

## Political Philosophy A Very Short Introduction David Miller

Raymond Wacks reveals the intriguing and challenging nature of legal philosophy, exploring the notion of law and its role in our lives. He refers to key thinkers from Aristotle to Rawls, from Bentham to Derrida and looks at the central questions behind legal theory, and law's relation to justice, morality, and democracy.

This book demonstrates the rich diversity and depth of political philosophy in the twentieth century. Catherine H. Zuckert has compiled a collection of essays recounting the lives of political theorists, connecting each biography with the theorist's life work and explaining the significance of the contribution to modern political thought. The essays are organized to highlight the major political alternatives and approaches. Beginning with essays on John Dewey, Carl Schmitt and Antonio Gramsci, representing the three main political alternatives - liberal, fascist and communist - at mid-century, the book proceeds to consider the lives and works of émigrés such as Hannah Arendt, Eric Voegelin, and Leo Strauss, who brought a continental perspective to the United States after World War II. The second half of the collection contains essays on recent defenders of liberalism, such as Friedrich Hayek, Isaiah Berlin and John Rawls and liberalism's many critics, including Michel Foucault, Jürgen Habermas and Alasdair MacIntyre.

This book introduces readers to the concepts of political philosophy. It starts by

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explaining why the subject is important and how it tackles basic ethical questions such as 'how should we live together in society?' It looks at political authority, the reasons why we need politics at all, the limitations of politics, and whether there are areas of life that shouldn't be governed by politics. It explores the connections between political authority and justice, a constant theme in political philosophy, and the ways in which social justice can be used to regulate rather than destroy a market economy. David Miller discusses why nations are the natural units of government and whether the rise of multiculturalism and transnational co-operation will change this: will we ever see the formation of a world government? ABOUT THE SERIES: The Very Short Introductions series from Oxford University Press contains hundreds of titles in almost every subject area. These pocket-sized books are the perfect way to get ahead in a new subject quickly. Our expert authors combine facts, analysis, perspective, new ideas, and enthusiasm to make interesting and challenging topics highly readable.

What is political philosophy? A philosophical study of political ideas such as authority, freedom, justice and democracy? An inquiry into the best form of government? An attempt to rationally justify forms of authority? Johanna Oksana asks exactly these questions as she opens this brilliant new guide to political philosophy. Rather than attempting to provide the reader with a definite answer, the book invites readers to recognize many of the issues encountered in everyday life as political, the outcome of human practices that incorporate power relations, social norms and obligations. It

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suggests that political philosophy should be understood as an open-ended, critical project that to some extent concerns everyone. The book employs an original structure which will be a huge help to both students and general readers seeking to understand the topic. Each chapter, which moves chronologically from antiquity to the twentieth century, focuses on selected classic texts in political philosophy, which are briefly introduced and analysed. The texts then function as a springboard for a discussion of central contemporary issues in political philosophy.

Jan Narveson asks the provocative, philosophical question: is the state necessary? In this unusual introduction to political philosophy, Narveson draws on the history of political philosophy and discusses its main theories—classic liberal, democratic, socialist, radical—with reference to how each sees the place of the individual in the political order. Narveson's critique is situated within issues of freedom, authority, economic welfare, international relations and others to explore how and whether the state is necessary. His argument is ultimately anti-statist and takes seriously the question of whether and how some version of anarchism might make sense.

This Very Short Introduction introduces readers to the key concepts of political philosophy: authority, democracy, freedom and its limits, justice, feminism, multiculturalism, and nationality. Accessibly written and assuming no previous knowledge of the subject, it encourages the reader to think clearly and critically about the leading political questions of our time.

