

Observations

The best way to understand liberalism is as *individualist*, not someone enamored with government solutions.

“When the movement began, classical liberals were united by a few common values: Individual rights, personal responsibility, and democracy. Democracy was particularly crucial because it is the rule of the people, by the people.”

– Daniel Jacobson

“To the extent possible, interactions with people should be voluntary. That applies to government and to people.”

– Dr. Peter Jaworski

“A pluralistic society contains groups holding a diverse set of ethical views and requires its members to exercise toleration.”

– Dr. Chandran Kukathas

“Classical liberalism includes a recognition that people have imperfect knowledge about the world.”

– Bradley Jackson

For more on Classical Liberalism visit the (Ludwig) Von Mises Institute at mises.org.

Classical Liberalism versus Progressivism and Modern Conservatism

Progressivism is partially socialistic and partially individualistic. Conservatism is said to involve reverence for order and caution, for cherishing social norms and is partially individualistic.

Both are *sociologies*, not *ideologies*. A sociology is a system of ideas and beliefs that are not necessarily coherent and may even be contradictory – held by people of similar ilk who tend to interact with each other – while an ideology provides a coherent approach to politics, built up from first principles.

Arguably, progressivism and conservatism are not ideologies. Rather, they reflect a process akin to picking items from a menu. Specifically, their choice of political party or candidate for office is more a matter of preference and, to some extent, emotion and less on principles and rational thought.

For additional reading go to the Goodman Institute website: goodmaninstitute.org/how-we-think/

Classical Liberalism

CLASSICAL LIBERALISM

The general umbrella of political thought that favors **individual liberty** over the power of central government.

SOCIAL LIBERALISM

Takes from Classical Liberalism to focus on **social liberties**.

AMERICAN CONSERVATISM

Takes from Classical Liberalism to focus on preserving **economic liberties**.

PROGRESSIVISM

Support or advocacy for improvement of society through political reform—especially **with the help of government**.

LIBERTARIANISM

Belief that people should be mostly free to make their own economic and social decisions, **free of government**.

DANIEL MIESSLER 2019



lpac.us • [f LPAlamedaCounty](https://www.facebook.com/LPAlamedaCounty)

Introduction

Core principles of classical liberalism – according to the Foundation for Economics Education (FEE) – include:

- 1) society's inherent capacity for self-management,
- 2) society could be more “self-organized” and less “hierarchically organized” (i.e., via government),
- 3) everyone deserves equal freedom.

Another key element of classical liberalism is democracy.

A primary proponent of classical liberal principles was Ludwig Von Mises who said:

“...there is simply no other term that signifies the great political and intellectual movement [that began in the 19th century in Europe and North America] that substituted: 1) free enterprise and the market economy for the previous “precapitalistic” methods of capital allocation and means of production and 2) constitutional representative government for the absolutism of [royalty or dictators].”

Elements of Classical Liberalism

The Institute for Humane Studies at George Mason University identifies these key elements of Classical Liberalism:

Human Dignity – all people, as human beings, deserve respect by people and government.

Individual Freedom – people should be free from coercion or subjugation.

Voluntary Action – people should not be required or forced to behave in ways that do not harm others, by government or other people.

Justice – individual rights of all people to be respected, including rights of autonomy, self-determination regarding one's own body and the right to hold property.

Tolerance and Pluralism – complementary principles: 1) tolerance of other's ideas, opinions, and non-violent behavior, 2) people with different backgrounds, faiths, and opinions living together, peacefully.

Freedom of Expression – every person has the right to voice their opinion, fostering a robust exchange of ideas.

Rule of Law – society governed by rules, applied impartially and equally to all.

Civil Society – voluntary human association and collective action that exists between the individual and the state.

Spontaneous Order – much of the order within society arises not by top-down control or design, but by bottom-up processes of trial, error, learning, and course correction.

Intellectual Humility – emphasis on the power of reason *and* recognition of the limits of reason.

Economic Freedom – public policy grounded in the principle of economic freedom over policies grounded in the principle of economic control.

Peaceful Solutions – a key to fostering a society in which individuals can go about their affairs with voluntary cooperation and without undue influence by government and the violence of war.

Personal Responsibility – in a free society people must take responsibility for their actions and personal well-being.

Democracy – government changes peacefully; representatives are elected by the people and they serve the people.

To read more visit George Mason University's Institute for Human Studies at theihs.org.

Resources

<https://theihs.org/initiatives/core-classical-liberal-principles/>