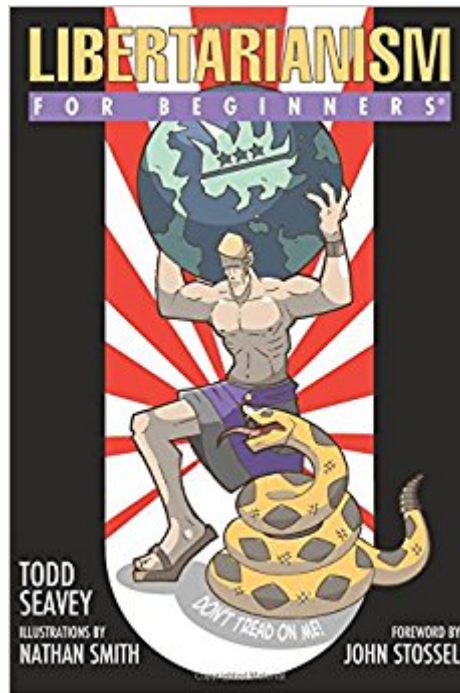




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Libertarianism For Beginners



Synopsis

Libertarianism isn't about winning elections; it is first and foremost a political philosophy – a description of how, in the opinion of libertarians, free people ought to treat one another, at least when they use the law, which they regard as potentially dangerous. If libertarians are correct, the law should intrude into people's lives as little as possible, rarely telling them what to do or how to live. A political and economic philosophy as old as John Locke and John Stuart Mill, but as alive and timely as Rand Paul, the Tea Party, and the novels of Ayn Rand, libertarianism emphasizes individual rights and calls for a radical reduction in the power and size of government. *Libertarianism For Beginners* lays out the history and principles of this often-misunderstood philosophy in lucid, dispassionate terms that help illuminate today's political dialogue.

Book Information

Series: For Beginners

Paperback: 176 pages

Publisher: For Beginners (April 12, 2016)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1939994667

ISBN-13: 978-1939994660

Product Dimensions: 6 x 0.7 x 8.9 inches

Shipping Weight: 0.3 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.3 out of 5 stars 15 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #732,025 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #38 in Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Politics & Government > Ideologies & Doctrines > Libertarianism #2192 in Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Philosophy > Political

Customer Reviews

Todd Seavey is a ghostwriter, political commentator, libertarian speaker and blogger (www.toddseavey.com), and writer for TV news commentators such as John Stossel and Judge Andrew Napolitano. Nathan Smith (aka bluefluke) is a writer and illustrator who specializes in the classical western esoteric tradition. His notable works include *The Psychonaut Field Manual*, *Am I Evil?*, and the *Discordian Tarot Collection*. See his art at: bluefluke.deviantart.com or bluefluke.tumblr.com

This book isn't really an introduction to libertarianism... at least, it never seems to actually get around to explaining what the libertarian philosophy is. It's more of an introduction to libertarians. There's a chapter dealing with philosophy, but it isn't libertarian philosophy itself but rather a history of the various philosophical ideas and various philosophers that led up to libertarian philosophy. Which is followed by a history of libertarians. So it's not really an introduction so much as a history. And not of libertarianism so much as of libertarians. Part of the reason it never gets around to explaining the libertarian philosophy is there isn't exactly "a" libertarian philosophy, there's many, many libertarian philosophies. The author appears to be far more dedicated to not "taking sides" and offending one branch or another than he is to actually explaining one or more of the branches. So if you want to know more about how the libertarian movement came to be, and about the ideas and people who formed it, this book is for you. It's very good in that respect. If you don't know anything about libertarianism and want an introduction to the fundamental ideas, you might be able to carefully pick some of that up from reading this book, but probably not.

If you were wondering how to vote this year, this book helps explain the basic principles Libertarians tend to follow. I'd emphasize the word "tend", because it also discusses the various branches of Libertarianism - paleolibertarians, liberalaltarians, etc. and explains how they fit into the movement and where they agree and disagree. The background on the history and people who influenced the movement was useful. The author writes clearly and knows the subject in depth. I'd wanted to learn more about a party described as socially liberal and fiscally conservative, so was happy to find this book.

The book is an OK read (the references are very valuable "for further reading." The biggest problem I had was the organization; the cartoon illustrations and the "sidebar" biographies were placed awkwardly (sometimes in the middle of a sentence, continued 3 pages later) so that I was constantly having to hold a finger in place and read the biography or cartoon, then go back and restart the sentence to make sense of things!

Very good for someone new into this political option. Maybe too much focus on history of the movement, which is, in my opinion, less important than basic views and questions that Libertarians should answer.

Very good for and intro into Libertarian thought

Good summary of the key leaders and ideas of libertarianism

It's probably best that I preface this review with the caveat that I'm a close friend of the author, whom I've known for years. That said, I like to think of myself as relatively objective when it comes to these things. As a fellow libertarian-who at times strongly differs from Mr. Seavey-I can appreciate the scope of the task he's set before himself with this book. Namely, explaining a (relatively) recent philosophy which seems to contradict what most people have been taught throughout their formative years, i.e. the ministrations of the state and its agents are not only beneficial but perpetual, and extricating the government from human relations would inevitably lead to disaster. *Libertarianism for Beginners* deconstructs these two myths while simultaneously explaining why eliminating collectivist distortions of the free market will benefit both individuals and society as a whole. I look at this book as an antidote to the years of misguided public education most Americans have experienced, which emphasize the national greatness model of history, while overlooking the calamitous results of the grand social engineering that's been undertaken in order to "advance" humanity. Seavey lucidly and succinctly explains the historical precedents for libertarianism, how modern libertarian philosophers and economists expanded upon classical liberal theory, and the rationale for embracing liberty and self-governance as an operating philosophy. He provides the connective tissue between the 'novel' theories of libertarian contemporaries and the revolutionary ideas enunciated by liberal thinkers dating back to the Enlightenment, and demonstrates the continuity between those who have always sought to liberate individuals from the unnecessary and hobbling influence of the state, whether in the form of kings and dukes or modern government bureaucrats. This is a book that is simple without being simplistic-the visual aides are a deft touch-which illuminates seemingly esoteric economic and philosophical concepts in a way that both the novice and diehard libertarian can appreciate.

Incredibly helpful in understanding the basics and differences between various forms of Libertarianism.

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