

# Nomination Process

# Soliciting Nominations and Requesting Review Copies

## Step 1: Call for Nominations

The initial call should be sent out in early fall to all NASSP members, and a reminder sent out in late November or early December. This is typically done by the NASSP president. There is a [form on the website](#) where anyone can submit nominations, but the call should be posted on other sites (e.g., Daily Nous, APA, SWIP, relevant listservs, public Facebook groups, etc.).

### Here is an example of a call, with dates used for award given in AY 2025-2026

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Each year the North American Society for Social Philosophy honors the best book published in social philosophy during the previous year. The Book Award Committee invites you to nominate a book to compete for the award for 2026. (For the purposes of this award, a book's eligibility is determined by the year of its copyright rather than by the year of its release. For the 2026 award, the relevant copyright date is 2025).

The Award will be conferred on a book published in 2025 that makes the most significant contribution to social philosophy. The field is to be construed broadly, to include social and political philosophy, philosophy of law, philosophy of social science, and social ethics. Excluded are anthologies, historical studies, and works on ethics that lack a distinctly social component and works on a social topic that lack a substantial philosophical component.

The Award is presented at the NASSP annual conference. The author and Book Award committee members participate in a panel discussion of the book. The comments and author response from the panel are published in *Social Philosophy Today*.

The deadline for nominations is no later than December 31, 2025. Nominations (including self-nominations) should be submitted here:

<http://www.northamericansocietyforsocialphilosophy.org/386-2/>

For inquiries about the 2026 NASSP Book Award, please contact the Award Committee chairperson, [add contact information]

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Sometime after the previous year's annual conference and before the new call for nominations, the Webmaster will update the dates on the nomination page to reflect the new cycle. They will

also link the portal to a google sheet that auto-populates nominations, and share this link with the incoming Book Award Committee Chairperson.

## **Step 2: Monitor Nominations & Contact Publishers**

Chair should periodically monitor incoming nominations on the google spreadsheet and check them against the eligibility criteria. For your own organizational purposes, determine a system to indicate which nominations are ineligible (previous chairs highlighted the row in red) so you can easily identify which books not to request.

Nominations should be capped at 40. Anything over 40 is unmanageable in the allotted timeframe for review. The chair can determine how to filter the nominations – either by accepting only the first 40 (eligible) nominations that come through, or by combing the nomination list for the 40 most promising contenders based on eligibility + selection criteria, or by some other procedure.

Once a significant enough number of nominations comes through (25+), use the information from the nomination spreadsheet to sort eligible titles by publisher and track down publisher contact information. Sometimes, though rarely, a press will have someone who specifically manages awards. Most often your point of contact will be in the publicity/media department.

**For AY 2025-2026, the major press contacts were:**

Oxford - [awards.ac@oup.com](mailto:awards.ac@oup.com). You may also submit a message through their messaging portal: <https://global.oup.com/academic/contactus/publicity?cc=us&lang=en&>

Routledge - [Andrew.Weckenmann@taylorandfrancis.com](mailto:Andrew.Weckenmann@taylorandfrancis.com) (Andrew Weckenmann, phil editor)

Cambridge - [academicawards@cambridge.org](mailto:academicawards@cambridge.org)

U Chicago - [press\\_publicity@uchicago.edu](mailto:press_publicity@uchicago.edu)

Harvard - [publicity\\_hup@harvard.edu](mailto:publicity_hup@harvard.edu)

NYU - [nyupressinfo@nyu.edu](mailto:nyupressinfo@nyu.edu)

MIT Press - [mitp\\_pub@mit.edu](mailto:mitp_pub@mit.edu)

University of Toronto Press - [vmicic@utorontopress.com](mailto:vmicic@utorontopress.com) (Vesna Micic, Director of Marketing)

University of Minnesota Press - [presspr@umn.edu](mailto:presspr@umn.edu)

The chair should begin requesting copies from publishers before the nomination window closes (Late November/early December) to ensure a timely review process. You can do another batch request after the nomination window closes if more nominations come through after the initial request.

Every committee member must receive a copy of every book (not just their reading allotment).

