Very Short Introductions online

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4. Law and entrepreneurship
G. Edward White

‘Law and entrepreneurship’ outlines how from the colonial years through the twentieth century, each of the dominant entrepreneurial ventures that emerged were responses to the changing physical and social features of the expanding American nation. They were made possible by legal innovations, whether in the form of a system for recording land titles, state-private partnerships creating exclusive transportation franchises, the application of patent law to industrial sector inventions, or the licensing of radio and television stations and cable franchises. In the twentieth century, aspiring entrepreneurs in the marketing, communications, and entertainment sectors would continue to rely on law to facilitate their ventures and to set permissible limits of their activities.

5. Criminal law
G. Edward White

Crime and the treatment of criminals have been pervasive themes of American legal history. ‘Criminal law’ shows that in contrast to the early conceptions of crime and punishment as largely private activities, diagnosing and responding to crime has become a distinctly public activity, as susceptible to changing public attitudes as other sectors of American political life. Americans have been responsive to the idea that individual citizens have rights not to be subjected to arbitrary criminal process by the state; but also they have rarely been opposed to the prospect of criminals being locked up for a long time. Balancing those attitudes has not been easy, and at present the balance seems tipped toward incarceration.

5. The cultural dimension of globalization
Manfred B. Steger
Cultural globalization refers to the intensification and expansion of cultural flows across the globe. Facilitated by the Internet and our proliferating mobile digital devices, the dominant symbolic systems of meaning of our age—such as individualism, consumerism, and various religious discourses—can be more easily and rapidly transmitted from one place to another, and profoundly impact the way people experience their everyday lives. Cultural practices are acquiring new meanings in interaction with dominant global themes. ‘The cultural dimension of globalization’ focuses on the tension between sameness and difference in the emerging global culture, the crucial role of transnational media corporations in disseminating popular culture, and the globalization of languages.

2. Globalization in history: is globalization a new phenomenon?
Manfred B. Steger

‘Globalization and history: is globalization a new phenomenon?’ gives a brief history of globalization. Globalization is commonly thought of as a new phenomenon, but contact between diverse individuals is not new. It began when prehistoric tribes settled and were able to outmuscle wandering nomads because of their agricultural food production. The premodern period saw technological advances that allowed trade and communication to flourish. The early modern period saw the birth of capitalism and interregional markets. The modern period saw industrialization provide massive advances in technology at the expense of the environment. The contemporary era is one of great convergence, with people coming together through deregulated economic and ICT systems.

Epilogue The future Constitution
David J. Bodenhamer

The United States does not operate today under the Constitution ratified in 1788 or the Constitution as completed by the Bill of Rights in 1791 or even the one revised by the Reconstruction amendments. Nor is it the same nation. The United States, then a plural noun and now a collective one, has grown from thirteen states hugging the Atlantic seaboard to fifty states spread across a continent and beyond. It has experienced a civil war that ended one social and political regime and ultimately ushered in another far different from anything most people could have imagined in 1776 or even in 1865. From its beginnings as a second-rate country with a tiny navy and army, it has grown to become a global economic and military superpower. It is a democratic republic in which democracy weighs far more heavily in its constitutional and societal calculus than the framers would have endorsed. Its citizens vest government with the responsibility for safeguarding their
prosperity, health, safety, and welfare in ways alien to the experiences of the founding generation....

The U.S. Constitution: A Very Short Introduction
David J. Bodenhamer

The U.S. Constitution: A Very Short Introduction explores the major themes of American constitutional history—federalism, the balance of powers, property, representation, equality, rights, and security. Informed by the latest scholarship, each theme illustrates how the Constitution has served as a dynamic framework for legitimating power and advancing liberty. Today, we face serious challenges to the nation’s constitutional legacy. Endless wars, a sharply divided electorate and deadlocked government, economic inequality, immigration, cybersecurity and privacy, and foreign interference in the nation’s democratic processes have placed demands on government and on society that test our constitutional values. Understanding how the Constitution has evolved will help us adapt its principles to the challenges of our age.

6. Scotland and the wider world
Rab Houston

‘Scotland and the wider world’ examines Scotland's relationships with other countries. When did the English begin to see the Scots as barbarous and alien? The wars of Independence are outlined, and their legacy of distrust discussed. Scots travelled Europe for trade, education, and pilgrimage, and European influences include cosmopolitan architecture, and Edinburgh's Botanic Gardens and university medical school. Emigration is explained, including the devastation of c. 1800–1939, when two million people left, many of them against their will (the clearances). What part did Scots play in the British Empire? Immigration into Scotland is surveyed: which groups of people have settled in Scotland? What percentage of the population is non-white?