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Politicians invoke grand ideas: social justice, democracy, liberty, equality, community. But what do these ideas really mean? How can politicians across the political spectrum appeal to the same values? This new edition of Adam Swift's highly readable introduction to political philosophy answers these important questions, and includes new material on global justice, feminism, and method in political theory, as well as updated guides to further reading. This lively and accessible book is ideal for students, but it also brings the insights of the world's leading political philosophers to a wide general audience. Using plenty of examples, it equips readers to think for themselves about the ideas that shape political life. Democracy works best when both politicians and voters move beyond rhetoric to think clearly and carefully about the political principles that should govern their society. But clear thinking is difficult in an age when established orthodoxies have fallen by the wayside. Bringing political philosophy out of the ivory tower and within the reach of all, this book provides us with tools to cut through the complexities of modern politics. In so doing, it makes a valuable contribution to the democratic process and this new edition will continue to be essential reading for students of political philosophy and theory.

Thomas Hobbes, the first great English political philosopher, has long had the reputation of being a pessimistic atheist, who saw human nature as inevitably evil and proposed a totalitarian state to subdue human failings. In this illuminating study, Richard Tuck re-evaluates Hobbes's philosophy and dispels these myths, revealing him

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to have been passionately concerned with the refutation of scepticism, and to have developed a theory of knowledge which rivalled that of Descartes in its importance.

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Presents fundamental philosophical questions as posed by ancient philosophers, comparing and contrasting modern differences in approach and perspective.

'I disapprove of what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it' This slogan, attributed to Voltaire, is frequently quoted by defenders of free speech. Yet it is rare to find anyone prepared to defend all expression in every circumstance, especially if the views expressed incite violence. So where do the limits lie? What is the real value of free speech? Here, Nigel Warburton offers a concise guide to important questions facing modern society about the value and limits of free speech: Where should a civilized society draw the line? Should we be free to offend other people's religion? Are there good grounds for censoring pornography? Has the Internet changed everything? This Very Short Introduction is a thought-provoking, accessible, and up-to-date examination of the liberal assumption that free speech is worth preserving at any cost. **ABOUT THE SERIES:** The Very Short Introductions series from Oxford University Press contains hundreds of titles in almost every subject area. These pocket-sized books are the perfect way to get ahead in a new subject quickly. Our expert authors

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No one has ever described American democracy with more accurate insight or more profoundly than Alexis de Tocqueville. After meeting with Americans on extensive travels in the United States, and intense study of documents and authorities, he authored the landmark *Democracy in America*, publishing its two volumes in 1835 and 1840. Ever since, this book has been the best source for every serious attempt to understand America and democracy itself. Yet Tocqueville himself remains a mystery behind the elegance of his style. Now one of our leading authorities on Tocqueville explains him in this splendid new entry in Oxford's acclaimed Very Short Introduction series. Harvey Mansfield addresses his subject as a thinker, clearly and incisively exploring Tocqueville's writings--not only his masterpiece, but also his secret *Recollections*, intended for posterity alone, and his unfinished work on his native France, *The Old Regime and the Revolution*. Tocqueville was a liberal, Mansfield writes, but not of the usual sort. The many elements of his life found expression in his thought: his aristocratic ancestry, his ventures in politics, his voyages abroad, his hopes and fears for America, and his disappointment with France. All his writings show a passion for political liberty and insistence on human greatness. Perhaps most important, he saw liberty not in theories, but in the practice of self-government in America. Ever an opponent of abstraction, he offered an analysis that forces us to consider what we actually do in our politics--suggesting that theory itself may be an enemy of freedom. And that, Mansfield writes, makes him a vitally important thinker for today. Translator of an authoritative edition of *Democracy in America*, Harvey Mansfield here offers the fruit of decades of research and reflection in a clear, insightful, and marvelously

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compact introduction.

How ought we to live? What really exists? How do we know? This book introduces important themes in ethics, knowledge, and the self, via readings from Plato, Hume, Descartes, Hegel, Darwin, and Buddhist writers. It emphasizes throughout the point of doing philosophy, explains how different areas of philosophy are related, and explores the contexts in which philosophy was and is done. ABOUT THE SERIES: The Very Short Introductions series from Oxford University Press contains hundreds of titles in almost every subject area. These pocket-sized books are the perfect way to get ahead in a new subject quickly. Our expert authors combine facts, analysis, perspective, new ideas, and enthusiasm to make interesting and challenging topics highly readable.

