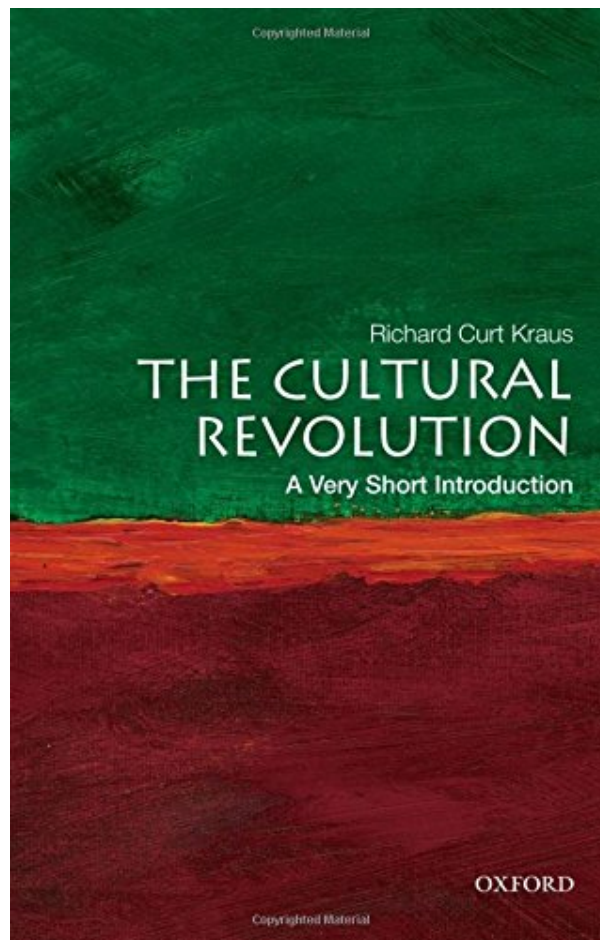
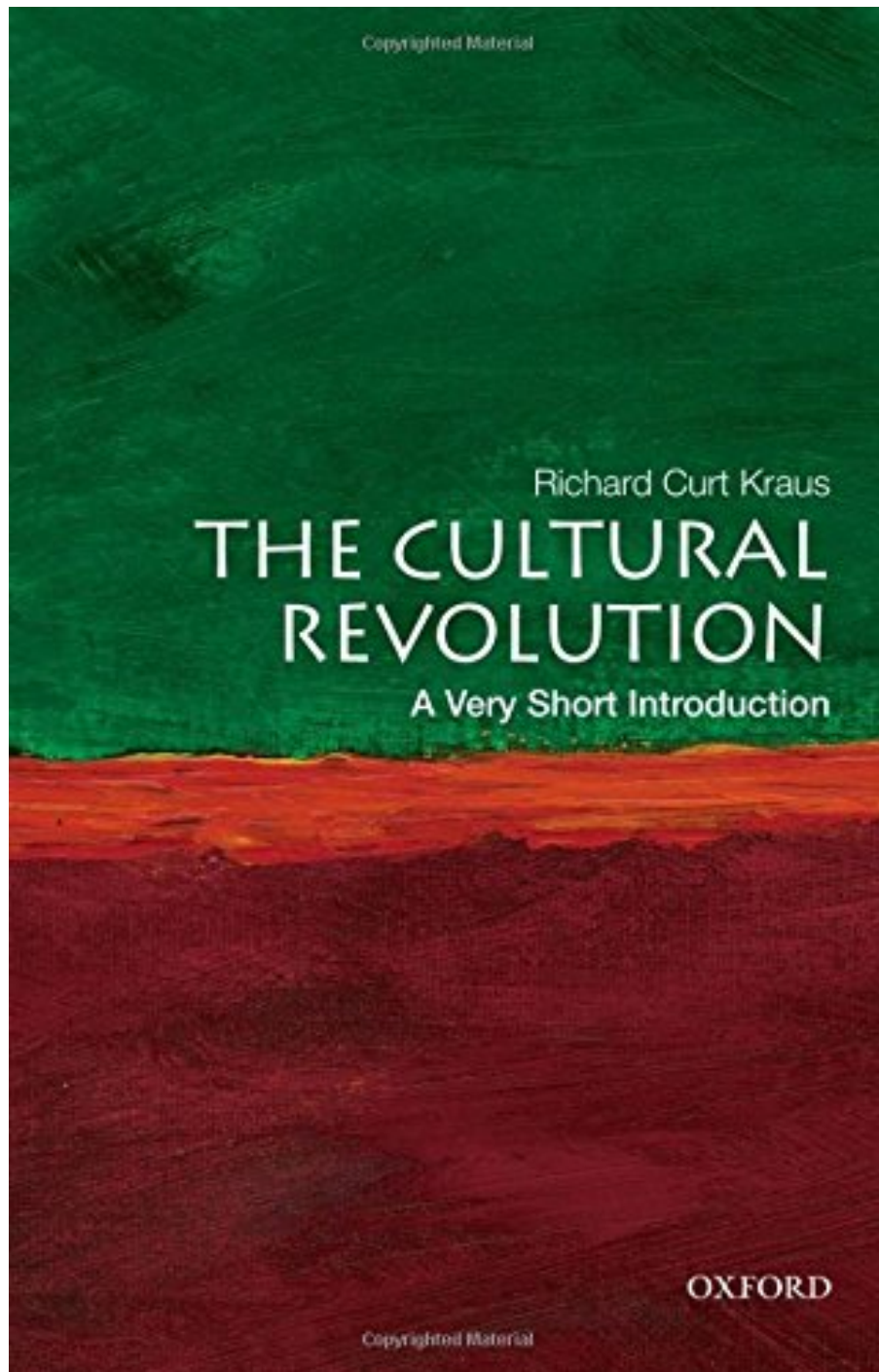


