Anarchism: A Very Short Introduction
Colin Ward

Anarchism: A Very Short Introduction explores key anarchist thinkers from Kropotkin to Chomsky and considers anarchism from a variety of perspectives: theoretical, historical, and international. What exactly is anarchism and who are the anarchists? Can anarchy ever function effectively as a political force? Is it more ‘organized’ and ‘reasonable’ than is currently perceived? The word ‘anarchism’ tends to conjure up images of aggressive protest against government, and — recently — of angry demonstrations against bodies such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. But is anarchism inevitably linked with violent disorder? Do anarchists adhere to a coherent ideology?

Aristocracy: A Very Short Introduction
William Doyle

Aristocracy: A Very Short Introduction shows how ideas of aristocracy originated in ancient times, were transformed in the middle ages, and have only fallen apart over the last two centuries. The myths in which aristocracies have always sought to shroud themselves are stripped away, but the true sources of their enduring power are also revealed. Their outlook and behaviour affected the rest of society in innumerable and sometimes surprising ways, but perhaps most surprising was the way in which a centuries-old aristocratic hegemony has crumbled away over the last two hundred years. This VSI considers why this happened and what remains today.

Capitalism: A Very Short Introduction
James Fulcher

Capitalism: A Very Short Introduction explores the origins and development of capitalism, its key features, and its impact on society. The book covers the history of capitalism from its emergence in the 16th century to the present day, and discusses its role in the global economy. It examines the strengths and weaknesses of capitalism, and considers its prospects for the future.
The word ‘capitalism’ is heard and used frequently, but what is capitalism about, and what does it mean? Capitalism: A Very Short Introduction discusses the history and development of capitalism through several detailed case studies, ranging from the ‘tulipomania’ of 17th-century Holland, the Great Depression of the 1930s, and the impact of the global financial crisis that started in 2007–8. It looks at the different forms that capitalism takes in Britain, Japan, Sweden, and the United States, and explores whether capitalism has escaped the nation-state by going global. It asks whether there is an alternative to capitalism, discussing socialism, communal and cooperative experiments, and the alternatives proposed by environmentalists.

Clausewitz: A Very Short Introduction
Michael Howard

Clausewitz: A Very Short Introduction explains Clausewitz's ideas in terms both of his experiences as a professional soldier in the Napoleonic Wars, and of the intellectual background of his time. Karl von Clausewitz's study On War was described by the American strategic thinker Bernard Brodie as 'not simply the greatest, but the only great book about war'. Even though he wrote his only major work at a time when the range of firearms was 50 yards, much of what he had to say remains relevant today. This VSI outlines Clausewitz's enduring theory of war and how his theory relates to his actual experience in the Napoleonic Wars.

Communism: A Very Short Introduction
Leslie Holmes

Communism: A Very Short Introduction highlights the inner dynamics, crises, and demise of communism as a global system, explaining the theory behind its ideology, and examining the history and mindset behind its political, economic, and social structures. That system, at its zenith, ruled more than a third of the world's population across four continents, and threatened to destroy the West. Yet most of it eventually, and very suddenly, mutated into spectacular failure. The collapse of communism was one of the most defining moments of the twentieth century. The highs and lows of communist power and its future in today's world is examined.

Democracy: A Very Short Introduction
Bernard Crick
Democracy: A Very Short Introduction is a short account of the history of the doctrine and practice of democracy, from ancient Greece and Rome through the American, French, and Russian revolutions, and of the usages and practices associated with it in the modern world. Considering the diverse range of interpretations of ‘democracy’, it looks at the controversies about such issues as who should have a right to vote. This VSI argues that democracy is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for good government, and that ideas of the rule of law, and of human rights, should in some situations limit democratic claims.

Engels: A Very Short Introduction
Terrell Carver

Engels: A Very Short Introduction examines the man who invented Marxism. Engels' work did more than Marx to make converts to the most influential political movement of modern times. He was not only the father of dialectical and historical materialism (the official philosophies of history and science in many communist countries), he was also the first Marxist historian, anthropologist, philosopher, and commentator on early Marx. In his later years, Engels developed his materialist interpretation of history, his chief intellectual legacy. This VSI traces its source and its effect on the development of Marxist theory and practice, assesses its utility, and discusses the difficulties which Marxists have encountered in defending it.

