

NEWS RELEASE

New book explores key ideas of David Hume, an early champion of trade and commerce

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For immediate release

VANCOUVER—A new book about David Hume, considered the greatest of all “empiricist” philosophers and a key figure of the Scottish Enlightenment, summarizes his insights on free trade, commercial society and government debt, which have a lasting influence to this day.

Published by the Fraser Institute, [The Essential David Hume](#) is accompanied by a website and animated videos.

“Hume was one of the earliest and most unapologetic defenders of commercial society, as he recognized the economic and social benefits that arise when people are free to trade goods and services they produce,” said the book’s author James R. Otteson, professor of business ethics at the University of Notre Dame and a senior fellow at the Fraser Institute.

Born in Scotland in 1711, Hume attended the University of Edinburgh but did not complete a degree. For most of his adult life, he was an independent scholar and writer as his religious skepticism thwarted his attempts at a university career.

In 1739, Hume released his most famous book, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, widely considered to be one of the most influential works in the history of philosophy.

He later met Adam Smith—now considered the father of economics—and the two became lifelong friends.

Hume’s writing displayed an astonishing range, addressing everything from metaphysics to politics, consistently producing novel and brilliant insights.

He was an early advocate of free trade, including between people in different countries. He also warned that government debt allows politicians to provide benefits to present-day voters at the expense of the next generation, and that debt can threaten a country’s sovereignty if foreigners finance the borrowing.

Hume died in Edinburgh in 1776 at the age of 65. His works continue to influence a wide range of fields and thinkers.

At www.essentialdavidhume.org, you can download the complete book and individual chapters for free and view several short videos summarizing key points of individual chapters. The videos are also available on the Fraser Institute’s YouTube [channel](#).

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