

# Charisma



International Conference  
Thursday, June 25 – Saturday, June 27, 2026

EINSTEIN  
FORUM

Conception  
Susan Neiman (Potsdam)

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Charisma, like pornography, is easier to recognize than define. Social scientists have not improved on Max Weber's attempt, which is so vague as to border on tautology. Charisma is not a matter of intelligence (though intelligence helps) or competence (which often doesn't). It's essentially erotic, but it need not involve sex. Its mystery led the early Greeks, who first named it, to view it as a gift of the gods: something that cannot be cultivated but might be conferred by grace. Attempts to describe it often rely on metaphors of light: charismatic people are dazzling, or sparkling, or fiery. In an attempt to get beyond social science or metaphor, leading international thinkers will discuss historical, political, religious, literary, and artistic dimensions of this crucial but elusive concept.

**Avrum Burg** (Jerusalem)

*Israel Learned from the Germans, the Church Learned from Judaism: Two Charismas of Collectives*

This talk explores Israel as a case study in two forms of charisma: the charisma of the powerless and the charisma of sovereign power. The argument is that Jewish history once produced a charisma rooted in vulnerability, intellectual intensity, and moral imagination, while statehood transformed charisma into something increasingly tied to force and domination. Part reflection, part political meditation, the lecture asks what happens when a people shaped by oppression begins to adopt the symbolic language and instincts of its own oppressors.

*Avrum Burg* is an Israeli author and politician. He was advisor to prime minister Shimon Peres, a member of the Knesset and Speaker of the Knesset from 1999 to 2003, and Chairman of the Jewish Agency and the World Zionist Organization. Since retiring from politics he has become an international bestselling author. In 2007, Burg published a book entitled *The Holocaust is Over: We Must Rise From Its Ashes* in which he argued that Israeli society has become violent as a consequence of the continuing trauma over the Holocaust. In 2021, Burg appealed to the Israeli Supreme Court to have the Interior Ministry erase from its records that his nationality is Jewish, in response to the 2018 Jewish Nation State Law which, in his view, codified “built in discrimination”.

**Michel Chaouli** (Bloomington)

*Poetic Charisma*

Charisma is an idea that elevates rulers and diminishes the ruled. It erodes equality and props up hierarchy, and it does so by taking recourse to a noumenal entity that seems designed to elude the grasp of analysis and comprehension, perhaps even of description. No surprise that it is repugnant to those who champion forms of social life founded on equality and the accountability of the powerful. But this concept can be revelatory if it is transposed from persons to things and from the political realm to the poetic. Apart from whatever utility it may have in the sphere of politics, charisma, specifically in the articulation given by Max Weber, turns out to disclose key features of poetic power.

*Michel Chaouli* teaches in the Department of Germanic Studies at Indiana University in Bloomington and directs the Center for Theoretical Inquiry in the Humanities, which he helped found. He has been named an Einstein Visiting Fellow at the Friedrich Schlegel School of Literary Studies, Freie Universität Berlin, to direct a research project called “The Philological Laboratory: Models of Criticism Beyond Critique” from 2018 to 2020. His intellectual interests focus on aesthetic theory, literature and philosophy, and ways of communicating intensive encounters with art, usually around texts from the German and European tradition beginning in the eighteenth century. Recent publications: *Thinking With Kant’s Critique of Judgment* (2017); *Poetic Critique: Encounters with Art and Literature* (Co-ed., 2021); *Something Speaks to Me: Where Criticism begins* (2024).

**Lorraine Daston** (Berlin)  
*Charisma in the Classroom*

Almost everyone has felt it; no one can explain it, much less feign it. But where explanation falters, description steps up. What does this strange enchantment of the classroom look like, feel like? Is everyone susceptible to its spell—and if not, why not? Like physical magnetism, does it only work over short distances, fading when translated into the pallid media of Zoom and YouTube? In a moment when students are riveted by their screens, can classroom attention be revived by the real presence of charisma in the classroom?

**Lorraine Daston** is Director Emerita of the Max Planck Institute for the History of Science in Berlin and a Regular Visiting Professor at the Committee on Social Thought at the University of Chicago. She also serves as member of the Board of Trustees of the Einstein Forum. She has written on a wide range of topics in the history of science, including statistics and probability, wonder and curiosity, the moral authority of nature and anthropomorphism, evidence, objectivity, and scientific imagery. Recent publications include *Against Nature* (2019); *Rules: A Short History of What We Live By* (2022); and *Rivals: How Scientists Learned to Cooperate* (2023).

**Irina Dumitrescu** (Bonn)  
*Charisma and Confession*

What makes a person endlessly compelling, an enigma others will spend centuries trying to figure out? The Middle Ages had an answer to this question. Confession was an intimate revelation, sometimes recorded and made public. It promised truth and intimacy, a glimpse into another's soul, even as it threatened to seduce and deceive. The right kind of confession could make a saint; the wrong one could lead to the stake. The tension between radical honesty and calibrated performance is what has made confession a charisma machine over the ages, from Augustine of Hippo and Joan of Arc to Fleabag and the reality show confessional booth.

*Irina Dumitrescu* is a writer, literary critic, and Professor of English Medieval Studies at the University of Bonn. She studied at the University of Toronto, Columbia, and Yale, where she received the English department's James A. Veech Prize for best dissertation. Before coming to Bonn she was an assistant professor at Southern Methodist University, and an Alexander von Humboldt postdoctoral fellow at the Freie Universität Berlin. She is the author of *The Experience of Education in Anglo-Saxon Literature* (2018), and the editor of *Rumba Under Fire: The Arts of Survival from West Point to Delhi* (2016). Her collaborative editorial work includes *Everyday Arts: Craft, Voice, Performance*, a special issue of *Medieval Feminist Forum* (57.1, 2021), and *In Brief*, a special issue of *New Literary History* (50.3, 2019) as well as three collections of essays focusing on early English poetics and medieval women and power.

**J Henry Fair** (New York)

*Picturing Freedom: Harriet Tubman and the Combahee River Raid*

It would be hard to imagine a more charismatic person than Harriet Tubman, or, strangely, one more contentious. Slight in stature, plagued with lifelong seizures from a blow to the head by an enslaver, Tubman was a giant individual. After freeing herself from slavery, she stole back into the land of bondage to free many more. Moving to the north, she became a celebrity and an inspiration to abolitionists, before returning to the south as a spy. There she infiltrated the rice plantations and helped to organize the most successful slave rebellion in USA history. And it is said she could converse with the animals...

*J Henry Fair* is a photographer and environmental activist. He is best known for his striking aerial photographs of the environment and his photo book *Industrial Scars: The Hidden Costs of Consumption* (2016). He studied journalism at Fordham University and has been published in internationally renowned newspapers and magazines (including *The New York Times*, *National Geographic*, *Die Zeit*, *The Guardian*, *Le Figaro*), and has appeared on television programs such as Arte, TTT, CBC News, and *The Today Show*. His work has been featured in numerous solo exhibitions worldwide. In 2012, J Henry Fair received the Earth Through a Lens Award and was shortlisted for the Sony World Photography Awards. In 2019, he was named Environmental Photographer of the Year.

**Konstanty Gebert** (Warsaw)  
*Revolutionary Charisma*

“Each of you,” says Dostoevsky’s Pyotr Verkhovensky to his fellow conspirators, “owes a higher accounting. You are called to renew the cause. ... your whole step is towards getting everything destroyed: both the state and its morality. We alone will remain, having destined ourselves beforehand to assume power.” The cynicism of this declaration alone should have shocked the listeners and provoked their revulsion. Instead his successful control of his secret cell and the continued allegiance of its members are probably the most vivid literary depiction of the destructive power of revolutionary charisma. And yet revolutionary charisma need not necessarily be associated with appeals for violence. Indeed, some of the most compelling charismatic figures, from Gandhi through Mandela to Wałęsa inspired as much loyalty and enthusiasm by advocating non-violence. I will try to understand what makes charisma work by suggesting that violent charisma is often exercised by leaders who are idols, while the non-violent kind is the domain of leaders who are role models. I will conclude with observations on what happens to charisma after victory—and after defeat.

