Anarchism is frequently criticised for being an ideology suitable for isolated communities, small enough to be self-governing, rather than one for the global, multi-national society in which we live. ‘The federalist agenda’ argues that some of the most prominent anarchist thinkers of the past, such as Proudhon, Bakunin, and Kropotkin, had a federalist agenda highly relevant to issues relating to European unity. These thinkers were in advance of their contemporaries in warning the people of Europe of the consequences of not adopting a federalist approach. Coordination can be achieved without uniformity or bureaucracy.

The U.S. Constitution: A Very Short Introduction

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.
‘What the EU is for’ explores the development of the European Community (EC). For France and Germany, finding a way to live together in a durable peace was a fundamental political priority that the EC was designed to serve. As the Second World War recedes into a more distant past, the motive of peace and security remains a powerful influence on governments and politicians of many member states—and peace could only succeed with adequate economic performance. There are two main explanations for the phenomenon of the EC and EU. One emphasizes the role of member states and their intergovernmental dealings; the other gives greater weight to the European institutions.

11. Much accomplished … but what next?
Simon Usherwood and John Pinder

In March 2017, two events illustrated the EU’s achievement and fragility. The first, the sixtieth anniversary of the signing of the Rome treaties, was an opportunity to reflect on how the integration process has become fundamental to European governance and government, reaching into almost every area of public policy. The second was the UK’s submission of their intention to withdraw from the EU. ‘Much accomplished … but what next?’ asks whether the EU has the necessary powers and structures to achieve its objectives, but also whether its objectives are even the right ones. Without considering the latter, the former risks becoming an exercise in political narcissism.

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.

6. Equality
David J. Bodenhamer
Equality was not an explicit core value of the Constitution, nor was it a basic condition of republican governments. The framers, living in a world based on class distinctions, rejected hereditary aristocracy, but casually accepted the idea of a natural aristocracy based on merit. Political equality was an animating force of the Revolution, although this condition applied primarily to white, property-owning men. ‘Equality’ outlines the three Amendments adopted between 1865 and 1870 that ended slavery, made state citizenship a consequence of national citizenship, and designated African-American men as political equals. It also describes the women’s movement of the 1920s, the aftermath of World War II, and the civil rights movement of the 1960s.