Fascism: A Very Short Introduction
Kevin Passmore

What is fascism? Is it revolutionary? Or is it reactionary? Can it be both? Fascism: A Very Short Introduction unravels the paradoxes of one of the most important phenomena in the modern world — tracing its origins in the intellectual, political, and social crises of the late nineteenth century, the rise of fascism following World War I, including fascist regimes in Italy and Germany, and the fortunes of ‘failed’ fascist movements in Eastern Europe, Spain, and the Americas. It also considers fascism in culture, the new interest in transnational research, and the progress of the far right since 2002.

Geopolitics: A Very Short Introduction
Klaus Dodds
From great power politics and speculation about resource scrambles, to everyday encounters and objects such as smart phones, geopolitics affects citizens, corporations, international bodies, social movements, and governments. Geopolitics is far more than simply the impact of geographical features such as rivers, mountains, and climate on political developments. Geopolitics: A Very Short Introduction explores the intellectual historical origins of geopolitics and its current concerns, drawing on regional and thematic case studies. A country’s connectivity, location, size, and resources all affect how the people that live there understand and interact with the wider world. The recent rise of populism and economic nationalism worldwide are also considered.

Governance: A Very Short Introduction
Mark Bevir

Governance: A Very Short Introduction explains the main theories of governance and their impact in the corporate, public, and global spheres. The many uses of the term ‘governance’ are explored: the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund make loans conditional on ‘good governance’; climate change and avian flu appear as issues of ‘global governance’; the US Forest Service calls for ‘collaborative governance’. Why is the term used so pervasively and to what does it refer? What makes good or bad governance?

Hegel: A Very Short Introduction
Peter Singer

Hegel: A Very Short Introduction outlines Hegel's philosophy and provides a broad discussion of his ideas and major works. Many people regard Hegel's work as obscure and extremely difficult, yet his importance and influence are universally acknowledged. It can be argued that without Hegel neither the intellectual nor political developments of the last 150 years would have taken the path they did. His profound ideas led him to some conclusions that may seem bizarre. Despite this, there are arguments and insights in his work that retain their force even today. With perhaps the exception of Marx, no philosopher of the nineteenth or twentieth century has had as great an impact on the world as Hegel.

Ideology: A Very Short Introduction
Michael Freeden
Ideology: A Very Brief Introduction is an examination of the major theories of ideology and the ways they have enriched our comprehension of ideology. Ideology is one of the most controversial terms in the political vocabulary. It creates both revulsion and inspiration. This VSI examines the reasons for this reaction and explains why ideologies deserve respect as a major form of political thinking. It explores the changing understandings of ideology as a concept and the arguments of the main ideologies. It draws on a range of disciplines in order to show the potency of ideology as a resource at the disposal of societies.

Liberalism: A Very Short Introduction
Michael Freeden

Liberalism is one of the most central and pervasive political theories and ideologies, yet it is subject to different interpretations as well as misappropriations. Its history carries a crucial heritage of civilized thinking, of political practice, and of philosophical-ethical creativity. Liberalism: A Very Short Introduction unpacks the concept of liberalism and its various interpretations through three diverse approaches. Looking at its historical and theoretical development, analysing the liberal ideology, and understanding liberalism as a series of ethical and philosophical principles, it provides a thorough exploration of the concept and practice of liberalism.

Nationalism: A Very Short Introduction
Steven Grosby

Nationalism: A Very Short Introduction examines the political and moral challenges that face the vast majority of human beings who consider themselves to be members of various nations. It explores nationality through the difficulties and conflicts that have arisen throughout history, from ancient civilizations to the present day, and discusses nations and nationalism from social, philosophical, and anthropological perspectives. This VSI looks at the nation in history, the territorial element in nationality, and the complex ways nationality has co-existed with religion, and shows how closely linked the concept of nationalism is with being human.