**Here is an email template you can use to contact publishers:**

Subject: Book Award Request for Review Copies

Dear [Press],

I am writing on behalf of the [North American Society for Social Philosophy](#) Book Award Committee. Each year our organization awards a prize to the best book in social philosophy published the previous calendar year. For the 2026 award we are considering books published in 2025. The winner is chosen by committee and honored at our [annual conference](#) at a round-table discussion of the book. All nominated books are displayed at the conference, and the proceedings from the award session are published in [Social Philosophy Today](#).

The following book(s) has/have been nominated from your press:

- Author, title, publisher, date, ISBN, link
- Author, title, publisher, date, ISBN, link
- Author, title, publisher, date, ISBN, link

As chairperson of the committee, I am writing to request review copies of this/these text(s) for the committee members, and to solicit further nominations if there are any others you would like to have considered for the award. The field of social philosophy is to be construed broadly, to include social and political philosophy, philosophy of law, philosophy of social science, and social ethics. Excluded are anthologies and edited volumes, historical studies, works on ethics that lack a distinctly social component, and works on a social or political topic that lack a substantial philosophical component.

Would you be able to send a copy of the nominated book(s) to each of the four committee members? They are:

Name

Mailing address

Email

Phone [several presses required phone numbers so be sure to include this!]

[repeat for each judge]

Thank you for considering this request. If I can provide any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,  
[your name]

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**Pro Tip:** You can use the google spreadsheet to keep track of which publishers have been contacted, which have confirmed, and which books have been received (e.g., add a column to indicate Press Confirmation Y/N, and one to indicate Book Received Y/N + date).

# Allocating Reading

## Allocating Reading

Once the nomination list is locked in (or mostly locked in), the chair will need to allocate the books.\* Every committee member will not read every book, but *each book must be read by at least two committee members*, and the distribution of reading burden should be even.

The committee can use any agreeable method to decide who reviews which books, but it will ideally take into account areas of expertise and any conflicts of interest.

Here are two ways allocations have been done in the past:

**Alphabetical/Random:** the chair alphabetizes the nomination list by author's last name, then assigns two committee members to the first half and the other two to the second half.

### Advantages

- easy/efficient
- Each pair is judging and deliberating about the same set of books, and thus considering all the same comparisons.

### Disadvantages

- Doesn't take advantage of committee members' expertise
- Doesn't account for the total number of pages assigned. One team may end up with significantly more reading than the other.

**By expertise/page allotment:** the chair generates an initial allocation based on what they know of the committee members' expertise and interests, making tradeoffs wherever necessary to ensure each person is reading approximately the same number of pages, and that each book is being read by at least two people. Ideally, all members will read the same number of books *and* approximately the same number of pages (+/- 100).

### Advantages

- Committee members read more books relevant to their particular interests / are in a better position to assess the books' merits.
- Ensures an even distribution of reading burden

### Disadvantages

- Requires more time/effort
- While all books are being read by two judges, no two judges have the exact same reading list. Our evaluations are often comparative, and it might raise concerns of fairness/effectiveness if each judge is comparing a slightly different set of nominees. This has not proven to be an issue in the past but may present unanticipated difficulties at the stage of selecting finalists.

**\*Pro Tip:** it is useful to generate a tentative allocation as early as possible so committee members can get started reading. The chair may have to revise the reading lists slightly as new nominations come in, but this usually involves adding books without much shuffling.

# Selection Process

## Timeline and Process for Selecting Book Award Winner

*The chair will determine a review timeline by counting backward from the conference dates. The author should receive comments no later than one month ahead of the conference. The meeting to select top four finalists typically happens in early April, winner is chosen in early May, and comments are sent in early June.*

### Round 1: Initial Review (early April)

Judges will have approximately 3 months to complete their reading list. Judges may determine their own approach to getting through their lists and may use discretion where appropriate (e.g., if a book is very obviously not a contender after the first chapter or two, move on).

The committee will meet over Zoom in early April for an initial review of the nominees. Ahead of this meeting, each member is asked to provide a *ranked top 5 of their assigned books*, allowing for ties. At the meeting, the committee will discuss each member's rankings and collectively decide on **four finalists**.

Selection criteria can be found in the "Criteria" sub-tab of this document. This criteria has been established by prior committees and is open for revision by future committees should they see fit.

### Round 2: Selecting a Winner (early May)

Once a final four have been decided, the committee will go back and read any of the books on the list that they have not yet read. *At this stage it is not advisable to skim or skip.* Finalists should be read with care, and they should be judged using a clear selection criteria (again, see "Criteria" tab).