*Konstanty Gebert* is an author, journalist, lecturer, and political activist based in Poland. He was a prominent figure in the democratic opposition in the 1970s and 1980s and cofounder of the unofficial Jewish Flying University (1979), and the Polish Council of Christians and Jews (1980). He published articles for various underground publications under the pseudonym Dawid Warszawski and served as a war correspondent in Bosnia for *Gazeta Wyborcza*. Gebert is the founder of *Midrasz*, the first Polish-language Jewish periodical in postcommunist Poland, and has published twelve books, most recently the prize-winning *Final Solutions: The Work of Genocide* (2022), which compares mass murder in many countries, including Bosnia, Armenia, Namibia, Rwanda, as well as the Holocaust. He is a member of the Advisory Board of the Einstein Forum.

**Claire Messud** (Cambridge, Mass.), **Fintan O'Toole** (Dublin), and **James Wood** (Cambridge, Mass.)

*Literary Charisma: A Conversation*

What makes a literary figure charismatic? What kinds of words convey charisma, and how much do we project? Why are we drawn to antiheroes—are we attracted by those whose characters we often condemn, and why? Does the charisma of a particular author affect our reading of their texts (think of Hemingway)? How does the absolutely ordinary become so interesting that it may fill six volumes and gain worldwide readers (think of Knausgaard, and other forms of autofiction)? Does charisma work differently in children's literature than in adult fiction? Can one detect charisma in a figure who hasn't lived long enough for their lives to be intriguing (think of Ferrante, Messud)? Is Kehlmann's Tyll charismatic? Or is charisma an appropriate category for literature at all?

*Claire Messud* is the author of numerous novels including *When the World Was Steady* (1995), *The Last Life* (1999), *The Woman Upstairs* (2013), and *The Emperor's Children* (2006), which won the Massachusetts Book Award in 2007. Her latest novels are *The Burning Girl* (2017) and *This Strange Eventful History*, which was longlisted for the Booker Prize 2024. Messud received a Guggenheim Fellowship, a Radcliffe Fellowship, the Strauss Living Award granted through the American Academy of Arts and Letters. From 2015 to 2025 she was professor of creative writing at Harvard University; Messud is currently a senior lecturer in English at Yale.

**Fintan O'Toole**, one of Ireland's leading public intellectuals, is a columnist for *The Irish Times* and Leonard L. Milberg '53 visiting lecturer in Irish Letters at Princeton. He also contributes to *The New York Review of Books*, *The New Yorker*, *Granta*, *The Guardian*, *The Observer*, and other international publications. His books on theater include works on William Shakespeare, George Bernard Shaw, Richard Brinsley Sheridan, and Thomas Murphy. His books on politics include the bestsellers *We Don't Know Ourselves: A Personal History of Modern Ireland* (2021), and *Heroic Failure: Brexit and the Politics of Pain* (2018). In 2023, Fintan O'Toole was named an International Honorary Member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. He also serves as member of the Advisory Board of the Einstein Forum.

**James Wood** has been a staff writer and book critic at *The New Yorker* since 2007 and is Professor of the Practice of Literary Criticism at Harvard University. He was the chief literary critic at *The Guardian*, in London, from 1992 to 1995, and a senior editor at *The New Republic* from 1995 to 2007. He also serves as member of the Advisory Board of the Einstein Forum. His critical essays have been collected in three volumes, *The Broken Estate: Essays on Literature and Belief* (1999), *The Irresponsible Self: On Laughter and the Novel* (2004), which was a finalist for the National Book Critics Circle Award, and *The Fun Stuff, and Other Essays* (2012). He has written a study of technique in the novel, *How Fiction Works* (2008), and two novels, *The Book Against God* (2003), and *Upstate* (2018).