Essential illustrated guide to key ideas of political thought. Philosophers have always asked fundamental and disturbing questions about politics. Plato and Aristotle debated the merits of democracy. The origins of society, the state and government authority were issues addressed by Hobbes, Rousseau, Hegel, Marx and many other philosophers. Introducing Political Philosophy explains the central concepts of this intriguing branch of philosophy and presents the major political theorists from Plato to Foucault. How did governments get started? Why should they be obeyed? Could we live without them? How much power should they have? Is freedom a right? Which is the best form of government? In the wake of consumerism and postmodernism, our need for a better grasp of political ideas is greater than ever. Dave Robinson's account of this complex subject is always clear, informative and accompanied by the entertainingly inventive illustrations of Judy Groves.

An anthology of basic statements by the most influential social and political philosophers of

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Western civilization. Includes Plato, Aristotle, Machiavelli, Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Jefferson, Thoreau, Mill, Marx and Engels, Lenin, Mussolini, Hitler, Dewey, and Gandhi. Most political debate is superficial. Just turn on cable news. Philosophy is for people who want to understand the deep questions. The goal of political philosophy is to determine the standards by which we judge different institutions good or bad, just or unjust. Some people might think they don't have much need of political philosophy: "Who cares about wishy-washy obtuse notions of justice? I'm a pragmatist. I just want to know what works." But this isn't a way of avoiding political philosophy; it's a way of being dogmatic about it. Before we can just do "what works," we have to know what counts as working. This book serves as an introduction to some of the major theories of justice, to the arguments philosophers have made for and against these theories, and, ultimately, to how to be more thoughtful and rigorous in your own thinking.

The tradition of ancient philosophy is a long, rich and varied one, in which a constant note is that of discussion and argument. This book introduces readers to some ancient debates to engage with the ancient developments of some themes. Getting away from the presentation of ancient philosophy as a succession of Great Thinkers, the book gives readers a sense of the freshness and liveliness of ancient philosophy, and of its wide variety of themes and styles.

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Providing a comprehensive introduction to political philosophy, this 2006 book combines discussion of historical and contemporary figures, together with numerous real-life examples. It ranges over an unusually broad range of topics in the field, including the just distribution of wealth, both within countries and globally; the nature and justification of political authority; the meaning and significance of freedom; arguments for and against democratic rule; the problem of war; and the grounds for toleration in public life. It also offers an accessible, non-technical discussion of perfectionism, utilitarianism, theories of the social contract, and of recently popular forms of critical theory. Throughout, the book challenges readers to think critically about political arguments and institutions that they might otherwise take for granted. It will be a provocative text for any student of philosophy or political science.

What is the philosophy of religion? How can we distinguish it from theology on the one hand and the psychology/sociology of religious belief on the other? What does it mean to describe God as "eternal"? And should religious people want there to be good arguments for the existence of God, or is religious belief only authentic in the absence of these good arguments? In this Very Short Introduction Tim Bayne introduces the field of philosophy of religion, and engages with some of the most burning questions that philosophers discuss.

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Considering how "religion" should be defined, and whether we even need to be able to define it in order to engage in the philosophy of religion, he goes on to discuss whether the existence of God matters. Exploring the problem of evil, Bayne also debates the connection between faith and reason, and the related question of what role reason should play in religious contexts. Shedding light on the relationship between science and religion, Bayne finishes by considering the topics of reincarnation and the afterlife. ABOUT THE SERIES: The Very Short Introductions series from Oxford University Press contains hundreds of titles in almost every subject area. These pocket-sized books are the perfect way to get ahead in a new subject quickly. Our expert authors combine facts, analysis, perspective, new ideas, and enthusiasm to make interesting and challenging topics highly readable.

