

Osher Lifelong Learning Institute

Great Decisions 2023 Class Schedule and Class Facilitators

**From Keith Simmons
Class Leader**

Welcome to the OLLI Great Decisions course for 2023. The course will meet on consecutive Tuesdays beginning on March 21 and continuing through April 25.

The Great Decisions course is different from most of the OLLI courses in that it is not intended to be a lecture, and the class size is restricted to encourage robust conversation. The course is also different in that you have homework. By now, you have received the 2023 Great Decisions course book published annually by the Foreign Policy Association. The book contains eight chapters, each dealing with a different foreign policy issue. We will cover five of the eight chapters as more fully discussed below. Each class will deal with a different chapter in the book. I will lead the discussion in each class.

We will not deal with the chapters in the order in which they are presented in the book. The reason for changing the order is that I will be accompanied by a co-facilitator in each class. Each co-facilitator is someone with particular expertise in the subject to be discussed in that class. The rearrangement of order has been done to accommodate their schedules. Each chapter stands on its

own as a discussion topic, so there is no magic to the order in which the chapters are presented in the book. We will not lose anything by taking them out of order.

The 2023 Great Decisions publication does not have a chapter on what might be the preeminent international issue in the past year, the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the resultant war. I thought the Ukrainian crisis was of sufficient importance that we should cover it in the class. Those of you who attended the Great Decisions course in 2019 will remember Brigadier General (Retired) Scott Brower who participated in one of our class discussions that year. I have asked General Brower to be with us for the April 25 class to discuss military tactics and strategy in the Ukrainian war. General Brower and I are still working out the logistics of that class, but he will probably bring with him one or more of his colleagues with direct experience in Ukraine or with Ukrainian troops.

In previous years when the Great Decisions course was offered, it was offered as an eight-week course corresponding to the eight chapters in the Great Decisions publication. This year, the course is being offered as a six-week course because my schedule would only accommodate six weeks. We will cover five chapters in the book in the first five weeks and discuss the Ukrainian war in the sixth week. The chapters that we will not discuss are the chapters, titled Energy Politics, Global Famine and Climate Migration.

I urge you to read the materials for each class in advance of that class. We may not discuss the materials

exactly as presented in the book, so reading the materials and attending class will be the best way to get the full benefit of the course. I also urge you to read the three chapters that we will not discuss in class. Each addresses an issue of vital international importance with broad economic, political and cultural consequences.

Set forth below is the order in which we will examine each of the chapters in the book and the co-facilitators who will be with us in each class, including a short biographical description of each co-facilitator.

**March 21—China and America: Back to the Future—
Thompson Paine**

Thompson Paine is a strategy and operations leader at Stripe, a global financial technology company with offices across five continents. Before Stripe, Thompson led business operations, including policy, privacy and compliance programs, international expansion, and business development at Quizlet, one of the largest online learning platforms in the U.S. In the foreign policy sphere, Thompson served as a political analyst with the U.S. State Department in Beijing, China, from 2006-2008, in addition to stints with the U.S. Trade Representative's Office, Apple, and the international law firm Morrison Foerster on legal and business matters in China. He has co-authored papers for Stanford and the Aspen Strategy Group on US-China tech competition, and has volunteered on policy working groups for three presidential campaigns. Thompson is a Life Member of the Council on Foreign Relations, and a member of the Truman National Security Project. He is proficient in Mandarin Chinese. Thompson has

a B.A. in Political Science and Asian Studies from the University of North Carolina, where he was a Morehead-Cain Scholar. He also earned a J.D. and M.B.A. from Stanford University, where he was Stanford's first exchange student enrolled in Mandarin-language legal coursework at Peking University Law School in Beijing.

March 28—Economic Warfare and U.S. Policy—Thad McBride

Thad McBride is an attorney in the Washington DC office of the Nashville based law firm, Bass, Berry & Sims. His practice centers on compliance with U.S. export regulations (ITAR and EAR), economic sanctions and embargoes, import controls (CBP), and the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act (FCPA). He also advises clients on anti-boycott controls, and assists companies with matters involving the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States (CFIUS). Thad also assists clients in investigations and enforcement actions brought by government agencies, including the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ), the U.S. Treasury Department Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC), the U.S. State Department Directorate of Defense Trade Controls (DDTC), Customs and Border Protection (CBP), the U.S. Commerce Department Bureau of Industry & Security (BIS), and the Securities & Exchange Commission. He holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from Princeton University and a JD from Boston College Law School.