**Glenn Most** (Chicago/Pisa)  
*Charisma, Charis, Chairō, Charizō*  
*Remarks on a Greek Etymology*

The modern term ‘charisma’ was popularized by Max Weber and is used above all in political thought, sociology, and psychology. Its origins are in ancient Greek; excavating and examining them can cast some illuminating light on continuities and differences between the ancient world and the modern ones.

**Glenn Most** was until 2020 Professor of Greek Philology at the Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa, and remains a regular Visiting Professor on the Committee on Social Thought at the University of Chicago, and an External Scientific Member of the Max Planck Institute for the History of Science in Berlin. Most also serves as member of the Advisory Board of the Einstein Forum. He has published books on Classics, on ancient philosophy, on the history and methodology of Classical studies, on comparative literature, cultural studies, and the history of religion, on literary theory and on the history of art, and has published numerous articles, reviews, and translations in these fields as well as in modern philosophy and literature. He is currently working on various projects involving both ancient Greek philology and the comparison of philological practices in different periods and cultures throughout the world.

**Susan Neiman** (Potsdam)

*Albert Einstein's Charisma: Attempting a Love Letter*

By 1921, Albert Einstein was not only the most famous intellectual in the world; when he landed in the U.S. for the first time, thousands of people met his ship with a ticker tape parade. The mayor of New York gave him the key to the city; President Warren G. Harding invited him to the White House. It went on and on and on, in a sort of mass hysteria that was later compared to the reception of the Beatles, an adoration of his person which cannot be explained by his greatest achievement, the theory of general relativity—since very few people understand it. Later descriptions, including by most of his many admiring biographers portray him as a sad fool, whose interest in scanning the cosmos left him unable to deal with the world at his feet. Yet if that was the case, what was it about him that drew thousands of admirers, from Belgian queens to Princeton trash collectors? This talk will attempt to understand it, by a person who initially was impervious to Einstein's charisma.

**Susan Neiman** has been director of the Einstein Forum since 2000, after working as a professor of philosophy at Yale University and Tel Aviv University. She is the author of ten books including *The Unity of Reason* (1994), *Evil in Modern Thought* (2002), *Moral Clarity* (2008), *Why Grow Up?* (2014), *Learning from the Germans* (2019), *Left is not Woke* (2023), and *Call it Evil: Understanding the Trump Era* (2026). Her essays have appeared in *The New York Times*, *The New York Review of Books*, *The Guardian*, *Die Zeit*, *Der Spiegel*, and other publications.

**Jed Perl** (New York)

*Cultural Charisma: True and False*

In the arts—whether literary, visual, musical, or theatrical—charisma is an exuberance or exhilaration, a sense that a work of art or an artist has taken a large or original place in the world, so large and original that ordinary measurements of good, very good, even great prove inadequate. Cultural charisma has its origins in ancient ideas about inspiration. But in the arts inspiration must be cultivated, developed. The real cultural charisma is grounded in craft—in the basics of an art form. In our media saturated world there's also a false cultural charisma, untethered from craft—a charisma that suggests Susan Sontag's definition of camp as "the spirit of extravagance." In thinking about the real and false cultural charisma I'll touch on the ideas of Giorgio Vasari, Thomas Carlyle, and Henry James, and look at creative spirits including Katherine Anne Porter, George Balanchine, Suzanne Farrell, Sean Connery, and Andy Warhol.

**Jed Perl** is a regular contributor to *The New York Review of Books*. His books include *New Art City* (2005), *Antoine's Alphabet* (2008), *Magicians and Charlatans* (2012), *Paris Without End* (2014), a two-volume biography of Alexander Calder (2017/2020), and, most recently, *Authority and Freedom: A Defense of the Arts* (2022). Jed Perl was a contributing editor at *Vogue* for a decade and the art critic at *The New Republic* for twenty years.

