Do we have any political leaders today?  
Do I have what it takes to become one someday?

Profiles in Political Leadership

The issue of political leadership is a hot topic these days. Do highly successful – or unusually bad – leaders have similar backgrounds or life experiences? Do they share common psychological profiles or interpersonal skills?

Do leaders emerge at times of crisis or unusual circumstances? Are they most likely to be experienced “insiders” or “rock-the-boat” outsiders?

Political Science 401, Profiles in Political Leadership, confronts such questions using:

- Biography and autobiography;
- Full-length film, documentaries, and video clips;
- Primary-source speeches and essays; and
- Guest speakers from national, state, and local politics.

Leaders to be studied will be selected from a list that includes Caesar Augustus, Cyrus the Great, Elizabeth I, Washington, Lincoln, Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt, Winston Churchill, Golda Meir, the Rev. Dr. King, Margaret Thatcher, Richard Nixon, Lyndon Johnson, Ronald Reagan, Nelson Mandela, and 20th century autocrats.

Course requirements include: active class participation, a weekly log, two short papers, and a final paper in which students propose individual theories of political leadership. Questions can be e-mailed to: taberry@wisc.edu.