

“GREAT LEADERSHIP”

OSHER LIFE-LONG LEARNING INSTITUTE, UC BERKELEY

SPRING 2022: MARCH 30 – MAY 18, 2022 (Wednesdays, 12:00pm – 1:30pm, by Zoom)

INSTRUCTOR: GEORGE W. BRESLAUER, PROFESSOR, UC BERKELEY

INTRODUCTION: What do we mean when we call someone a “great” leader? Does it mean that we admire those people, their goals and their methods? Or does it mean that we view them as people who pulled off highly consequential acts of leadership---for better or for worse---that others likely could not have accomplished? In this course, as you’ll see from the very first cases, I take the second approach. Then I ask: how did they manage to do it? We focus on many types of leadership, and many types of leaders, exploring their skills and strategies, as well as the magnitude and durability of their accomplishments. From this we draw conclusions about how to go about evaluating leaders---past, present, and future.

COURSE OUTLINE:

March 30: Great Leadership: An Introduction

April 6: State-Builders: Tyrannical (Stalin, Hitler) and Non-Tyrannical (DeGaulle, Ataturk, Bismarck, Napoleon)

April 13: War-time Political and Military Leaders: Churchill, Thatcher, Lincoln; Giap, Napoleon

April 20: Reformers: FDR, Reagan, Gorbachev, Deng Tsiao-ping, Pope Francis

April 27: Authoritarian Populists (De-democratizers): Putin, Erdogan, Hugo Chavez, Trump

May 4: Leaders of Social Movements Against the Established Order: Gandhi, King, Jr., Mandela; Margaret Sanger, Greta Thunberg

May 11: Builders of 20th-Century Corporations: Ford, Sloan, Kaiser, Jobs, J.C. Penny

May 18: Leaders of Universities: Kerr, Hutchins, Carol Christ

READING: There are literally many thousands of books on leadership, from self-help manuals to serious works of scholarship that generalize about different types of leadership. There are also millions of biographies of individual leaders (several thousand on Napoleon Bonaparte alone). If you wish to read one book as a supplement (and partial antidote) to this course, I recommend Archie Brown, **THE MYTH OF THE STRONG LEADER** (Basic Books, 2014).