**Albie Sachs** (Cape Town)

*The Making, Unmaking, and Re-Making of Nelson Mandela*

Perhaps no figure of the 20th century retains such an aura as Nelson Mandela, who is often credited with shepherding the transition from apartheid to a democratic South Africa through the force of his own charisma. But what did it consist of? How can someone who was jailed and silenced for 27 years create charisma? And how did the very characteristics that established his legend world-wide lead to condemnation by a new young generation in South Africa? Justice Albie Sachs, who worked closely with Nelson Mandela during the years of transition, will reflect.

*Albie Sachs* is a South African lawyer, activist, and writer. He was appointed a judge in first Constitutional Court of South Africa, and became an internationally recognized common law judge. After several detentions in the late 1960s on account of his activist work against Apartheid, Sachs was forced to leave South Africa. He continued his ANC work abroad, including first in England and then in Mozambique, where he survived an assassination attempt in 1988. Sachs was able to return to South Africa in 1990, where he was subsequently closely involved in the creation of the post-apartheid 1996 constitution. Sachs has written several award-winning books on justice in South Africa and his experiences as an activist judge—e.g., *Soft Vengeance of a Freedom Fighter* (2009); *Strange Alchemy of Life and Law* (1990)—and has been recognized for his contributions to peace and justice, including, e.g., the Reconciliation Award (Institute for Justice and Reconciliation); the Legion of Honour (France); Order of the Southern Cross (Brazil). He also serves as member of the Advisory Board of the Einstein Forum.

**Volker Schlöndorff** (Berlin)

in conversation with **Daniel Kehlmann** (Berlin/New York)

*Charisma in Film: Found or Created?*

Can a director sense an actor's magnetism before the camera rolls, or does it only appear in the work? Why is presence in a room so often different from presence on screen? How much of directing is imposing a vision, and how much is making others want to follow? Is the quality that makes a performer compelling related to what makes a demagogue compelling? Did the New German Cinema demand charisma of its directors, or is that a myth built in hindsight? And after sixty years behind the lens, does the camera discover charisma, or create it?

**Daniel Kehlmann** is a novelist, playwright and essayist, whose novels have become the most successful in the postwar German world. His work has been translated into more than 40 languages. He has been awarded the Candide Prize, the Per Olov Enquist Prize, the Thomas Mann Prize, and the Friedrich Hölderlin Prize, and two of his novels were shortlisted for the International Booker Prize (*Tyll*, 2020, and *The Director*, 2024) He is a member of the German Academy for Language and Literature and the Advisory Board of the Einstein Forum.

**Volker Schlöndorff** is a German film director, screenwriter, and producer best known for his film adaptations of literary works. In 1980, his feature film *Die Blechtrommel*, based on Günter Grass' famous postwar novel, won the Oscar for Best Foreign Language Film in 1979. Schlöndorff has been a member of the Academy of Arts in Berlin since 1993. He is also a founding member of the Friends of the Murnau Foundation, and his works have been honored with numerous awards. Schlöndorff's latest film *Heimsuchung*, based on the novel of the same name by Jenny Erpenbeck, premiered at the Cannes Film Festival in 2026.

**Julia Sonnevend** (New York)

*Beyond Charisma: The Politics of Charm*

Politics is a site of performance, and contemporary politicians increasingly perform ordinariness: the fantasy of being someone we might like to have a beer with. They succeed not through the elevated rhetoric traditionally associated with charisma (“ask not what your country can do for you”), but through something more intimate, affective, and relatable. I call this mediated enchantment “charm”. Circulating across mass and social media platforms, charm creates the appearance of authenticity and proximity while binding leaders to political tribes. I argue that charm is becoming a defining feature of contemporary political life, as political values are increasingly embodied in mediated personalities rather than institutions or ideologies. These magnetic figures may rise and fade with extraordinary speed, but without understanding the political force of charm, we cannot fully grasp the fragility of the present moment.