April 4—Iran at a Crossroads—Samar Ali

Samar Ali is the Research Professor of Political Science and Law with a joint appointment to the Vanderbilt University

Department of Political Science and the Vanderbilt Law School. She is also the Co-Chair of the Vanderbilt Project on Unity & American Democracy. Her research initiatives focus on positive compromise through promoting conflict-resolution best practices among people, communities and nations experiencing polarization due to the connection between violence and labeling. Ali joined Vanderbilt's political science and law faculties as a research professor after 14 years of experience in international relations and legal practice. She began her legal career as a law clerk to Judge Gilbert S. Merritt Jr. of the 6th Circuit Court of Appeals and then clerked for Justice Edwin Cameron during his tenure on the Constitutional Court of South Africa. In 2007, she joined Hogan Lovell US in Washington D.C., helping to establish the firm's Middle Eastern practice in the United Arab Emirates. She left the firm in 2010 when she was named a White House Fellow in President Barack Obama's administration. During her fellowship, she worked closely with U.S. Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano on counterterrorism measures, gaining experience with bilateral negotiations on behalf of the U.S. government and later joined former President Jimmy Carter as part of an international delegation observing Egypt's 2012 presidential election. She co-founded and has served as a director of the Lodestone Advisory Group, a boutique consulting firm that specializes in growth strategies through innovation, venture capital, global markets and transformation. She is also president and CEO of Millions of Conversations, a nonprofit organization that aims to unite Americans around common values for a shared future by fostering dialogue among those who hold different opinions, views or beliefs. She is a Young Global Leader with the World Economic Forum, a term member with the Council on Foreign Relations, a Winrock International

board member, and a recipient of the White House Fellows IMPACT Award. She currently serves as an adviser to the Aspen Institute's initiative, "Who Is Us: A Project on American Identity," and was recently appointed as a New Pluralist Fellow. She holds a Bachelor of Arts degree and JD from Vanderbilt University.

April 11—War Crimes: What are they? How can they be prosecuted?—Houston Goddard

Houston Goddard spent six years working for the United Nations in various international criminal tribunals. He investigated Khmer Rouge crimes in Cambodia and then moved to The Hague, where he assisted judges conducting the trials of Ratko Mladic (the head of the Bosnian-Serb military, who was convicted of genocide for his role in the Srebrenica massacre) and of the Hezbollah members charged with assassinating Lebanese prime minister Rafik Hariri. Houston now works as a federal public defender, representing individuals on death row. He is a Nashville native. He attended University School of Nashville where he graduated in 1998. He holds a Bachelor of Arts in History from Princeton University and a J.D. from New York University. He also holds a Master's in International Peace & Security from King's College London Department of War Studies.

April 18—Political Trends in Latin America—Chris King

Since 2011, Chris King has been the Executive Director of Amistad Mission, a Nashville-based nonprofit organization that supports children in Cochabamba, Bolivia who have experienced abuse or abandonment. After his graduation from

Middlebury College, Chris lived in Bolivia for two years. He travels to Bolivia three times each year and has followed the ascension and decline of Bolivia's first indigenous president as reflective of the pink tide in Latin America. He is interested in the economic strategies and political ideologies of Bolivia that affect bilateral relations with the U.S. and with China, an increasingly prominent energy investor in South America. He has watched Bolivia's adoption of socialist policies reduce extreme poverty, while stifling licit business growth, in one of the poorest South American countries. Chris is a Nashville native and graduate of Hume Fogg Academic Magnet School. He holds a Bachelor of Arts degree Summa Cum Laude in psychology and Spanish from Middlebury College where he was a member of Phi Beta Kappa.

April 25— Ukraine War--Brigadier General (Retired) Scott E. Brower

Brigadier General (Retired) Scott E. Brower graduated from the United States Military Academy in 1989 and was commissioned a 2nd Lieutenant in the Air Defense Artillery. Following his initial assignment, General Brower served the remainder of his military career in the Army Special Forces community. He commanded at the detachment, company, battalion and group levels, with operational commands culminating with country-wide responsibility for special operations across Iraq in 2010-2011. His combat service includes Desert Storm, the initial invasions of both Afghanistan and Iraq, with three additional tours to Iraq, one to Afghanistan and another deployment to Islamabad, Pakistan. In General Brower's final assignment at Fort Campbell, KY, which culminated 12 years of service at this installation, he served as the Acting Senior

Commander for the 101st Airborne Division and Fort Campbell. Following retirement from the US Army, General Brower served as the Military Advisor in Residence at Austin Peay State University, helping to serve over 2,800 Military Affiliated Students. Starting in March of 2020, he served as the Chief of Staff for Governor Lee's Unified Command Group, which was responsible for coordination of all state-level efforts tied to the COVID-19 pandemic response across the state of Tennessee. General Brower now serves as the Director of the Bass Military Scholars Program at Vanderbilt University, which provides scholarships to honorably discharged military service members seeking advanced degrees in Law, Nursing, Medicine, Business, and Education with the charter for the scholars to connect to the Vanderbilt community and share the values and principles learned in service to our nation.