The committee will meet again over Zoom in early May to determine a winner. Ahead of this meeting, each member is asked to provide a ranked list of the finalists (#1 being their preferred winner, #2 is runner up, and so on). The committee will decide together which book will be the reward recipient, and will establish a final ranking (1st – 4th place).

The final ranked list will then be sent to the NASSP president, including information about how many nominations were considered and whether the final decision was unanimous (if these data points are favorable, the president will include them in the notification email to the winner).

If for whatever reason the #1 choice declines, an invitation will be extended to the #2 position, and so forth until a recipient is confirmed. Once a winner is confirmed, the chairperson should email the author with information about what comes next.

Here is an optional email template:

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Dear [author's name],

On behalf of the **North American Society for Social Philosophy Book Award Committee**, let me say how honored and excited we are that you have accepted the award and will be joining us in [location] this summer for a panel celebrating [*book title*]. The book was an absolute joy to read.

**Format of the Session:** Each year, NASSP hosts a book panel for the award recipient at our annual conference. At the book award session, the committee will read a brief prepared summary of the book, followed by comments from each of the four committee members (list names of committee members). We'll then take a short break, after which you will have 30 minutes to respond and take questions from the audience. Since the entire session is just 90 minutes, the committee will strive to be brief so we leave as much time as possible for you and the Q&A.

**The Timeline:** The committee will take the next month to prepare the summary and comments, with the goal of having these documents to you by **[date]**. This will give you a little over a month to prepare a response. Author responses typically clock in around 10 minutes, leaving 20 minutes for questions. Given the time constraints, feel free to use discretion with your response — you need not address everything each of the commentators touches on. The summary, committee comments, and your response will be included in the following issue of *Social Philosophy Today*.

Please reach out with any questions you may have. We look forward to meeting you and talking more about this excellent book!

Sincerely,  
[chairperson's name]

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# Criteria

## Three-Stage Criteria

### Stage 1 - Eligibility:

- For a book to be eligible for nomination, it must be a work of social philosophy published in the previous calendar year (e.g., to be eligible for the 2026 award, the book must have a pub date in 2025).
- The field of social philosophy is to be construed broadly, to include social and political philosophy, philosophy of law, philosophy of social science, and social ethics.
- We accept nominations for single-authored and multi-authored manuscripts. Excluded are anthologies and edited volumes, historical studies, works on ethics that lack a distinctly social component, and works on a social or political topic that lack a substantial philosophical component.

### Stage 2 - Selection Criteria to Determine Finalists:

(in no particular order)

- **Relevance:** does it address and help illuminate a contemporary social issue? Is it recognizably philosophical in its approach?
- **Originality:** does the book make an original contribution – either developing a new problem or a novel solution to an existing problem?
- **Depth & Quality of Research:** is the thesis, focus, and argument easily identifiable? Does it draw on relevant literature (citing appropriately)? Does it fulfill the promise that its thesis makes? Does it commit any egregious moral or intellectual errors?
- **Accessibility:** How broad is the audience for this work? Would it be intelligible and interesting to someone who may not work in the field, or know the traditions/literatures it draws on?
- **Impact/implications:** to what extent does the problem that it identifies and the solution it offers open up new perspectives, paths of inquiry?

### Stage 3 - Selection Criteria to Determine Winner:

(in no particular order)

- **Relevance/Timeliness/Appeal:** Does it substantively engage a topic of interest to the NASSP community and of contemporary concern?
- **Accessibility:** While remaining philosophically and academically rigorous, could it also be enjoyed by nonspecialists and nonacademics? To what extent is it likely to inspire conversation?
- **Novelty/Impact:** Does it make a significant contribution to social philosophy?

# Commentaries

## Book Award Commentaries

Summary < 1,200 words / 10 min

**Co-authoring Procedure:** Chair (or other volunteer) will begin drafting the summary in a shared google doc (rough introduction, set up a structure, include bullet points for major ideas to hit on). When finished, the first writer will notify the committee and tag the next writer to take over. Each member will make a reasonable contribution to the overall document (this is discretionary, you can determine when you believe you've contributed your fair share), then pass it off to the next person in the same manner. Once all committee members have contributed and we have a complete rough draft, the document will recirculate beginning again with the first writer, and each person will have a chance to make further edits and polish prose. We'll continue with this process until we are satisfied.