A leading political theorist's groundbreaking defense of ideal conceptions of justice in political philosophy Throughout the history of political philosophy and politics, there has been continual debate about the roles of idealism versus realism. For contemporary political philosophy, this debate manifests in notions of ideal theory versus nonideal theory. Nonideal thinkers shift their focus from theorizing about full social justice, asking instead which feasible institutional and political changes would make a society more just. Ideal thinkers, on the other

hand, question whether full justice is a standard that any society is likely ever to satisfy. And, if social justice is unrealistic, are attempts to understand it without value or importance, and merely utopian? Utopophobia argues against thinking that justice must be realistic, or that understanding justice is only valuable if it can be realized. David Estlund does not offer a particular theory of justice, nor does he assert that justice is indeed unrealizable—only that it could be, and this possibility upsets common ways of proceeding in political thought. Estlund engages critically with important strands in traditional and contemporary political philosophy that assume a sound theory of justice has the overriding, defining task of contributing practical guidance toward greater social justice. Along the way, he counters several tempting perspectives, including the view that inquiry in political philosophy could have significant value only as a guide to practical political action, and that understanding true justice would necessarily have practical value, at least as an ideal arrangement to be approximated. Demonstrating that unrealistic standards of justice can be both sound and valuable to understand, Utopophobia stands as a trenchant defense of ideal theory in political philosophy. Many contemporary political thinkers are gripped by the belief that their task is to develop an ideal theory of rights or justice for guiding and judging political actions. But in *Philosophy and Real Politics*, Raymond Geuss argues that

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philosophers should first try to understand why real political actors behave as they actually do. Far from being applied ethics, politics is a skill that allows people to survive and pursue their goals. To understand politics is to understand the powers, motives, and concepts that people have and that shape how they deal with the problems they face in their particular historical situations.

Philosophy and Real Politics both outlines a historically oriented, realistic political philosophy and criticizes liberal political philosophies based on abstract conceptions of rights and justice. The book is a trenchant critique of established ways of thought and a provocative call for change.

An interpretative essay on the British political system looks at the key characteristics and ideas of the British tradition, explores what makes British politics distinctive, and considers how the system continues to evolve.

In this book John Marenbon discusses the extraordinary breadth of medieval philosophy as written by Christians in Greek and Latin, Muslims in Arabic and by Jews in Hebrew, from c. 500 to c. 1550. He considers important factors such as where and when it took place, its social setting and its links with religion.

How can politicians across the political spectrum appeal to the same values? This edition answers this questions, using examples to equip readers to think for themselves about the ideas that shape political life. Bringing It provides tools to

cut through the complexities of modern politics, aiming to make a contribution to the democratic process.

Rather than a survey of political philosophy, this concise text focuses on the problem of developing a personal outlook toward government and political life. Even though political philosophy has a long tradition, it is much more than the study of old and great treatises. Contemporary philosophers continue to press new arguments on old and timeless questions, but also to propose departures and innovations. The field changes over time, and new work inevitably responds both to events in the world and to the directions of thought itself. This volume includes 22 new pieces by leaders in the field on both perennial and emerging topics of keen interest to contemporary political philosophers. In addition to longstanding issues such as Authority, Equality, and Freedom, and Democracy, there are articles on less classical topics such as Race, Historical Injustice, Deliberation, Money and Politics, Global Justice, and Ideal and Non-Ideal Theory. All of the pieces combine clarity and accessibility with a top scholar's critical and original point of view. The introductory essay briefly situates this snapshot of the state of the art in a broader view of developments in political philosophy in the last 40 years, and looks forward to future developments. Students and scholars alike will find the pieces to be valuable not only surveys but as provocations to think further about the questions, puzzles, and practical problems that animate recent work in political philosophy. The issues will be of interest to many working in philosophy,

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political science, law, economics, and more.

In this Very Short Introduction, Michael Freeden explores the concept of liberalism, one of the longest-standing and central political theories and ideologies. Combining a variety of approaches, he distinguishes between liberalism as a political movement, as a system of ideas, and as a series of ethical and philosophical principles.

