



World Affairs Council  
of Western Michigan

## Great Decisions Global Discussions

### January 29th "Are Dictators Getting Smarter?"

**William Dobson**, Chief International Editor, International Desk, NPR

Democracy has fallen on tough times. Authoritarian regimes in Russia, China, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and elsewhere are on the march, while the West seems to be taking a back seat. Are the world's dictators getting more sophisticated in their repression? How do the world's despots manipulate media to serve their own ends? In the age of Twitter and smart phones, can democracy keep up?

Mr. Dobson is the Chief International Editor of NPR's International Desk. He manages a team of correspondents across the globe committed to delivering powerful stories and authoritative reporting on international politics, economics, and culture. Prior to joining NPR, Dobson was Slate magazine's Washington Bureau Chief. He led the magazine's award-winning coverage of the 2012 U.S. presidential election.

Previously, he served as the managing editor of Foreign Policy, overseeing the editorial planning of its award-winning magazine, Web site, and nine foreign editions. During his tenure, Foreign Policy was nominated for the National Magazine Award five years in a row, winning the top honor twice.

Dobson is the author of [\*The Dictator's Learning Curve: Inside the Global Battle for Democracy\*](#), which examines the struggle between authoritarian regimes and the people who challenge them. It was selected as one of the "best books of 2012" by Foreign Affairs, the Atlantic, The Telegraph, and Prospect.

Dobson has published widely on international politics. His articles and essays have appeared in the New York Times, Washington Post, Financial Times, Wall Street Journal, Boston Globe, Foreign Policy, The New Republic, Newsweek, and elsewhere. He has provided commentary and analysis on international politics for ABC, CNN, CBS, and MSNBC.

Dobson holds a law degree from Harvard Law School and a Masters degree in East Asian Studies from Harvard University. He received his bachelor's degree, summa cum laude, from Middlebury College.

Two options to attend:

**12-1 p.m.:** Recital Hall in the Covenant Fine Arts Center at Calvin College

**6-7:15 PM:** Aquinas College Performing Arts Center

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