



# The Paradoxes of the American Presidency

*Thomas E. Cronin, Michael A. Genovese*

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What exactly do Americans want from their president? A strong and innovative leader or someone who primarily listens to the will of the people? A programmatic party leader or a pragmatic bipartisan coalition-builder? A president who exercises power forcefully or someone who establishes consensus before doing anything? In their provocative new book, *The Paradoxes of the American Presidency*, Cronin and Genovese suggest Americans want the president to be both a leader and a follower, partisan and bipartisan, innovative and conservative.

Cronin and Genovese explore the complex institution of the American Presidency by viewing it as a series of paradoxes which shape and define the office. The authors look at the clashing expectations and contrarian demands placed upon the president, offering students the opportunity to begin to understand the dilemma faced by all incumbents -- how to bring leadership into a separated system where expectations far exceed the resources and power available to the incumbent. The authors focus on the various relationships all presidents must develop if they are to lead successfully -- relations between the president and Congress, the public, and the courts; the managerial side of the executive branch; the new roles of the cabinet, Vice President, and president's spouse; the vagaries of the selection process; and the inherent contradictions of leadership in a democratic system. Written in a lively, engaging style, this comprehensive, interpretive work represents the collaboration of two highly respected presidential scholars. This is a major end-of-the-century treatment of one of America's most important political institutions.

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