

# ISCAST Guidelines for Book Reviewers

Thank you so much for writing a review for ISCAST. Providing book reviews on the ISCAST website and in the ISCAST Journal is a service for the public. We hope our reviews will be informative and encouraging as well as appropriately critical.

## General

- Reviews should be around 800 to 1000 words.
- Readership at ISCAST includes scientists from many and varied disciplines, philosophers, theologians, scholars and practitioners of religion, and non-academics. Because a specialist in one discipline is usually not a specialist in another, your review should translate technical language into plain English and should not assume highly specialised knowledge.
- At the end of your review, please provide your name and email address and, if relevant, your professional title and institutional affiliation.
- Submit one file as an MS Word document.
- ISCAST's desired timeframe is two to four months but if you require more time please do not hesitate to contact the Publications Director, David Hooker ([davidhooker@iscast.org](mailto:davidhooker@iscast.org)).

## Style

- ISCAST uses the *Chicago Manual of Style* which you may be able to access via an institutional library. For biblical material not covered by the *Chicago Manual of Style*, ISCAST uses *The SBL Handbook of Style*.
- Double quotation marks should be used for all quotations and “scare quotes,” single quotation marks being reserved for quotes within quotes.
- If citing other works, please include author, title, and publication details parenthetically in the body of the review. Footnotes and endnotes should not be used.
- References to pages in the reviewed book should be as follows: “Various examples (pp. 22–24) support the argument.” Note the en dash for number ranges. The abbreviations “f.,” “ff.,” should not be used.
- The following style should be used for biblical references: 1 John 1:8–10, Ps 22:9f., 2 Tim 1:8, 12ff.; 2:14. Please supply the version of the biblical text (NIV, NRSV, etc.)
- Please do not include block quotations; however shorter quotations are appropriate.

## Content and tone

Please avoid a polemical tone and rejection of the work outright. Instead, aim for fairness, objectivity, balance, and appropriate criticism. Avoid a personal critique of the author but rather aim for a review of this particular work. It is not necessary to identify small grammatical or typographical errors.

Please supply in this order the following list:

- Full book title including subtitle.
- Author(s) or editor(s).
- Place of publication, publisher, year of publication.
- ISBN-13, number of pages, edition, hardback, or paperback.
- Price and currency.

In your review, it would be ideal to include the following:

- Briefly give the author's background and professional position.
- Specify the intended readership of the book. Is it written for academics or non-academics, for philosophers, theologians, scientists? Is more specificity required; for example, is it for mathematicians? Who would benefit from reading it?
- You might comment on the author's writing style (e.g., forensic, commentary, engaging, stimulating, confusing, ambiguous, dense). Does the style suit the intended audience?
- Include a summary of the contents of the book: perhaps chapter titles, subjects covered, etc.
- Outline the major arguments, themes, or theses. Is there a central claim? Is it clear, original, controversial, uninspired, imitative, etc.?
- How well does the author develop the major areas or points in the book? Are there obvious gaps? Point out specific deficiencies in the argument as well as good qualities; for example, note valuable insights and perhaps unexpectedly bold conclusions.
- Consider how the book fits or does not fit in its field of study and whether it is original.
- In a one or two-sentence conclusion, state whether you recommend this book and for what reasons.

Thank you again for writing a review for ISCAST!