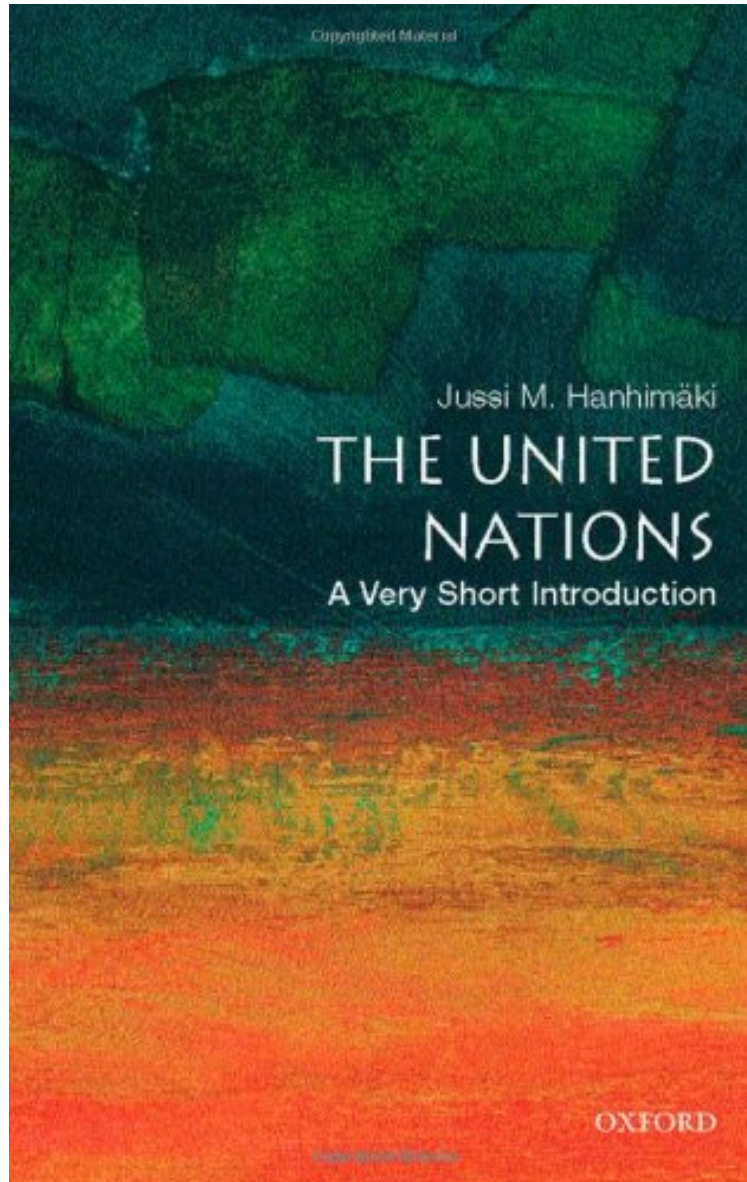


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The United Nations: A Very Short Introduction

Jussi M. Hanhimäki

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Jussi M. Hanhimäki : The United Nations: A Very Short Introduction before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The United Nations: A Very Short Introduction:

14 of 14 people found the following review helpful. TREMENDOUSLY INFORMED -- AND INFORMATIVE By Thomas Plate A tremendously informative -- and informed -- overview of the United Nations system. This is an overview that emphasizes both the history and sprawling expanse of the UN as a checkered but inter-linked system. It

avoids the journalistic fallacy of personalizing either the Office of Secretary General or the institution itself, and is rock-solid on important details and relevant problems. It accepts the UN as a necessary world institution without in any sense ignoring its yawning structural problems. Highly recommended. I will use it as the basic introductory text for my undergraduate "The Future of the United Nations" class at university. By the way, as the series title would suggest...it is pointedly concise. In an age of wasted Internet and Blog words...BRAVO!8 of 8 people found the following review helpful. Nice, short overview of the UN, its structure, and its actionsBy Jeff WaldenThe title says it all -- this book's a short summary of the history behind the UN, the structure of the UN, the challenges facing it, and the avenues for future reform. It's a reasonably short read, although not quite one to breeze through, acronym-laden as it is (pretty much by necessity, given how the UN works).As the author acknowledges, he's writing the book as a UN apologist. Yet at the same time, he doesn't hesitate to discuss the many times and ways the UN's fallen short of its original lofty goals. I tend to think it won't change many people's minds about the value or futility of the UN (it doesn't seem to have been written with an explicit goal of that sort), but at least it'll leave people better informed as to what the UN does and doesn't do, effectively and incompetently.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. short, systematic and easy to readBy Sevde Tuba OkcuThe book is very easy go read. I bought it less than 24 hours ago and I have finished it.It is very systematic. The topic order is well-selected.Although it is a short introduction, it covers all fundamental areas related to the structure and the functions of the UN.Another aspect which made me give 5 star is that the topics are professionally explained from a historic- perspective.I would strongly recommend this book to the student interested in one of the topics (IR, UN, human rights, environment etc.)An updated version of the book would include the development since 2007.

The United Nations has been called everything from "the best hope of mankind" to "irrelevant" and "obsolete." With this much-needed introduction to the UN, Jussi Hanhimki engages the current debate over the organizations effectiveness as he provides a clear understanding of how it was originally conceived, how it has come to its present form, and how it must confront new challenges in a rapidly changing world.After a brief history of the United Nations and its predecessor, the League of Nations, the author examines the UN's successes and failures as a guardian of international peace and security, as a promoter of human rights, as a protector of international law, and as an engineer of socio-economic development. Hanhimki stresses that the UN's greatest problem has been the impossibly wide gap between its ambitions and capabilities. In the area of international security, for instance, the UN has to settle conflicts--be they between or within states--without offending the national sovereignty of its member states, and without being sidelined by strong countries, as happened in the 2003 intervention of Iraq. Hanhimki also provides a clear accounting of the UN and its various arms and organizations (such as UNESCO and UNICEF), and he offers a critical overview of how effective it has been in the recent crises in Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia, for example--and how likely it is to meet its overall goals in the future.The United Nations, Hanhimki concludes, is an indispensable organization that has made the world a better place. But it is also a deeply flawed institution, in need of constant reform.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.

About the AuthorJussi M. Hanhimki is Professor of International History and Politics at the Graduate Institute of International Studies in Geneva, Switzerland. An editor of the journal *Cold War History*, he is the author or co-author of six books, including *The Flawed Architect: Henry Kissinger and American Foreign Policy*. He won the 2002 Bernath Prize from the Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations.