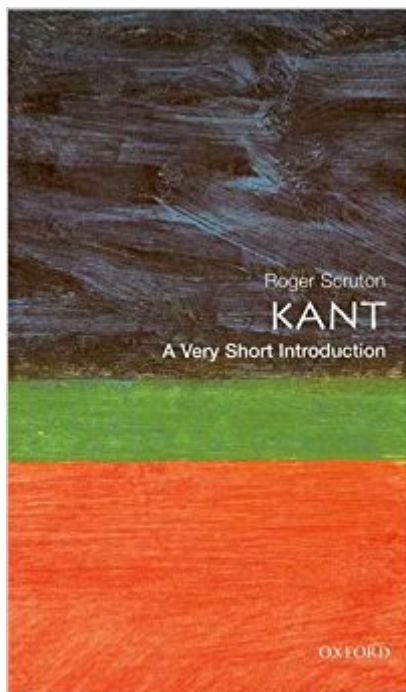


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# Kant: A Very Short Introduction



## Synopsis

Immanuel Kant is arguably the most influential modern philosopher, but is also one of the most difficult. In this illuminating Very Short Introduction, Roger Scruton--a well-known and controversial philosopher in his own right--tackles his exceptionally complex subject with a strong hand, exploring the background to Kant's work and showing why Critique of Pure Reason has proved so enduring. About the Series: Combining authority with wit, accessibility, and style, Very Short Introductions offer an introduction to some of life's most interesting topics. Written by experts for the newcomer, they demonstrate the finest contemporary thinking about the central problems and issues in hundreds of key topics, from philosophy to Freud, quantum theory to Islam.

## Book Information

Paperback: 160 pages

Publisher: Oxford University Press; Revised edition (December 6, 2001)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0192801996

ISBN-13: 978-0192801999

Product Dimensions: 6.8 x 0.6 x 4.3 inches

Shipping Weight: 4.8 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.1 out of 5 stars 41 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #65,389 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #35 in Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Philosophy > Criticism #143 in Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Philosophy > Modern #169 in Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Philosophy > History & Surveys

## Customer Reviews

"Roger Scruton faced perhaps the most intractable task of all in giving an elementary account of Kant's philosophy... but he does it extremely elegantly and neatly."--Listener

Roger Scruton is a well-known philosopher and the author of *The Aesthetics of Music* and a co-author of *German Philosophers: Kant, Hegel, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche*.

Immanuel Kant is arguably one of the most influential, and yet most difficult to read, philosophers of all time. Roger Scruton does as good a job as it is reasonable to expect in this short introduction to Kant's work. The reader is given a bit of background to Kant's philosophy, and then is introduced to the transcendental deduction, the logic of illusion, the categorical imperative, as well as Kant's ideas

on aesthetic and law. The booklet concludes with a few comments on the meaning and impact of Kant's "transcendental" philosophy. I must say that the section that gripped (yes, that is the right word!) me the most is chapter 7, "Enlightenment and Law," where Scruton comments on the role Kant had in developing modern concepts such as human rights and even the idea of a league of nations. Kant was an anti-utopian, in the sense that he did not believe that an ideal political system could actually be realized in practice, and indeed despised the violence of the then recent French revolution. (He would certainly not have approved of Bush's war to bring democracy to other countries.) But he was a man of the Enlightenment in the sense that he thought we still ought to strive toward such ideals, to keep them in mind as a guide to our behavior and our discussions about what is right and just. It makes for much food for thought even in modern times.

This is a very good book. Very well written by Scruton. I am a big fan of Slavoj Zizek and Jacques Lacan, so I wanted to have a better understanding of Kant. I often read about other philosophers interpreting Kant and I thought it was time I get to know more about him. I have read a small amount of Kant's actual writings and it's a bit too laborious for me. Scruton makes aspects of Kant more accessible. This is a very good introduction.

This is the best explanation of the work of the philosopher who launched the enlightenment and became the main philosopher of the modern and contemporary age. If I get to teach a course on Kant, this text will be used because it discusses the value of Kant's philosophy in shaping the progress of intelligent humanity as a projection into the future of human flourishing. His elucidation of Kantian reflection in its complexity is lucid.

Scruton has a wonderful talent of bringing philosophy into the public sphere in a way that is both enjoyable and intelligible. Kant is a giant among philosophers and more people should take the time to learn about him from a modern philosopher who has incorporated Kantian theories into his own writings.

Even in the 'very short introduction' format, the book is "deep" - too deep for those of us without even a freshman's 'C' in a Philosophy-101 class. The author does his best to cut to the bottom of, "The Little Professor's" concepts, but the vast abstractness of the concepts, coupled with terminology new or obscure to the 1st-timer is just too much. I gave up and I HATE to give up on a book even if it means no more than running the eyes over the words to the last page. My two stars

("I don't like it) really mean I can't understand it. No grief intended for Herr Kant or Mr. Scruton. You'll have to bring some background to this one... or more capacity for abstract thinking than this humble reviewer could manage!

Love this series! Short and clear, to the point!

I am not an academic philosopher. I read philosophy because it gives me pleasure much as I listen to a Beethoven symphony. From my point of view, it is impossible to have a firm grip on western or eastern philosophy without understanding the critiques of Kant. For a non-academic person, reading the originals of Kant, even in translation, would be an immense barrier. It is much better to read books which introduce Kant to casual readers. There are quite a few books to introduce Kant to casual readers. Unfortunately, every author has his own point of view, and none of them are entirely satisfactory. It is easier to read short introductions on the web before plunging into these introductory books. Viewed from this aspect, this introduction by Roger Scruton serves its purpose. If you are reading this alone, there will still be parts which will appear quite obscure. This is because Kant is a response to rationalists such as Spinoza and empiricists such as Hume. Knowing them first would be an advantage. The good news is that once you have a firm grip on Kant, and has formulated your own ideas, later philosophers such as Heidegger will make much more sense.

Schopenhauer in my opinion is the greatest philosopher ever lived. One of his qualities is that he is just and honest. Kant is the predecessor of Schopenhauer and his philosophy is used by the latter to build a new system on. The true metaphysical philosophy is addressed by Kant who said that our intellect is not built to perceive metaphysics and metaphysics not only impossible but also unknowable. This book is a very short introduction to "the greatest mind ever lived" as Schopenhauer himself said. Kant's philosophy is difficult to understand and not readable as Schopenhauer's, and an introductory to it is appropriate. This book will make it easy for us to understand Kant's writings. For interested readers, the completion of Kant's philosophy is in Schopenhauer's and I recommend these two books: 1) *The World As Will and Representation*, In Two Volumes: Vol. I & II. 2) *The Will's Harmonic Motion: The Completion of Schopenhauer's Philosophy*.

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