

Guidelines and Procedures for the Clifford Geertz Prize in the Anthropology of Religion

November, 2007

The following guidelines have been drafted by the Prize Committee to provide guidance in the organization and administration of the Geertz Prize. They may be amended and supplemented in the future at the discretion of the Executive Board of the Society.

1. Jury selection

Jury selection will be done by the Executive Board of the Society. We recommend that Board members suggest names of potential jurors, in addition to encouraging volunteers from the membership. This should be done well in advance of the November AAA meetings each year; accordingly, it will be necessary to conduct the discussion via email.

Two new jurors must be chosen each year, for a two-year term. The resulting overlap will help foster an institutional memory among the jurors. In order to make this possible, the inaugural jury should include two jurors with one-year terms and two with two-year terms.

Jurors should be members of the Society with established records of published scholarship in the field. Since this is a book prize, jurors should ordinarily have published at least one book themselves; in some cases, however, the Board may find an exception to this rule appropriate.

The impartiality and fairness of the jury is essential for the integrity of the prize. Accordingly, we recommend the following guidelines for the selection process.

- a. The jury should include at least one male member and one female member.
- b. An effort should be made to include jurors from a variety of institutional settings, including research universities, regional universities, liberal arts colleges, and museums.
- c. Members of the jury may not submit entries for the prize, and they must inform the prize chair of any potential conflicts of interest that could lead to the appearance of impartiality in the judging.
- d. No two members of the jury should be employed at the same academic institution.
- e. No two members of the jury should currently be collaborators on significant publication or research projects.

f. No two members of the jury should be spouses, domestic partners, or close relatives.

2. Prize compensation

The amount of the cash award for the book prize should be set by the Executive Committee annually and paid out of current Society funds. The prize is not currently endowed. The Prize committee recommends an initial award of \$250, along with a commemorative plaque and, if possible, a set of the latest publications in the Society's book series.

3. Prize administration

Day-to-day logistical administration of the prize is to be handled by the prize chair, a member of the Board appointed to the position by the SAR president. The chair will work with publishers, arrange publicity, coordinate communications among jurors, and arrange the payment and presentation of the award. The chair is not a juror, and has no role in choosing the winner beyond helping the jurors to receive submissions and to communicate.

4. Schedule

The presentation of the award will be made each November at the annual business meeting of the Society. The timing of announcements, publicity, and submission deadlines should be arranged to make this possible. A suggested schedule for the activities associated with the prize is as follows, using a hypothetical schedule for 2009:

October 15, 2009: Announcements for 2010 prize mailed to publishers, announced in *Anthropology News*, ARS website, ARS listserv, and other outlets.

November 19, 2009: Annual business meeting at AAA; 2009 prize presented; call made for submissions to 2010 prize; call made for volunteers for 2011 jury.

March 1, 2010: Deadline for submissions for 2010 prize.

March 15, 2010: Submissions in hands of jurors.

April, 2010: Board members make juror suggestions for 2011 prize; prize chair compiles and circulates list of volunteers and suggested names.

May 1, 2010: Board votes on prospective jurors for 2011 prize.

May 1-15, 2010: SAR president asks nominated jurors to serve.

June 15, 2010: Jurors for 2010 prize begin deliberations by email/conference call.

July 15, 2010: Deadline for 2010 prize jury decision.

July 17, 2010: Winner of 2010 prize contacted.

5. Jury mechanics

The choice of four as the number of jurors was made in part to allow for multi-stage reviews of books if necessary. If the number of submissions grows too large for jurors to read them all, for example, jurors may wish to divide them in two groups, each to be read by one pair of jurors. Each pair would then select a small number of outstanding books to be read by the entire jury. Such arrangements should be made by the jurors in consultation with the prize chair and the SAR president.

6. Variation in prize recipients

The prize aims to encourage excellence in the anthropological study of religion, with excellence defined broadly. To foster this breadth, we recommend that jurors strive to vary the type of work chosen as the winner. If the prize has been awarded to ethnographies for several years, for example, it might be desirable to give some preference to a theoretical work or an applied study. Over time, it is hoped that a variety of types of book will receive the prize.