*Julia Sonnevend* is Associate Professor of Sociology and Communications at The New School and the author of *Stories Without Borders: The Berlin Wall and the Making of a Global Iconic Event* (2016) and *Charm: How Magnetic Personalities Shape Global Politics* (2024).

**Mingming Wang** (Beijing)  
*Translating Charisma*

First, I will reflect on my study of Chinese grassroots charisma. Second I will outline Max Weber's perspective of charisma in his sociology of religion and study of the religion of China, which I have taken as a kind of cultural translation. Finally I will present a short overview of Chinese reception of Weber's sociology, and his idea of charisma.

*Mingming Wang* is professor and founding chair of anthropology at Beijing University. He has published numerous historical and anthropological works in Chinese, including *Social Anthropology and Sinology* (1997), *The Supra-Societal Systems* (2015), and *The City of Zaytun* (2019). His English writings include *The West as the Other* (2014) and *For Heaven-human Conviviality* (2023). In March 2017, he delivered the Radcliffe-Brown Memorial Lecture in Social Anthropology in which he spoke about his approach to comparative and relational cosmologies.

**Sean Wilentz** (Princeton)

*Bob Dylan and the Charisma of Refusal*

Bob Dylan inverts standard categories of charisma, except in being charismatic. His followers look to him as a beacon, invest in him great spiritual authority above and beyond his art, a classic charismatic figure. But Dylan, the quintessential masked man, refuses that authority—which only adds to his charisma. So, what do we make of this charisma of refusal?

*Sean Wilentz* is a historian of American politics and society from the Revolution to the present, with extensive publications in cultural history, especially about the twentieth century, including folk and popular music, and American art. He received his PhD in history from Yale University (1980) after earning bachelor's degrees from Columbia University (1972) and Balliol College, Oxford University (1974). A member of the editorial boards of *Dissent* and *Democracy*, Wilentz has written over three hundred articles, reviews, and op-ed pieces for publications including the *New York Times*, *Los Angeles Times*, *New York Review of Books*, *London Review of Books*, *The Nation*, *Le Monde*, and *Salon*. His writings on music have earned him two Grammy nominations and two Deems Taylor-ASCAP awards. Wilentz is also the historian for Bob Dylan's official website, [www.bobdylan.com](http://www.bobdylan.com).

**Molly Worthen** (Chapel Hill)

*The Rise of Charisma, the Fall of Experts,  
and the Future of Politics*

What is charisma? In the context of politics, sometimes we use the word as a synonym for charm; in other cases, it can imply immoral manipulation. Just as often, charisma is a hazy word that we punt to when, frankly, we don't understand a leader's appeal at all. A survey of the dynamics between leaders and followers across American history helps cut through the confusion and explain today's crisis of institutional authority. A charismatic leader is not necessarily charming or good-looking, but is always a particular kind of storyteller. Charisma in secular politics remains more connected to charisma in the original New Testament sense than we might think—and theological concepts like transcendence and idolatry are more relevant than ever.

**Molly Worthen** is a professor of history at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and a freelance journalist. She received her BA and PhD from Yale University. Her research focuses on North American religious and intellectual history. Her most recent book, *Spellbound* (2025), is a history of charisma as both a religious and a political concept from the Puritans to the Trump era. She also created a course for Audible, *Charismatic Leaders Who Remade America*. Worthen lectures widely on religion and politics and teaches courses on North American religious and intellectual culture, global Christianity, and the history of ideas. She writes about religion, politics, and higher education for the *New York Times* and has also contributed to the *Atlantic*, *The New Yorker*, *Slate*, and other publications.