**Summary Guidelines:** This is a high-altitude project. We are trying to give the audience a sense for what the book is about. The more concrete stuff will come out in our individual commentaries so we should avoid getting too detailed/specific here. The point of the summary is to set up the commentaries and give the audience some context, since they will likely not yet have read the book. There is going to be a lot more of interest in the book than we can address, so we want to pull out the ideas that are most likely to inspire conversation during the Q&A

Individual Comments <1,200 words / 10 min

**Authoring Procedure:** We only have ~a month to write these so plan ahead. We need to have all comments to the author no later than one month prior to the conference (ideally 5 weeks). Once committee members have a sense for what they'll write about, add it to the "distribution of focus" doc (see sub-tab). Check back with that document periodically as people add their topics to be sure there isn't too much overlap. If there appears to be some overlap between two or more committee members, arrange to meet and discuss strategies for re-distributing the coverage.

**Commentary Guidelines:** Rather than think of this as an Author Meets Critics, think of it as a panel celebrating the book. We want to critically engage the author's work in a way that will inspire conversation, but we aren't here to tear the book down. You can write about anything in the book that interests you. If it is critical, just try and keep it friendly.

# Distribution of Focus

## Book Award Commentaries: Distribution of Focus

[this is a living document. Each year the new committee can use this doc to house their distribution of focus, clearing it in preparation for the following year's committee]

*In a few sentences, indicate which ideas/claims/arguments of the book you will be most directly addressing, and what your angle will be. This can be vague/general at first, and you can go back in later to make it more specific/concrete if you wish*

[Committee Member #1 – *name*]

[Committee Member #2 – *name*]

[Committee Member #3 – *name*]

[Committee Member #4 – *name*]

# The Conference

## Format and Protocols for Book Award Session

If practicable, as many of the nominated books as possible should be brought to the conference and displayed near the registration table. At the end of the conference, attendees will be invited to take whatever books they like from the display.

Depending on the conference schedule, the award session will last either 90 minutes or, ideally, 105 minutes. The session is presided over by the award committee chairperson, who will welcome attendees, introduce the author and committee members, and read the summary.

If each set of remarks is 10 minutes, this should leave plenty of time for a brief intermission and a full 30 minutes for reply + Q&A.

- Typical format: opening remarks and summary read by the chairperson, comments read by each of the members, short break, author's replies, Q&A.
- The order in which comments are read is to be determined by the committee, and will ideally follow the most logical progression of ideas.
- Commentators are encouraged to read at a measured pace so the audience can easily follow. We are providing the audience with all the information they'll have to go on for the Q&A, so speaking clearly, slowly, and audibly is important.
- The chair should generate a slide deck to be projected during the session. At a minimum, the deck should include: a title slide with info about the award recipient, title slides for each set of comments, an "Author Reply" slide, and a "Q&A" slide.
- The chairperson should also prepare brief introductory remarks about the author and their achievements. This will be delivered immediately before reading the summary.

# Passing the Baton

## Reconstituting the Committee

At the end of the conference, a new committee will need to be established for the next year.

It is recommended that a single person only serve on the Book Award Committee for up to three years in a row, and a person can chair up to two years. It is desirable that veteran members cycle out so new people can participate, and it is preferable that the chair be someone who has served on the committee at least once before.

While the president is responsible for recruiting and assembling a new book award committee, if you are on the book award committee and wish to serve a second (or third) year, or are interested in chairing, let the president know before the end of the conference.

Once a new chairperson is appointed, the previous chair should transfer ownership of this document to the new chair. The new chair/owner will then invite any new committee members to have “editor” access.

# Social Philosophy Today

## Submitting to *Social Philosophy Today*

Final versions of the commentaries will be submitted to *SPT* for publication together with the author's reply.

The procedure for submitting final copies of the commentaries will be confirmed by the editor(s) sometime after the conference ends. Be on the lookout for an email from the editor soliciting your comments and asking you to sign an Author Agreement. This usually comes through the end of summer/early fall.

Comments do not go through peer review, but you will receive a set of proofs that you'll be asked to copy edit – typically the following spring.