2026 Lionel Gelber Prize awarded to Francis Gavin for Thinking Historically: A Guide to Statecraft and Strategy

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TORONTO, March 30, 2026 /PRNewswire/ â?? Judith Gelber, Chair of the Lionel Gelber Prize Board, announced today that the winner of the 2026 Lionel Gelber Prize is Thinking Historically: A Guide to Statecraft and Strategy by Francis J. Gavin, published by Yale University Press. Chosen by a jury of international journalists, practitioners and scholars, the Lionel Gelber Prize is awarded annually to the best book on international affairs published in English. The Prize is presented by the University of Torontoâ??s Munk School of Global Affairs & Public Policy. The winner will receive $50,000.

â??Thinking Historically is a book for our times. In the midst of escalating, interconnected crises that are challenging deeply embedded assumptions and creating new levels of uncertainty, Gavin shows how thinking historically helps us see some of what we otherwise would miss,â?• said Janice Gross Stein, the Chair of the Gelber Jury.

The winning title was selected from a shortlist of books which included King of Kings: The Iranian Revolution: A Story of Hubris, Delusion, and Catastrophic Miscalculation by Scott Anderson (Signal/McClelland & Stewart); Capitalism: A Global Historyby Sven Beckert (Penguin Press); House of Huawei: The Secret History of Chinaâ??s Most Powerful Company by Eva Dou (Portfolio); How Progress Ends: Technology, Innovation and the Fate of Nations by Carl Benedikt Frey (Princeton University Press).

The 2026 Lionel Gelber Prize was chosen by Prof. Janice Gross Stein (Jury Chair), Prof. John Bew (London), Prof. Sergey Radchenko (Cardiff), James Steinberg (Washington), and Prof. Nina Srinivasan Rathbun (Toronto).

The Winner

Thinking Historically: A Guide to Statecraft and Strategy by Francis J. Gavin (Yale University Press)

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Jury Comment: Francis Gavin has written a profound work of philosophy of history that is at the same time eminently readable. He writes not about history but rather about historical sensibility, a way of understanding and thinking about the world with all its complexities and uncertainties. Historical sensibility creates discomfort with linear reasoning and single causes. It embraces complexity, multiple chains that intersect and connect, and a story that changes with the perspective of time. In one elegant chapter after another, Gavin walks the reader through these complexities and leaves us less sure, more empathic, and wiser. Thinking Historically is a more important book than E.H. Carrâ??s Twenty Years Crisis in helping us understand the crises of our times.

The Event

The Lionel Gelber Prize ceremony and lecture will take place at 12 p.m. ET on Wednesday, April 15, 2026.

The Lionel Gelber Prize was founded in 1989 by Canadian diplomat Lionel Gelber. A cash prize of $50,000 CAD is awarded to the winner. The award is presented annually by the Lionel Gelber Prize Board and the Munk School of Global Affairs & Public Policy at the University of Toronto.

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To register online, visit gelber.munkschool.utoronto.ca

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Data di creazione
Marzo 30, 2026

Autore
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