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## Review

"This remarkably full and efficient account provides a basic narrative of the Cultural Revolution, and then discusses in greater depth its politics, culture, economics, foreign relations, and memory. The book profits from Kraus's particular expertise on culture and the arts, and does not shy from controversial claims that are likely to provoke lively discussions." -Joseph Esherick, Hwei-chih and Julia Hsiu Chair in Chinese Studies, University of California, San Diego

"It's just 152 pages, small enough to slip in your back pocket, and written by a political scientist who knows the complex event in question through and through, and does a nice job of, among other things, dealing with the strange shadows it continues to cast on contemporary Chinese politics." -- Jeffrey Wasserstrom, Chancellor's Professor and Department of History Chair, University of California at Irvine

## About the Author

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China's decade-long Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution shook the politics of China and the world. Even as we approach its fiftieth anniversary, the movement remains so contentious that the Chinese Communist Party still forbids fully open investigation of its origins, development, and conclusion. Drawing upon a vital trove of scholarship, memoirs, and popular culture, this Very Short Introduction illuminates this complex, often obscure, and still controversial movement. Moving beyond the figure of Mao Zedong, Richard Curt Kraus links Beijing's elite politics to broader aspects of society and culture, highlighting many changes in daily life, employment, and the economy. Kraus also situates this very nationalist outburst of Chinese radicalism within a global context, showing that the Cultural Revolution was mirrored in the radical youth movement that swept much of the world, and that had imagined or emotional links to China's red guards. Yet it was also during the Cultural Revolution that China and the United States tempered their long hostility, one of the innovations in this period that sowed the seeds for China's subsequent decades of spectacular economic growth.

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A good introduction with a lot of limitations

By C. D. Varn

Kraus's introduction actually suffers slightly from the limitations of the "very short introduction" format given the sheer scale and internal contradictions of both the Cultural Revolution and the Deng reforms thereafter. While hardly simplistic in its presentation, Kraus tries to stir his ship away from hagiography of the cultural revolution or just standard contempt. While missing several key elements of ethnic tension of non-Han ethnic groups within the cultural revolution, which is a significant omission, Kraus does use a good overview of much of the politics of the period and of the market liberalization that came thereafter. Glossing the legacy of violence can be seen as a problem, but the numbers on this are both well-known and impossible to meaningfully verify. The internal contradictions of Mao and Deng's ideology and their relationship is also hinted at, but not fully explored here. This, however, as a starting point for understanding the Cultural Revolution, is a decent beginning to a complicated and oft misunderstood (by both detractors and advocates) time period in Chinese and Communist history. Gaps on both Mao's advocacy of and deviation from classical Marxism, his on and off flirtations with pre-modern forms of Chinese nationalism and legalism, and his policy contradictions should be explored in books which are not "very short" introductions after beginning with this one.

9 of 11 people found the following review helpful.

Excellent introduction to the subject

By Richard

While reading "Mao's Last Revolution," (Roderick MacFarquhar, Michael Schoenhals) I realized I needed a brief overview of the Cultural Revolution to better organize all the material I was encountering. Professor Kraus' little book performed this task very well. I now feel prepared to return to Roderick MacFarquhar and Michael Schoenhals' much more detailed account of the Cultural Revolution.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful.

This is a wonderful little book for people who want to know more about the CR

By hsw27

This book is great! It gives the reader a brief outline of the CR events in chronological order, then delves into various aspects of the CR: economy, culture, in global context etc.

This book neither emphasizes on the traumatic aspect nor gives too much attention to elite politics of the CR, which are recounted in many other books, rather, it aims to help the reader understand the CR in broader context, both historical and global, and emphasizes on the aspect of continuity rather than rupture of the CR in Chinese history. Some people may certainly find the theme of this book surprising or unsatisfactory, but it is what makes it a great, albeit short, piece of historical analysis.

It serves as an excellent intro to the CR. It is remarkable how much Prof. Kraus has been able to achieve in such a small book.

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