Nelson Mandela: A Very Short Introduction
Elleke Boehmer
Nelson Mandela: A Very Short Introduction explores the reasons why Mandela's story is so important, and what his achievements signify. It shows how our picture of Mandela is more complicated than the legend suggests: quality of character is combined with his talents as a performer, his maverick ability to absorb transnational influences, his proximity to outstanding colleagues, his steely survival skills, and his postmodern ease with media image. As well as being a remarkable statesman and one of the world's longest-detained political prisoners, Nelson Mandela has become an exemplary figure of non-racialism and democracy. Once a man with an unknown face, he became after his 1994 release one of the most internationally recognizable images of our time.

Neoliberalism: A Very Short Introduction
Manfred B. Steger and Ravi K. Roy
Print Publication Year: 2010 Published Online: Sep 2013
Publisher: Oxford University Press
DOI: 10.1093/actrade/9780199560516.001.0001
Item type: book

Neoliberalism: A Very Short Introduction explores the major political, economic, and social dimensions of neoliberalism. From its heyday in the late 1990s when it became the world's dominant economic policy, neoliberalism has suffered a major setback with the financial crisis. Who have been the key thinkers and political advocates of neoliberalism? Is neoliberalism doomed or will it regain its former ascendance? Is there a viable alternative to neoliberalism? This VSI examines these questions as it explores the origins, core claims, and the different ideas and leaders at the heart of one of the most debated ‘isms’ of our time.

Peace: A Very Short Introduction
Oliver P. Richmond
Print Publication Year: 2014 Published Online: Nov 2014
Publisher: Oxford University Press
DOI: 10.1093/actrade/9780199656004.001.0001
Item type: book

Peace: A Very Short Introduction explores the evolution of peace in practice and in theory, exploring modern assumptions about peace and the different interpretations of its application. The concept of peace has always attracted radical thought, action, and practices. A term that has been taken to mean merely an absence of overt violence or war is, in the contemporary era, often used interchangeably with ‘peacemaking’, ‘peacebuilding’, ‘conflict resolution’, and ‘statebuilding’. The modern concept of peace has therefore broadened from the mere absence of violence to something more complicated.

Rousseau: A Very Short Introduction
Robert Wokler
Print Publication Year: 2001 Published Online: Sep 2013
Publisher: Oxford University Press
Rousseau: A Very Short Introduction examines the role of Jean-Jacques Rousseau in the European Enlightenment, and his critique of the political, economic, theological, and sexual trappings of civilization. His philosophy of history, his theories of music and politics, his fiction, educational and religious writings, and even his botany, were all inspired by visionary ideals of mankind's self-realization in a condition of unfettered freedom. This VSI explains how, in embracing classical republicanism, ancient mythology, direct communion with God, the wildness of nature and solitude, Rousseau anticipated some post-modernist rejections of the Enlightenment.

Socialism: A Very Short Introduction
Michael Newman

Socialism: A Very Short Introduction sets out to answer questions such as: What is socialism? Does it have a future, or has it become an outdated ideology in the twenty-first century? The successes and failures of modern socialism are examined and explained from an international perspective — ranging from communism in Cuba to social democracy in Sweden. Discussing socialism from its inception in the industrial towns of the nineteenth century to its response to the feminist, green, and anti-capitalist movements today, this VSI concludes that, with its values of equality, solidarity, and cooperation, socialism remains as relevant as ever, but that it needs to learn lessons from the past.

Tocqueville: A Very Short Introduction
Harvey Mansfield

Tocqueville: A Very Short Introduction uncovers the man behind the landmark Democracy in America a book still considered one of the best sources for anyone trying to understand American democracy. Tocqueville was a liberal and a thinker whose life's experiences — his aristocratic ancestry, his ventures in politics, and his voyages abroad — shaped his writings. His work expressed his passion for political liberty and insistence on human greatness. He opposed abstraction and theory, and his emphasis on the practice of self-government in America was a reflection of his hopes and fears for America, and his disappointment with his native France.