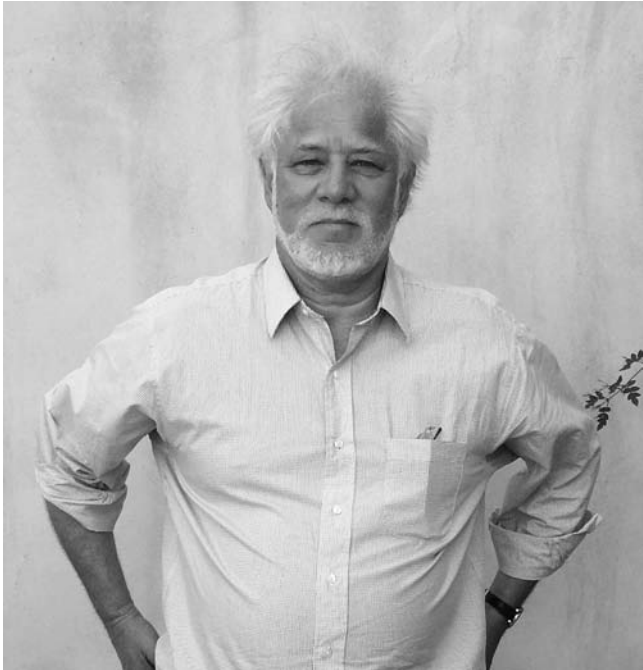




Friday, February 13, 2015, 8pm  
Memorial Stadium University Club

## Berkeley Talks

### Michael Ondaatje



Linda Spalding

**In Conversation with Chancellor Nicholas B. Dirks**

*Cal Performances' 2014–2015 season is sponsored by Wells Fargo.*

**B**ERKELEY TALKS is a new series of conversations that bring together international thought leaders, public scholars, creators, and innovators to examine the distinctive issues of our time. These luminaries will engage in dialogue at the sometimes surprising nexus between their area of expertise and the University's core mission, celebrating the Chancellor's vision of a vibrant, engaged, and forward-looking campus culture.

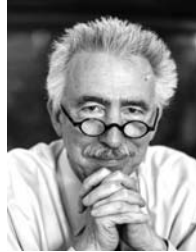
Michael Ondaatje is one of the world's foremost writers—his artistry and aesthetic have influenced an entire generation of writers and readers. Although best known for his novels, Mr. Ondaatje's work also encompasses poetry, memoir, and film, and reveals a passion for defying conventional form. His transcendent novel *The English Patient* explores the stories of people history fails to reveal by intersecting four diverse lives at the end of World War II. This bestselling novel was later made into an Academy Award-winning film.

Mr. Ondaatje himself is an interesting intersection of cultures. Born in Sri Lanka, the former Ceylon, of Indian-Dutch ancestry, he went to school in England and then moved to Canada. He is now a Canadian citizen. From the memoir of his childhood, *Running in the Family*, to his Governor-General's Award-winning book of poetry, *There's a Trick with a Knife I'm Learning to Do*, to his classic novel, *The English Patient*, Mr. Ondaatje casts a spell over his readers. And having won the British Commonwealth's highest honor, the Booker Prize, he has taken his rightful place as a contemporary literary treasure.

He is the author of four collections of poetry, including *The Cinnamon Peeler* and, most recently, *Handwriting*. His works of fiction include *In the Skin of a Lion*, *The English Patient*, *Anil's Ghost*, *Divisadero*, and *The Cat's Table*. Mr. Ondaatje's work of nonfiction is *The Conversations: Walter Murch and the Art of Editing Film*, which unites his love of literature and passion for the art of filmmaking.

Mr. Ondaatje has garnered several literary

prizes, including the Booker Prize for Fiction, the Irish Times International Prize for Fiction, the Kiriyama Pacific Rim Book Prize, the Prix Médicis, the Governor General's Award, and the Giller Prize.



**Nicholas B. Dirks** became the tenth chancellor of the University of California, Berkeley, on June 1, 2013. An internationally renowned historian and anthropologist, he is a leader in higher education and well-known for his commitment to and advocacy for accessible, high-quality undergraduate education in the liberal arts and sciences, to the globalization of the university, and to innovation across the disciplines as well as in applied and basic fields.

Before coming to Berkeley, he was the executive vice president for the arts and sciences and dean of the faculty at Columbia University, where, in addition to his work on behalf of undergraduate programs, he improved and diversified the faculty, putting special emphasis on interdisciplinary and international initiatives. The Franz Boas Professor of Anthropology and History, Chancellor Dirks joined Columbia in 1997 as chair of the anthropology department. Prior to his appointment at Columbia, he was a professor of history and anthropology at the University of Michigan for ten years, before which he taught Asian history and civilization at the California Institute of Technology.

Chancellor Dirks has held numerous fellowships and scholarships and received several scholarly honors, including a MacArthur Foundation residential fellowship at the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton, a Guggenheim Fellowship, and the Lionel Trilling Award for his book *Castes of Mind*. He serves on numerous national and international bodies, as adviser or member of the board, and is a Fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations.