



Linda Greenhouse

THE U.S. SUPREME COURT

A Very Short Introduction

OXFORD

The U.S. Supreme Court: A Very Short Introduction

VERY SHORT INTRODUCTIONS are for anyone wanting a stimulating and accessible way in to a new subject. They are written by experts and have been published in more than 25 languages worldwide.

The series began in 1995 and now represents a wide variety of topics in history, philosophy, religion, science, and the humanities. The VSI library now contains more than 300 volumes—a Very Short Introduction to everything from ancient Egypt and Indian philosophy to conceptual art and cosmology—and will continue to grow in a variety of disciplines.

Very Short Introductions available now:

- ADVERTISING Winston Fletcher
AFRICAN HISTORY John Parker and
Richard Rathbone
AGNOSTICISM Robin Le Poidevin
AMERICAN IMMIGRATION
David A. Gerber
AMERICAN POLITICAL PARTIES
AND ELECTIONS L. Sandy Maisel
THE AMERICAN
PRESIDENCY Charles O. Jones
ANARCHISM Colin Ward
ANCIENT EGYPT Ian Shaw
ANCIENT GREECE Paul Cartledge
ANCIENT PHILOSOPHY Julia Annas
ANCIENT WARFARE
Harry Sidebottom
ANGELS David Albert Jones
ANGLICANISM Mark Chapman
THE ANGLO-SAXON AGE
John Blair
THE ANIMAL KINGDOM
Peter Holland
ANIMAL RIGHTS David DeGrazia
ANTISEMITISM Steven Beller
THE APOCRYPHAL GOSPELS
Paul Foster
ARCHAEOLOGY Paul Bahn
ARCHITECTURE Andrew Ballantyne
ARISTOCRACY William Doyle
ARISTOTLE Jonathan Barnes
ART HISTORY Dana Arnold
ART THEORY Cynthia Freeland
ATHEISM Julian Baggini
AUGUSTINE Henry Chadwick
AUTISM Uta Frith
THE AZTECS David Carrasco
BARTHES Jonathan Culler
BEAUTY Roger Scruton
BESTSELLERS John Sutherland
THE BIBLE John Riches
BIBLICAL ARCHAEOLOGY
Eric H. Cline
BIOGRAPHY Hermione Lee
THE BLUES Elijah Wald
THE BOOK OF MORMON
Terryl Givens
THE BRAIN Michael O'Shea
BRITISH POLITICS Anthony Wright
BUDDHA Michael Carrithers
BUDDHISM Damien Keown
BUDDHIST ETHICS Damien Keown
CANCER Nicholas James
CAPITALISM James Fulcher
CATHOLICISM Gerald O'Collins
THE CELL Terence Allen and
Graham Cowling
THE CELTS Barry Cunliffe
CHAOS Leonard Smith
CHILDREN'S LITERATURE
Kimberley Reynolds
CHINESE LITERATURE Sabina Knight
CHOICE THEORY Michael Allingham

CHRISTIAN ART Beth Williamson
CHRISTIAN ETHICS D. Stephen Long
CHRISTIANITY Linda Woodhead
CITIZENSHIP Richard Bellamy
CLASSICAL MYTHOLOGY
Helen Morales
CLASSICS Mary Beard and John Henderson
CLAUSEWITZ Michael Howard
THE COLD WAR Robert McMahon
COLONIAL LATIN AMERICAN
LITERATURE Rolena Adorno
COMMUNISM Leslie Holmes
THE COMPUTER Darrel Ince
THE CONQUISTADORS
Matthew Restall and
Felipe Fernández-Armesto
CONSCIENCE Paul Strohm
CONSCIOUSNESS Susan Blackmore
CONTEMPORARY ART
Julian Stallabrass
CONTINENTAL PHILOSOPHY
Simon Critchley
COSMOLOGY Peter Coles
CRITICAL THEORY
Stephen Eric Bronner
THE CRUSADES Christopher Tyerman
CRYPTOGRAPHY Fred Piper and
Sean Murphy
THE CULTURAL
REVOLUTION Richard Curt Kraus
DADA AND SURREALISM
David Hopkins
DARWIN Jonathan Howard
THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS
Timothy Lim
DEMOCRACY Bernard Crick
DERRIDA Simon Glendinning
DESCARTES Tom Sorell
DESERTS Nick Middleton
DESIGN John Heskett
DEVELOPMENTAL BIOLOGY
Lewis Wolpert
DICTIONARIES Lynda Mugglestone
DINOSAURS David Norman
DIPLOMACY Joseph M. Siracusa
DOCUMENTARY FILM
Patricia Aufderheide
DREAMING J. Allan Hobson
DRUGS Leslie Iversen
DRUIDS Barry Cunliffe
EARLY MUSIC Thomas Forrest Kelly
THE EARTH Martin Redfern
ECONOMICS Partha Dasgupta
EGYPTIAN MYTH Geraldine Pinch
EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY
BRITAIN Paul Langford
THE ELEMENTS Philip Ball
EMOTION Dylan Evans
EMPIRE Stephen Howe
ENGELS Terrell Carver
ENGLISH LITERATURE Jonathan Bate
ENVIRONMENTAL
ECONOMICS Stephen Smith
EPIDEMIOLOGY Rodolfo Saracci
ETHICS Simon Blackburn
THE EUROPEAN UNION John Pinder
and Simon Usherwood
EVOLUTION Brian and
Deborah Charlesworth
EXISTENTIALISM Thomas Flynn
FASCISM Kevin Passmore
FASHION Rebecca Arnold
FEMINISM Margaret Walters
FILM Michael Wood
FILM MUSIC Kathryn Kalinak
THE FIRST WORLD WAR
Michael Howard
FOLK MUSIC Mark Slobin
FORENSIC PSYCHOLOGY
David Canter
FORENSIC SCIENCE Jim Fraser
FOSSILS Keith Thomson
FOUCAULT Gary Gutting
FREE SPEECH Nigel Warburton
FREE WILL Thomas Pink
FRENCH LITERATURE John D. Lyons
THE FRENCH REVOLUTION
William Doyle
FREUD Anthony Storr
FUNDAMENTALISM Malise Ruthven
GALAXIES John Gribbin
GALILEO Stillman Drake
GAME THEORY Ken Binmore
GANDHI Bhikhu Parekh

GENIUS Andrew Robinson
GEOGRAPHY John Matthews and
David Herbert
GEOPOLITICS Klaus Dodds
GERMAN LITERATURE
Nicholas Boyle
GERMAN PHILOSOPHY
Andrew Bowie
GLOBAL CATASTROPHES
Bill McGuire
GLOBAL ECONOMIC
HISTORY Robert C. Allen
GLOBAL WARMING Mark Maslin
GLOBALIZATION Manfred Steger
THE GREAT DEPRESSION AND THE
NEW DEAL Eric Rauchway
HABERMAS James Gordon Finlayson
HEGEL Peter Singer
HEIDEGGER Michael Inwood
HERODOTUS Jennifer T. Roberts
HIEROGLYPHS Penelope Wilson
HINDUISM Kim Knott
HISTORY John H. Arnold
THE HISTORY OF
ASTRONOMY Michael Hoskin
THE HISTORY OF LIFE
Michael Benton
THE HISTORY OF MATHEMATICS
Jacqueline Stedall
THE HISTORY OF MEDICINE
William Bynum
THE HISTORY OF TIME
Leofranc Holford-Strevens
HIV/AIDS Alan Whiteside
HOBBS Richard Tuck
HUMAN EVOLUTION Bernard Wood
HUMAN RIGHTS Andrew Clapham
HUMANISM Stephen Law
HUME A. J. Ayer
IDEOLOGY Michael Freeden
INDIAN PHILOSOPHY
Sue Hamilton
INFORMATION Luciano Floridi
INNOVATION Mark Dodgson and
David Gann
INTELLIGENCE Ian J. Deary

INTERNATIONAL
MIGRATION Khalid Koser
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
Paul Wilkinson
ISLAM Malise Ruthven
ISLAMIC HISTORY Adam Silverstein
ITALIAN LITERATURE
Peter Hainsworth and David Robey
JESUS Richard Bauckham
JOURNALISM Ian Hargreaves
JUDAISM Norman Solomon
JUNG Anthony Stevens
KABBALAH Joseph Dan
KAFKA Ritchie Robertson
KANT Roger Scruton
KEYNES Robert Skidelsky
KIERKEGAARD Patrick Gardiner
THE KORAN Michael Cook
LANDSCAPES AND
GEOMORPHOLOGY
Andrew Goudie and Heather Viles
LATE ANTIQUITY Gillian Clark
LAW Raymond Wacks
THE LAWS OF THERMODYNAMICS
Peter Atkins
LEADERSHIP Keith Grint
LINCOLN Allen C. Guelzo
LINGUISTICS Peter Matthews
LITERARY THEORY Jonathan Culler
LOCKE John Dunn
LOGIC Graham Priest
MACHIAVELLI Quentin Skinner
MADNESS Andrew Scull
MAGIC Owen Davies
THE MARQUIS DE SADE John Phillips
MARTIN LUTHER Scott H. Hendrix
MARX Peter Singer
MATHEMATICS Timothy Gowers
THE MEANING OF LIFE
Terry Eagleton
MEDICAL ETHICS Tony Hope
MEDIEVAL BRITAIN John Gillingham
and Ralph A. Griffiths
MEMORY Jonathan K. Foster
MICHAEL FARADAY
Frank A.J.L. James
MODERN ART David Cottington

MODERN CHINA Rana Mitter
MODERN FRANCE
Vanessa R. Schwartz
MODERN IRELAND Senia Pažeta
MODERN JAPAN
Christopher Goto-Jones
MODERN LATIN AMERICAN
LITERATURE
Roberto González Echevarría
MODERNISM Christopher Butler
MOLECULES Philip Ball
MORMONISM
Richard Lyman Bushman
MUHAMMAD Jonathan A.C. Brown
MULTICULTURALISM Ali Rattansi
MUSIC Nicholas Cook
MYTH Robert A. Segal
NATIONALISM Steven Grosby
NELSON MANDELA Elleke Boehmer
NEOLIBERALISM Manfred Steger and
Ravi Roy
THE NEW TESTAMENT
Luke Timothy Johnson
THE NEW TESTAMENT AS
LITERATURE Kyle Keefer
NEWTON Robert Iliffe
NIETZSCHE Michael Tanner
NINETEENTH-CENTURY
BRITAIN Christopher Harvie and
H. C. G. Matthew
THE NORMAN CONQUEST
George Garnett
NORTH AMERICAN
INDIANS Theda Perdue and
Michael D. Green
NORTHERN IRELAND
Marc Mulholland
NOTHING Frank Close
NUCLEAR POWER Maxwell Irvine
NUCLEAR WEAPONS
Joseph M. Siracusa
NUMBERS Peter M. Higgins
THE OLD TESTAMENT
Michael D. Coogan
ORGANIZATIONS Mary Jo Hatch
PAGANISM Owen Davies
PARTICLE PHYSICS Frank Close

PAUL E. P. Sanders
PENTECOSTALISM William K. Kay
THE PERIODIC TABLE Eric R. Scerri
PHILOSOPHY Edward Craig
PHILOSOPHY OF LAW
Raymond Wacks
PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE
Samir Okasha
PHOTOGRAPHY Steve Edwards
PLANETS David A. Rothery
PLATO Julia Annas
POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY David Miller
POLITICS Kenneth Minogue
POSTCOLONIALISM Robert Young
POSTMODERNISM
Christopher Butler
POSTSTRUCTURALISM
Catherine Belsey
PREHISTORY Chris Gosden
PRESOCRATIC
PHILOSOPHY Catherine Osborne
PRIVACY Raymond Wacks
PROGRESSIVISM Walter Nugent
PROTESTANTISM Mark A. Noll
PSYCHIATRY Tom Burns
PSYCHOLOGY Gillian Butler and
Freda McManus
PURITANISM Francis J. Bremer
THE QUAKERS Pink Dandelion
QUANTUM THEORY
John Polkinghorne
RACISM Ali Rattansi
THE REAGAN REVOLUTION
Gil Troy
REALITY Jan Westerhoff
THE REFORMATION Peter Marshall
RELATIVITY Russell Stannard
RELIGION IN AMERICA
Timothy Beal
THE RENAISSANCE Jerry Brotton
RENAISSANCE ART
Geraldine A. Johnson
RISK Baruch Fischhoff and John Kadwany
ROMAN BRITAIN Peter Salway
THE ROMAN EMPIRE
Christopher Kelly
ROMANTICISM Michael Ferber

ROUSSEAU Robert Wokler
 RUSSELL A. C. Grayling
 RUSSIAN LITERATURE Catriona Kelly
 THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION
 S. A. Smith
 SCHIZOPHRENIA Chris Frith and
 Eve Johnstone
 SCHOPENHAUER
 Christopher Janaway
 SCIENCE AND RELIGION
 Thomas Dixon
 SCIENCE FICTION David Seed
 THE SCIENTIFIC REVOLUTION
 Lawrence M. Principe
 SCOTLAND Rab Houston
 SEXUALITY Véronique Mottier
 SHAKESPEARE Germaine Greer
 SIKHISM Eleanor Nesbitt
 SLEEP Steven W. Lockley and
 Russell G. Foster
 SOCIAL AND CULTURAL
 ANTHROPOLOGY
 John Monaghan and Peter Just
 SOCIALISM Michael Newman
 SOCIOLOGY Steve Bruce
 SOCRATES C. C. W. Taylor
 THE SOVIET UNION Stephen Lovell
 THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR
 Helen Graham
 SPANISH LITERATURE Jo Labanyi
 SPINOZA Roger Scruton
 STATISTICS David J. Hand
 STEM CELLS Jonathan Slack
 STUART BRITAIN John Morrill
 SUPERCONDUCTIVITY
 Stephen Blundell
 TERRORISM Charles Townshend
 THEOLOGY David F. Ford
 THOMAS AQUINAS Fergus Kerr
 TOCQUEVILLE Harvey C. Mansfield
 TRAGEDY Adrian Poole
 THE TUDORS John Guy
 TWENTIETH-CENTURY
 BRITAIN Kenneth O. Morgan
 THE UNITED NATIONS
 Jussi M. Hanhimäki
 THE U.S. CONGRESS Donald A. Ritchie
 THE U.S. SUPREME COURT
 Linda Greenhouse
 UTOPIANISM Lyman Tower Sargent
 THE VIKINGS Julian Richards
 VIRUSES Dorothy H. Crawford
 WITCHCRAFT Malcolm Gaskill
 WITTGENSTEIN A. C. Grayling
 WORLD MUSIC Philip Bohlman
 THE WORLD TRADE
 ORGANIZATION Amrita Narlikar
 WRITING AND SCRIPT
 Andrew Robinson

Available soon:

PLAGUE Paul Slack
 RUSSIAN HISTORY
 Geoffrey Hosking
 ENGINEERING David Blockley
 PROBABILITY John Haigh
 PLANTS Timothy Walker

For more information visit our website

www.oup.co.uk/general/vsi/

Linda Greenhouse

THE U.S.
SUPREME
COURT

A Very Short Introduction

OXFORD
UNIVERSITY PRESS

OXFORD

UNIVERSITY PRESS

Oxford University Press, Inc., publishes works that further
Oxford University's objective of excellence
in research, scholarship, and education.

Oxford New York

Auckland Cape Town Dar es Salaam Hong Kong Karachi
Kuala Lumpur Madrid Melbourne Mexico City Nairobi
New Delhi Shanghai Taipei Toronto

With offices in

Argentina Austria Brazil Chile Czech Republic France Greece
Guatemala Hungary Italy Japan Poland Portugal Singapore
South Korea Switzerland Thailand Turkey Ukraine Vietnam

Copyright © 2012 by Oxford University Press, Inc.

Published by Oxford University Press, Inc.
198 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10016

www.oup.com

Oxford is a registered trademark of Oxford University Press

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced,
stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means,
electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise,
without the prior permission of Oxford University Press.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
Greenhouse, Linda.

The U.S. Supreme Court : a very short introduction / Linda Greenhouse.
p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-0-19-975454-0 (pbk.)

1. United States. Supreme Court.

2. Judicial process—United States.

I. Title. II. Title: United States Supreme Court.

KF8742.G744 2012

347.73'26—dc23 2011031589

1 3 5 7 9 8 6 4 2

Printed in Great Britain
by Ashford Colour Press Ltd., Gosport, Hants.
on acid-free paper

For Gene and Hannah