4. Democratic despotism
Harvey C. Mansfield

The greatest danger to democracy, according to Tocqueville, comes out of the very nature of democracy. His later analysis of American democracy identifies the replacement of the sovereignty of the people with the tyranny of mild despotism, that is big government, as a great danger. ‘Democratic despotism’ traces Tocqueville's remedy for democratic individualism, democratic mediocrity, and democratic apathy. His answer to such threats is ‘the true friends of liberty and human greatness’. He argues that individual freedoms and limits on the legislature are needed in order to maintain true democracy.

4. The United Nations
Christopher S. Browning

‘The United Nations’ discusses the world's primary organization of collective security. The United Nations is often seen as an entrepreneur promoting norms of good governance, upholding commitments to human rights, and establishing standards around trade, environmental, and health issues. Peacekeeping is the activity the UN is most renowned for. The UN Charter has traditionally been understood as prioritizing principles of state sovereignty and non-intervention. Such principles have a moral foundation premised on upholding respect for different cultures, religions, and political and economic systems and are intended to thwart any imperial ambitions of territorial aggrandizement particular states might be harbouring.

Populism: A Very Short Introduction
Cas Mudde and Cristóbal Rovira Kaltwasser
What is populism? What is the relationship between populism and democracy? Populism: A Very Short Introduction presents populism as an ideology that divides society into two antagonistic camps: the “pure people” versus the “corrupt elite,” and that privileges popular sovereignty above all else. It illustrates the practical power of this ideology by describing populist movements of the modern era—European right-wing parties, left-wing presidents in Latin America, and the Tea Party movement in the United States—and charismatic populist leaders such as Juan Domingo Péron, H. Ross Perot, Silvio Berlusconi, and Hugo Chávez. Although populism is ultimately part of democracy, populist forces constitute an increasing challenge to democratic politics.

6. Political sovereignty and economic autonomy
Theda Perdue and Michael D. Green

Indian history in the 20th century is about the battle for political sovereignty. In 1933 John Collier was appointed by Roosevelt to be commissioner of Indian affairs. He embraced the idea that all cultures make sense, work well, and serve the needs of the people in them. ‘Political sovereignty and economic autonomy’ looks at the efforts made by Collier on behalf of the Indians including the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934, the effect of World War and the termination policy that followed, and other schemes of assimilation. There are today at least 324 unacknowledged Indian communities in the United States, scattered throughout the country. Many of them are still seeking acknowledgement.

5. Constructing the Modern State
Kenneth Minogue

‘Constructing the Modern State’ is concerned with the time when the medieval realm gave way to the modern state, generally thought to be during the sixteenth century. The arguments of Machiavelli and Thomas Hobbes are discussed along with the theory of sovereignty. Two contrasting attitudes reveal the rhythm of modern politics. The first is the liberal view of the state, descending from medieval conceptions of freedom and kingship, as sustaining a civic order to be enjoyed. The second is the art of the state as something repressive, standing against the aspirations of its exploited subjects; the state as a problem because it is a repressive thing that needs to be humanized.

1. The politics of the Constitution, 1787–89
Donald T. Critchlow
‘The politics of the Constitution, 1787–89’ describes the drafting of the U.S. Constitution in 1787 and its ratification. The central actors were George Washington, James Madison, Benjamin Franklin, James Wilson, Alexander Hamilton, Gouverneur Morris, Luther Martin, Edmund Randolph, and George Mason. Disillusioned with the failure of the Articles of Confederation, distrustful of direct democracy and the passions of the mob, fearful of demagogues, and terrified by centralized government that was easily corrupted, the Philadelphia delegates expressed profound optimism that the American Revolution marked the beginnings of a new epoch in human history—the establishment of a large-scale representative republican government worthy of a continent. In the end, the constitution blended republican theory and political compromise.