American politics seems to grow more contentious and complicated by the day, and whether American democracy works well is hotly debated. Amidst all this roiling partisan argument and confusing claims and counterclaims, there has never been a greater need for an impartial primer on the basics of the American political system. This Very Short Introduction gives readers a concise, accessible, and sophisticated overview of the vital elements of American democracy, emphasizing both how these elements function, their historical origins, and how they have evolved into their present forms. Richard Valelly covers all facets of America's political system: the bicameral Congress and the place of the filibuster, the legislative-executive process, the role of the Supreme Court, political parties and democratic choice, bureaucracy, the partisan revival, and the political economy. He offers as well an original analysis of the evolution of the American presidency and a fascinating chapter on the effects of public polling on political decision-making and voter representation. Valelly shows that the American political system is, and always has been, very much a work in progress--unfolding within, and also constantly updating, an eighteenth-century constitutional framework. In a refreshingly

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balanced and judicious assessment, he explores the strengths of American democracy while candidly acknowledging both gaps in representation and the increasing income inequality have sparked protest and intense public discussion. Finally, Valelly considers the remarkable persistence, for more than two centuries, of the basic constitutional forms established in 1787, despite the dramatic social changes that have reshaped virtually all aspects of American life. For anyone wishing to understand the nuts and bolts of how our political system works--and sometimes fails to work--this Very Short Introduction is the very best place to start. About the Series: Oxford's Very Short Introductions series offers concise and original introductions to a wide range of subjects--from Islam to Sociology, Politics to Classics, Literary Theory to History, and Archaeology to the Bible. Not simply a textbook of definitions, each volume in this series provides trenchant and provocative--yet always balanced and complete--discussions of the central issues in a given discipline or field. Every Very Short Introduction gives a readable evolution of the subject in question, demonstrating how the subject has developed and how it has influenced society. Eventually, the series will encompass every major academic discipline, offering all students an accessible and abundant reference library. Whatever the area of study that one deems important or appealing, whatever the topic that fascinates the general reader, the Very Short Introductions series has a handy and affordable guide that will likely prove indispensable.

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"Julia Annas provides an incisive exploration of the many-sided and elusive genius whose wide-ranging, bold, and influential ideas continue to challenge, provoke, and inspire us today"--Page 4 of cover.

Simon Critchley's *Very Short Introduction* shows that Continental philosophy encompasses a distinct set of philosophical traditions and practices, with a compelling range of problems all too often ignored by the analytic tradition. He discusses the ideas and approaches of philosophers such as Kant, Hegel, Nietzsche, Husserl, Heidegger, Sartre, Habermas, Foucault, and Derrida, and introduces key concepts such as existentialism, nihilism, and phenomenology by explaining their place in the Continental tradition. ABOUT THE SERIES: The *Very Short Introductions* series from Oxford University Press contains hundreds of titles in almost every subject area. These pocket-sized books are the perfect way to get ahead in a new subject quickly. Our expert authors combine facts, analysis, perspective, new ideas, and enthusiasm to make interesting and challenging topics highly readable.

*Political Philosophy: A Very Short Introduction* Oxford University Press

French culture is unique in that philosophy has played a significant role from the early-modern period onwards, intimately associated with political, religious, and literary debates, as well as with epistemological and scientific ones. While Latin was the language of learning there was a universal philosophical literature, but with the rise of vernacular literatures things changed and a distinctive national form of philosophy



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arose in France. This Very Short Introduction covers French philosophy from its origins in the sixteenth century up to the present, analysing it within its social, political, and cultural context. Beginning with psychology and epistemology, Stephen Gaukroger and Knox Peden then move onto the emergence of radical philosophy in the eighteenth century, before considering post-revolutionary philosophy in the nineteenth century, philosophy in the world wars, the radical thought of the 1960s, and finally French philosophy today. Throughout, they explore the dilemma sustained by the markedly national conception of French philosophy, and its history of speaking out on matters of universal concern. ABOUT THE SERIES: The Very Short Introductions series from Oxford University Press contains hundreds of titles in almost every subject area. These pocket-sized books are the perfect way to get ahead in a new subject quickly. Our expert authors combine facts, analysis, perspective, new ideas, and enthusiasm to make interesting and challenging topics highly readable.

