



# Interpreting the Constitution

*Kent Greenawalt*

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## **Interpreting the Constitution** Kent Greenawalt

In *Legal Interpretation*, Kent Greenawalt focuses on the complex and multi-faceted topic of textual interpretation of the law. All law needs to be interpreted, and there are many ways to do it. But what sorts of questions must one seek to answer in interpreting law and what approach should one take in each case? Whose interpretations should be prioritized? Why would one be drawn to one strategy over another? And should legal interpretation seek to satisfy specific aims or general objectives?

In order to provide the answers to these questions, Greenawalt explores the ways in which interpretive strategies from other disciplines--the philosophy of language, literary and musical interpretation, religious interpretation, and general interpretive theory--can augment and enrich methods of legal interpretation. Over the course of the book, he suggests how such forms of interpretation are analogous to legal interpretation--and points to those cases in which interpretation must rest on the distinctive aspects of legal theory, such as is the case with private documents.

Furthermore, Greenawalt's meditation suggests that interpretive strategies from other disciplines can shed light on the essential nature of legal interpretation and provide roads by which to account for dissonance between various methods of interpretation. *Legal Interpretation* is a thought-provoking reflection on the ways that insights from a range of intellectual traditions can deepen our understanding of law, particularly with regard to constitutional law.

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