

Nonfiction Book Proposal

This is a sample syllabus. Actual course topics and assignments may vary by instructor and class.

Week 1

What is a book proposal? Abstract, format and comparative analysis.
Assignment: Write your abstract and format sections and bring in a list of comparable books.

Week 2

Workshop abstract, format, and comparative analysis sections. Now that you've refined the shape of your book, practice your elevator pitches.
About the author, intended market/audience and publicity/marketing plans.
Assignment: Write your about the author section. Bring in your research for the audience and marketing sections.

Week 3

Workshop about the author, audience, marketing, and publicity sections. Chapter outline and sample chapters. How do you pick which of the chapters in your outline to include as sample chapters? How many do you need to include?
Assignment: Write your chapter outline. Pick which sample chapters you plan to write and start writing. Email questions for next week's guest editor.

Week 4

Guest editor. Workshop chapter outlines. Look at some finished proposals and see how they did their sample chapters. Discuss which sample chapters people are writing and how they're coming along.
Assignment: Finish writing your first sample chapter (or at least an outline of what it will include).

Week 5

Workshop three students' sample chapters. Getting an agent. The author/agent relationship. Author/agent agreements.
Assignment: Figure out which agents to query.

Week 6

Workshop more students' sample chapters and any full proposals students have brought in. Discussion of which agents people selected. Writing great cover letters.



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