just make sure to clearly differentiate between the author's work and your personal perspective.
9. **Conclude your review:** Summarize your main points and provide a final evaluation of the book. Offer a concise recommendation or judgment regarding the book's overall quality, usefulness, and significance.
10. **Edit and proofread:** Review your work for grammar, spelling, and punctuation errors. Ensure your review is clear, coherent, and well-structured. Consider seeking feedback from peers or colleagues to refine your review further.

Remember, a scholarly book review should be thoughtful, well-reasoned, and objective. It should provide readers with a comprehensive understanding of the book and its contributions to the field while offering your own critical analysis and evaluation.

Suggested Structure for the Review

1. Introduction
 - a. Begin with a brief introduction that includes the book's title, author, publication information, and any relevant background information about the author or the book's context.
 - b. Provide a concise overview of the book's main topic or subject matter.
 - c. State your overall purpose for writing the review and mention the main points you will address. What is at stake here? Why should scholars be interested in this work? Grab the reader's attention right away, locating the book in established debates and controversies.
2. Summary of the Book
 - a. Provide a summary of the book's main arguments, ideas, and supporting evidence. Include the major themes and key concepts.
 - b. Be concise but ensure that you cover the essential aspects of the book. Within the first two paragraphs, it's important to try to explicitly state the primary argument of the book (e.g., "Smith's main argument revolves around/centers on/is..."). What is the larger point of this book, and why should readers care?
3. Analysis and Evaluation

- a. Analyze the strengths and weaknesses of the book. Consider aspects such as the author's argumentation, evidence, methodology, organization, and writing style. Please strive to be fair and considerate while offering critique. However, you can disagree with the book's claims if you believe they are incorrect, exaggerated, misguided, or for any other reason. On the other hand, you can talk about how much you loved the book and explain what specifically fascinated, persuaded, or revolutionized your perspective about the argument or idea.
 - b. Assess the book's contribution to the field or discipline. Evaluate whether it adds new insights, challenges existing theories, or provides a unique perspective.
 - c. Support your analysis with evidence from the book. Quote relevant passages or provide examples to substantiate your points.
4. Discussion and Interpretation
 - a. Engage in a critical discussion of the book's content. Analyze the implications of the author's arguments and ideas.
 - b. Consider the book's significance in relation to broader academic debates or the field of study.
 - c. Offer your own interpretations and insights, presenting your perspective on the book's strengths, weaknesses, and overall value.
5. Conclusion
 - a. Summarize your main points and findings from the analysis and evaluation.
 - b. Provide a clear and concise overall assessment of the book.
 - c. State your final thoughts and opinions on the book, including any recommendations for further reading or research.
6. References
 - a. Include a list of references for any sources cited or referenced in your review. Follow the *Chicago Manual of Style's* author-date format.

Potential Book Reviewers

We are always looking for new book reviewers interested in various disciplines. If you wish to become a book reviewer, write to us along with your CV. You can send us a few titles that you would like to review or just your areas of interest. Please contact our editors at sls.journal@gallaudet.edu.