3. The age of democracy, 1816–44
Donald T. Critchlow

From 1816 to 1844, the United States underwent an economic, political, and social transformation resulting in a nation of twenty-four states and three territories with a population of nearly 13 million people, triple the number in 1790. This market revolution occurred as a result of better transportation and communication systems. ‘The age of democracy, 1816–44’ outlines how this facilitated rapid political changes, including the expansion of the electorate, the rise of political parties and creation of a rudimentary two-party system (Democrats and Whigs), and pronounced egalitarianism in campaign rhetoric. The presidential elections of James Monroe (1816, 1820), John Quincy Adams (1824), Andrew Jackson (1828, 1832), Martin Van Buren (1836), and William Henry Harrison (1840) are described.

1. Nations under law
Vaughan Lowe

The most basic function of international law is to secure the coexistence of the world’s almost 200 sovereign States. ‘Nations under law’ explains the essential conditions of statehood under international law: having a permanent population; an effective government; a physical territory; the capacity to enter into relations with other States; and legitimacy as an independent State. International law provides for the security of States’ borders, and for their right to be free from invasion and coercion by neighbouring States. It underpins the right of each State to choose its political, economic, and social structures.
4. The politics of slavery: prelude to the Civil War, 1844–60

Donald T. Critchlow

In the ten years following the 1844 election the entire political landscape changed, including the demise of the Whig party and the rise of a powerful new northern party, the Republican Party. The catalyst for this dramatic political upheaval came from a single issue—slavery—that divided the North and the South over the proper role of government. ‘The politics of slavery: prelude to the Civil War, 1844–60’ describes the debates on slavery and the election campaigns of James Polk (1844), Zachary Taylor (1848), Franklin Pierce (1852) and James Buchanan (1856). It concludes with the election of Abraham Lincoln of the Republican Party, who ran on an antislavery ticket, and the resulting secession of South Carolina in 1860.

3. Claiming and negotiating the Antarctic

Klaus Dodds

World political divisions are generally easy to define with a few exceptions where there is uncertainty. However, large parts of the Antarctic are claimed by seven states: Argentina, Australia, Chile, France, New Zealand, Norway, and the United Kingdom. ‘Claiming and negotiating the Antarctic’ looks at the last hundred years, where we see three phases in how the Antarctic has been claimed and colonized. These are: the claiming phase (1908–40); the negotiating phase (1940s–1950s); the post-colonial phase (1960s–onwards). The 1959 Antarctic Treaty stabilized the divisive problem of territorial sovereignty. Article 4 put an end to sovereignty positions and allowed for the emergence of science as the determining factor for shaping access to terrain and data.

5. Debate

Allen C. Guelzo

‘Debate’ describes the debates between Lincoln and Stephen Douglas leading up to the legislative elections in 1858. Although Douglas was re-elected, Lincoln had come within an ace of upsetting the most famous and powerful Democrat in Congress. The great debates had been far from merely another political disappointment for Lincoln. By early 1859 he was beginning to get invitations to appear before Republican meetings as well as proposals from publishers to issue the debates as a book. Already, Northerners were beginning to
speak of Lincoln as an ideal Republican candidate — not for the Senate, but for president of the United States.

8. Politics, democracy, and law
James Gordon Finlayson

Habermas believes that traditional societies are held together by a shared ethos. Modern societies are complex, differentiated, and multicultural. Subjects consider themselves first and foremost as individuals. ‘Politics, democracy, and law’ looks at the wider picture of Habermas's views on social integration and his programme of democratic and legal theory. He argues that under modern conditions moral discourse is the primary mechanism of social integration. Habermas's programme of democratic and legal theory recognises that modern social orders are forged by moral norms and also political institutions and laws. Habermas is optimistic about the capacity of democratic institutions to cope with the problems of modern societies.

5. On the origin of treaties
Anthony Arnull

EU Treaties are international agreements signed and ratified by sovereign states. The EU is, therefore, a creation of international law. However, it is increasingly treated by scholars as distinct from international law and is starting to resemble a national system in its scope and complexity. ‘On the origin of treaties’ explains how the EU treaties may be amended, which is more difficult than amending secondary EU law, and the processes of joining and leaving the EU. Finally, it considers the general principles of law and fundamental rights that bind the EU’s institutions and member states.