How ought we to live? What really exists? How do we know? Edward Craig discusses some of the key questions philosophy engages with. He explores important themes in ethics, knowledge, and the self, alongside a new chapter for this edition on free will, discussing determinism and indeterminism in the context of Descartes and Hegel's work.

Written by one of the world's leading experts in the field, this book offers a clear account of the contributions to philosophy made by one of Britain's greatest

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thinkers. Harris covers Hume's main interests of human nature, morality, politics, and religion, and explores the philosophical questions that remain at the heart of the subject today.

This new edition of *A Companion to Contemporary Political Philosophy* has been extended significantly to include 55 chapters across two volumes written by some of today's most distinguished scholars. New contributors include some of today's most distinguished scholars, among them Thomas Pogge, Charles Beitz, and Michael Doyle. Provides in-depth coverage of contemporary philosophical debate in all major related disciplines, such as economics, history, law, political science, international relations and sociology. Presents analysis of key political ideologies, including new chapters on Cosmopolitanism and Fundamentalism. Includes detailed discussions of major concepts in political philosophy, including virtue, power, human rights, and just war.

Existentialism was one of the leading philosophical movements of the twentieth century. Focusing on its seven leading figures, Sartre, Nietzsche, Heidegger, Kierkegaard, de Beauvoir, Merleau-Ponty and Camus, this *Very Short Introduction* provides a clear account of the key themes of the movement which emphasized individuality, free will, and personal responsibility in the modern world. Drawing in the movement's varied relationships with the arts, humanism,

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and politics, this book clarifies the philosophy and original meaning of 'existentialism' - which has tended to be obscured by misappropriation. Placing it in its historical context, Thomas Flynn also highlights how existentialism is still relevant to us today. ABOUT THE SERIES: The Very Short Introductions series from Oxford University Press contains hundreds of titles in almost every subject area. These pocket-sized books are the perfect way to get ahead in a new subject quickly. Our expert authors combine facts, analysis, perspective, new ideas, and enthusiasm to make interesting and challenging topics highly readable.

Series Copy The new Very Short Introductions series offers concise and original introductions to a wide range of subjects from politics to classics. Not simply a textbook of definitions, each book in the series provides trenchant, provocative, yet balanced discussions on the central issues of the field, gives a readable historical account of the subject, and demonstrates how each particular area of study has developed and shaped society. Eventually, the series will encompass every major academic discipline, offering readers an affordable, accessible, and complete reference library. Stimulating and lively, the Very Short Introductions are indispensable guides and essential reading for anyone interested in the development of these influential fields. Providing the general reader and the

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student with an introduction to the central issues of political science, *A Very Short Introduction to Politics* shows how political trends and maneuvers develop and how they help shape our society. Kenneth Minogue, with his lively and popular style, begins with a discussion of issues arising from a historical account of politics, and goes on to offer chapters dealing with the Ancient Greeks and the idea of citizenship; Roman law; medieval Christianity and individualism; freedom since Machiavelli and Hobbes; the challenge of ideologies; democracy, oligarchy, and bureaucracy; power and order in modern society; and politics in the West. Readable and pithy, this entertaining introduction is perfect for anyone looking for an accessible overview of the subject.

This accessible and user-friendly text offers a broad survey of some of the fundamental philosophical questions concerning social and political relations in modern society.

This book examines the intersection of fictional narratives and political philosophy, focusing specifically on the use of short stories to teach the classic works of political philosophy. It is a resource for scholars and teachers of politics, philosophy, and literature.

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