Conclusion: The lessons of history
Rab Houston

‘Conclusion: The lessons of history’ asks What are the implications of the past for Scotland's future? One of the most obvious answers to this question is that Scots retain a
deeply embedded sense of history. Modern Scotland is grounded on historical foundations and this provides a certain amount of continuity. Scots' historic experience of more localized government means that they think that central authority should intervene for benign ends, and that power should continue to be diffused. Relations between England and Scotland remain in a state of flux and no one knows what the future holds for each nation.

Introduction
Robert J. C. Young

Since the early 1980s, postcolonialism has attempted to shift the dominant ways in which the relations between western and non-western people and their worlds are viewed. Postcolonialism: A Very Short Introduction uses the technique of montage to juxtapose perspectives and times against one another, seeking to generate a creative set of relations between them. For much of postcolonial theory is not so much about static ideas or practices, as about the relations between ideas and practices: relations of harmony, relations of conflict, generative relations between different peoples and their cultures. Postcolonialism is about a changing world, a world changed by struggle and one which its practitioners intend to change further.

4. The political dimension of globalization
Manfred B. Steger

Political globalization refers to the intensification and expansion of political interrelations across the globe. ‘The political dimension of globalization’ considers how these processes raise an important set of political issues pertaining to the principle of state sovereignty, the growing impact of intergovernmental organizations, and the future prospects for regional and global governance, global migration flows, and environmental policies affecting our planet. Contemporary globalization has led to a permeation of the traditional territorial borders of nation-states and fostered the growth of supraterritorial social spaces and institutions that, in turn, unsettle both familiar political arrangements and cultural traditions. Will the final outcome of political globalization be the emergence of a ‘cosmopolitan democracy’?

5. Labour markets
Philip N. Jefferson
For most people, their performance in the labour market determines their station in life. What determines who earns what in the labour market? Are there systemic impediments that inhibit the ability of particular groups to prosper in the labour market? What is the role of education, skills, race, and gender? Are there ways to make the financial return on work greater regardless of skill level? If skills are lacking, are there policies that directly help to close skill gaps? ‘Labour markets’ considers these questions and concludes that a goal of labour market policy is to create pathways out of poverty. Well-functioning labour markets facilitate the economic mobility of people over the course of their lifetimes and across generations.

2. Federalism

David J. Bodenhamer

Federalism, the division of power between state and central governments, was the most novel doctrine to emerge from the Constitutional Convention. ‘Federalism’ explains how it embraced a contradiction, imperium in imperio, a sovereignty within a sovereignty. This logical inconsistency—classical theory assumed that governmental sovereignty was indivisible—could be explained only by another innovation, popular sovereignty, which vested ultimate power in the people. Federalism has proven to be a highly malleable scheme for accommodating the demands of a diverse society and a dynamic economy. What began in 1787 as a partnership of equal governments became a powerful national government two centuries later, with widespread authority to safeguard (or threaten) liberty for its citizens.

7. Rights

David J. Bodenhamer

Throughout American history, rights have been invented and repudiated, fought over and striven for, expanded and violated. From the nation’s beginnings, revolutionaries appealed to natural rights, but the question often became which rights and for whom? ‘Rights’ explains that what is most striking about the conflict over rights has been its democratic character. Rights are always a matter of public debate about the proper balance between order and liberty. It is a conversation that engaged the framers of the Constitution, and, as has been the case with each successive generation, Americans are continually working out the boundaries of what individual liberties are essential for a just and free society.
For better or worse, be it militarily, politically, economically, technologically, or culturally, Americans have had a profound impact on the wider world beyond them. American Foreign Relations: A Very Short Introduction analyzes the key episodes, themes, and individuals in the history of American foreign relations. While discussing diplomacy and the periods of war that have shaped national and international history, it also addresses such topics as industrialization, globalization, imperialism, and immigration. Covering the American Revolution through the War on Terror, it examines the connections between domestic politics and foreign affairs, as well as the importance of ideals and values.

American Political History: A Very Short Introduction

Donald Critchlow

American Political History: A Very Short Introduction explores key turning points in American political history, the nature of the two-party system, representative presidential and congressional elections, struggles to expand the electorate, critical social protest and third-party movements, and the emergence of a democratic political culture within a republican form of government. Despite fierce debates over the meaning of the U.S. Constitution, a belief in the importance of constitutional order persists among political leaders and voters. There have been deep divisions about the extent of federal power, slavery, citizenship, immigration policy, civil rights, and economic, financial, and social policies. New immigrants, racial minorities, and women have also joined the electorate and the debates.