3. Architectures
Klaus Dodds

The term ‘geopolitical architecture’ is used to describe the ways in which states and non-state organizations access, manage, and regulate the intersection of territories and flows, and in so doing establish borders between inside/outside, citizen/alien, and domestic/international. Historically, there has been a series of such geopolitical architectures that rejig the relationship between spaces and flows. In order to understand the shifts and the
implications for geopolitical theorizing, ‘Architectures’ considers two fundamental subjects: first, sovereignty and how it informs the activities of the territorial state/border; and second, the geopolitical architecture of the 20th and 21st centuries, which highlights how states in particular attempt to control and regulate spaces judged to be disorderly and ungoverned.

4. Liberty, virtue, and citizenship
Robert Wokler

‘Liberty, virtue, and citizenship’ looks at the model that Rousseau created for a state. Rousseau believed in the classical Greek link between politics and morality, and rejected previous theoretical bases for a social contract. Popular engagement in self-rule permitted greater scope for freedom than in the natural state. Private property should be preserved, but inequality legislated against. Sovereign and legislature should remain separate, with the people the sovereign and an elective aristocracy as executive. Despite this commitment to popular sovereignty, he accepted the power of an extraordinary individual to transform solitary persons into a greater whole. Rousseau's equation of liberty with fraternity and equality inspired the French revolutionaries.

5. Sovereignty inside the State
Vaughan Lowe

Limitations on the right to use force are a key element among the principles by which international law secures the sovereign equality and independence of States against external threats. ‘Sovereignty inside the State’ examines the principles of international law that spell out in positive terms the content of that equality and independence. Each State has the sovereign right to decide upon its social and economic structures, and to lay down laws that will influence the national character of the State and of life within it. The legal concept of jurisdiction determines the reach and priority of those laws. That freedom is not unlimited: it is constrained by obligations of the State under international law.

4. Liberty
Allen C. Guelzo

‘Liberty’ examines the roots of Lincoln's revulsion for slavery and describes the condition of liberal democracy in Europe and America in the 1840s. Lincoln saw slavery as a direct
obstruction of the Free Trade in Ability which liberalism adored and he had always been confident that the problem of slavery would solve itself, provided it could not expand. The Kansas-Nebraska Act jeopardized this expectation and, Lincoln argued, betrayed the intentions of the Founders by feigning indifference to slavery's spread. In June 1856, Lincoln was persuaded to transfer his allegiance to a new, all-Northern and unequivocally anti-slavery party, the Republicans.

Lincoln: A Very Short Introduction
Allen C. Guelzo

Lincoln: A Very Short Introduction explores the problems that confronted Lincoln and liberal democracy — equality, opportunity, the rule of law, slavery, freedom, and reconciliation. These problems and Lincoln's responses to them are set against the larger world of American and trans-Atlantic liberal democracy in the nineteenth century. Lincoln is shown to be an Enlightenment figure, who struggled to create a common ground between a people focused on individual rights and a society eager to establish a certain moral, philosophical, and intellectual bedrock. Lincoln insisted that liberal democracy had a higher purpose, which was the realization of a morally right political order.

International Law: A Very Short Introduction
Vaughan Lowe

Recently, interest in international law has increased greatly, largely because of its central place in discussions such as the Iraq War, the World Trade Organization, the Kyoto Convention, the situations in Palestine and Darfur, and the plights of refugees and illegal immigrants around the world. International Law: A Very Short Introduction explains what international law is, its role in international society, and how it operates. It examines what international law can and cannot do and what it is and isn’t doing to make the world a better place. It uses terrorism, environmental change, poverty, and international violence to demonstrate international law theories and practice, and how the principles can be used for international cooperation.