Vladimir Putin, President of the Russian Federation, is by many accounts the world’s most powerful political leader. How did he achieve this status? What have been his chief goals, values and operating principles? What accounts for his vast popularity in Russia, even at a time of military engagement and economic recession? A product of Leningrad’s “mean streets”, the young Putin sought glory in the KGB, and after the demise of the Soviet Union - a collapse he rues to this day - moved into the heights of power. We will explore Vladimir Putin’s life path, political maneuvers, ideas about Russia’s identity and place in the world, and his image as the epitome of potent masculinity. Assignments will include biographical and autobiographical writings, speeches, videos and a plethora of images and caricatures of this enigmatic and forceful leader.

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