



# UNIVERSITY *of* VIRGINIA PRESS

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## UVA Press Events Guide for Authors

### Your book is done! What's next?

We are excited to share our experience in marketing & publicity with you, so that you can be your own best ally in getting word about your research and insights to academic colleagues and public audiences. To help you do this, here are a few tips for bringing your work to the attention of a variety of readers through events and otherwise.

### How to Think About and Set Up Book Talks

#### The New Normal: Virtual Events

Many events have moved online, and we don't see this trend stopping anytime soon. In great news, this often means you can partner with an institution, library, group, or bookstore that might have been out of reach travel-wise beforehand, but now may be a possibility. Contact those outlets and see if they're interested in doing something virtual with you.

**Interlocutor:** For virtual events, having an interlocutor can be a great benefit to your audience. Think of someone you could offer along with yourself. Start by offering the venue you, and then if they're open to a conversation partner, talk with your acquisitions editor and Emily Grandstaff, Publicity Director ([egradstaff@virginia.edu](mailto:egradstaff@virginia.edu)), to work out the details.

**Discount Code:** we can offer a 30% discount code for those attending virtual events. Once your event is set up contact Emily to get the code.

For more best practices when you book an event (virtual or in-person), see the next page.

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### **In-Person Venues**

Promotion of academic books usually takes place in familiar venues: on university campuses or at research organizations. When thinking about setting up author events to promote your work, start locally and then look to your professional network to identify other venues.

Always share with potential hosts:

- your book's title and description (i.e. the jacket copy)
- books specs: format (cloth or paper); price; date of publication
- a brief biography establishing your credentials
- the reason why you'd like to give a talk at this specific location / through this specific organization
- how you can help bring in a crowd—i.e., if local/in-person, estimated number of students, family friends, and colleagues you can invite. If you have a sizeable following on social media, you might offer how many followers you have and how you will help promote the event through your social media channels.

### **Potential Outlets Online and In-Person**

1. **Your home institution:** This is the easiest venue and can take the form of a department sponsored launch party for your colleagues and students, a more formal campus-wide talk, or presentations to your institution's alumni groups.
2. **Regional bookstores and public libraries:** Talk to the managers at your regional bookstore and/or your public library to see if they'd be interested in hosting an author talk either virtually or in their building, or an official book signing, as a way to promote local talent. If you go this route, please be prepared to offer an e-mail list of family and friends who might attend.
3. **Research organizations (Historical Societies, State Historic Preservation Offices, etc.):** Many historical societies have lecture series, which you might even have attended when you sifted through collections there! Reach out to the events coordinators at the major institutions where you researched your book (and which might even have supported you through a grant), and ask whether you could take part in a lecture series now that your book is out (esp. if repositories are nearby or you happen to travel back there for other purposes, such as a conference). This is an excellent way to promote both their collections and your work, with a built-in audience for both.

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4. State Humanities Councils: Many Humanities Councils organize annual book festivals, so look up your state's Council (<https://www.neh.gov/about/state-humanities-councils>) and, if they sponsor a festival, apply to be on the program. If accepted, your participation in a book festival will allow your work to reach a diverse public audience.

5. Colleagues' campus events: Talk to your friends and colleagues in the field and see whether there's a campus lecture series at their college or university appropriate for your topic, or whether they'd be interested in having you come and talk to their students specifically (which is now very easily done via Zoom)—this is a great way to spread your new ideas among your core constituency of fellow academics and students.

### Set Up

1. Timing: Schedule book events to take place after your book's official date of publication! If you're invited to give a talk ahead of your book's pub date, UVA Press can furnish you with flyers that contain book order information, but the Press cannot guarantee the availability of books at your event. You will know your exact publication date approximately one week after your copyeditor sends your manuscript into production to be typeset at UVA Press, which is when the Press generates an official production schedule.

2. Publicity kits: Once you have scheduled an event, please let UVA Press's publicist Emily Grandstaff know at [egrandstaff@virginia.edu](mailto:egrandstaff@virginia.edu). Emily can provide you and/or the event coordinator with promotional materials such as your book's cover image, author photo, and press release for posters. Emily will also put the event on the UVA Press calendar and promote it (if open to the public) through our social media channels.

3. Book sales: Find out whether your event's host is connected to a vendor (independent bookstore; campus store; gift shop, etc.). If yes, then the vendor must place book orders directly with UVA Press's distributor Longleaf Services at least three weeks ahead of the event date. When the store manager or event organizer places the order, they must specify the event date so Longleaf uses the appropriate shipping method:

Longleaf Services, Inc.

116 S. Boundary St.

Chapel Hill, NC 27514-3808

Tel: 800-848-6224 (M-F 8:30-5PM EST) / Fax: 800-272-6817

[orders@longleafservices.org](mailto:orders@longleafservices.org)

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### Alternatives:

If your host, such as a public library or a repository without an in-house gift shop, is not connected to a vendor, you can order books yourself through Longleaf Services (using your 40 percent UVA Press author discount) and carry them with you to sign and re-sell. Or UVA Press's marketing manager can send you a flyer that contains order information and a discount code so attendees can order your book after the event. Do keep Emily and your book's acquisitions editor in the loop, so UVA press can furnish you with the resources you need.

### What to Expect

Most book talks, both virtual and in-person ones, will include a brief presentation, followed by Q&A with the audience. A good way to think about a book talk is as a value-added event—communicate the story of your book, but also the story behind the story: how you came to write on your topic; a-ha moments during research; or how your argument might connect with or illuminate present-day concerns.

1. **Publicity:** The event coordinator will handle all local publicity for your talk, and this can take many forms, from press releases, to online newsletters and social media postings, to in-store and on-campus flyers, and even ads in local newspapers. Most venues will be very appreciative if you invite your own local acquaintances or give organizers contact information for friends and colleagues you know in the area.
2. **The Introduction:** Usually, your host or online interlocutor will mention your book's title and publisher. If not, do so yourself, but only once. Or simply prepare a slide with your book's cover on it.
3. **The Talk:** Practice a short, informal talk (between 15 and 20 minutes in length)
  - be personable; offer some behind-the-scenes information
  - use accessible language; avoid jargon or acronyms that only experts know about
  - provide necessary context; don't assume any familiarity with your topic
  - offer compelling anecdotes or statistics to make your main points memorable, and communicate take-home points succinctly
  - save some additional details for the Q&A
  - prepare slides that are image, not text heavy—include conversation pieces such as significant maps or intriguing photographs

**Practice! Practice! Practice!**

**Read your talk out loud until you are completely comfortable with it.**

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4. The Q&A: In an ideal world, your talk will guide the direction of the Q&A, but do be aware that you might be asked to speak on other topics as well; this is an organic process and should feel like a friendly, relaxed conversation:

- think about what various audiences might ask you about (esp. if your topic connects to something in the news) and practice possible answers ahead of time
- be prepared to offer additional compelling details from the book, so use some, but not all, of your best material during the talk but keep some in reserve
- think about some points you would like to work into the Q&A ahead of time; if you get a peculiar question, try to work these prepared points into the conversation to steer the discussion back onto a track with which you're more comfortable

5. After: Don't worry about copies signed or sold; any and all publicity surrounding your talk itself will have generated interest in your book beyond the number of attendees and actual takers. Send a thank you note to the event coordinator and get ready to do it all again next time!

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