## Exhibition

**J Henry Fair** (New York)

*Picturing Freedom: Harriet Tubman and the Combahee River Raid*

*Einstein Forum, April 14 – June 28, 2026*

Prior to the Civil War, the economy of the southern USA states was dominated by the industrial agriculture of cotton and rice, which depended on the institution of slavery. The few families that controlled this hierarchy benefitted tremendously, becoming some of the wealthiest people in the world, enabling them to dictate the social structure of their societies. Fearing the dilution of their political power as new states joined the union, this cabal decided the southern states should secede and hubristically attacked the northern army at Fort Sumter in Charleston. In response, the North moved to blockade southern trade with Europe through Charleston and Savannah and took Beaufort, South Carolina as a supply port which was in the middle of the most profitable rice growing areas.

Harriet Tubman, who had liberated herself from slavery, was already an American hero from her work with the Underground Railroad. Tubman went to Beaufort to gather intelligence from the enslaved people freed by the Northern Army invasion, and discovered that the rice plantations were still operating on the next river system, The Combahee River. Based on her spying, The North planned a bold nighttime raid up this shallow, winding river with three converted paddle-wheel steamboats. Tubman had recruited spies and scouts and the essential river guides from the plantations, who guided the Northern generals and 150 freshly trained, newly liberated black soldiers up the moonlit river. They surprised the Confederate defenders and attacked the rice plantations there, freeing over 750 enslaved people, making it one of the most successful slave rebellions in the world. Those rice plantations, with their man-made, freshwater wetlands, have become



*J Henry Fair: Old Combahee Island, wetlands and setting sun, Wiggins, South Carolina*

priceless habitat for species migrating north to escape the rising temperatures of the climate crisis. As wetlands in Florida have been drained and filled, these wetlands have become essential stopovers for migratory birds and other species.

Harriet Tubman, an American hero, is both an inspiration for many Americans and a person of controversy, stuck in the middle of the legacy of racism. Efforts to have her face on the \$20 bill have been stalled for many years. This series of pictures and videos tells this story through the words of some of the descendants of the people freed in the raid, and explores the habitat remaining after the disappearance of the rice culture.

## Program

### Thursday, June 25

**6:15 pm**

Susan Neiman (Potsdam)  
*Albert Einstein's Charisma:  
Attempting a Love Letter*

**7:30 pm**

Albie Sachs (Cape Town)  
*The Making, Unmaking,  
and Re-Making of Nelson Mandela*

### Friday, June 26

**10:00 am**

Molly Worthen (Chapel Hill)  
*The Rise of Charisma, the Fall of  
Experts, and the Future of Politics*

**11:00 am**

Julia Sonnevend (New York)  
*Beyond Charisma  
The Politics of Charm*

**12:30 pm**

Glenn Most (Chicago/Pisa)  
*Charisma, Charis, Chairō, Charizō:  
Remarks on a Greek Etymology*

**3:00 pm**

Konstanty Gebert (Warsaw)  
*Revolutionary Charisma*

**4:00 pm**

Mingming Wang (Beijing)  
*Translating Charisma*

**5:30 pm**

Irina Dumitrescu (Bonn)  
*Charisma and Confession*

**6:30 pm**

Lorraine Daston (Berlin)  
*Charisma in the Classroom*

### Saturday, June 27

**10:00 am**

Avrum Burg (Jerusalem)  
*Israel Learned from the Germans,  
the Church Learned from Judaism  
Two Charismas of Collectives*

**11:30 am**

Michel Chaouli (Bloomington)  
*Poetic Charisma*

**12:30 pm**

Jed Perl (New York)  
*Cultural Charisma: True and False*

**3:00 pm**

Claire Messud (Cambridge,  
Mass.), Fintan O'Toole  
(Dublin), James Wood  
(Cambridge, Mass.)  
*Literary Charisma: A Conversation*

**4:00 pm**

Volker Schlöndorff (Berlin) in  
conversation with Daniel  
Kehlmann (Berlin/New York)  
*Charisma in Film: Found or  
Created?*

**5:30 pm**

J Henry Fair (New York)  
*Picturing Freedom: Harriet Tubman  
and the Combahee River Raid*

**6:30 pm**

Sean Wilentz (Princeton)  
*Bob Dylan and the Charisma of Refusal*