

SPRING 2026

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# GRADUATE READINGS IN MODERN AMERICA

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HIST 8540-001

Dr. Burd



**CLEMSON**  
UNIVERSITY

## HIST 8860 – Graduate Readings in Modern America Spring 2026

### Course Description

This is a readings course intended to prepare the student for comprehensive exams dealing with the United States History survey from the Reconstruction Era to the Present day. The works listed below relate to the comprehensive exam list designed by members of the department of History and Geography at Clemson University.

### Expectations

The student and faculty member will coordinate a time to meet, aligned with schedule below. During their meeting they will discuss the books assigned for that week. The student is expected to have notes on each book and come prepared to discuss the group as a collection of scholarship. The student should be able to understand how the works relate to one another and where the authors depart on historical interpretation. In short, the student is interested in the history AND historiography of the collected readings.

### Meetings:

Select Mondays (see schedule below), 1:30-3:00pm.

### January 12 – Reconstruction/Gilded Age

- Hahn, Steven. *A Nation Under Our Feet: Black Political Struggles in the Rural South from Slavery to the Great Migration* (2005).
- Litwack, Leon. *Been in the Storm So Long: The Aftermath of Slavery* (1979).
- Richardson, Heather Cox. *West from Appomattox: The Reconstruction of America after the Civil War* (2008).
- Hunter, Tera W. *To 'Joy My Freedom: Southern Black Women's Lives and Labors after the Civil War* (1998).

### January 19 – No Meeting

### January 26 – Gilded Age

- Chandler, Alfred D. *The Visible Hand: The Managerial Revolution in American Business* (1993).
- Levy, Jonathan. *Freaks of Fortune: The Emerging World of Capitalism and Risk in America* (2014).
- Trachtenberg, Alan. *The Incorporation of America: Culture and Society in the Gilded Age* (2007).

### February 2 – No Meeting

### February 9 – Populists and Progressives

- Rodgers, Daniel. "In Search of Progressivism," *Reviews in American History* (December 1982).
- McGerr, Michael. *A Fierce Discontent: The Rise and Fall of the Progressive Movement in America, 1870-1920* (2005).
- Postel, Charles. *The Populist Vision* (2007).
- Hofstadter, Richard. *The Age of Reform*. (1955)

## February 16 – No Meeting

## February 23 – New Deal Era

- Cowie, Jefferson and Nick Salvatore, “The Long Exception: Rethinking the Place of the New Deal in American History,” *Journal of International Labor and Working-Class History* 74, no. 1 (2008): 3-32.
- Cohen, Elizabeth. *Making a New Deal: Industrial Workers in Chicago, 1919-1939* (2014).
- Katznelson, Ira. *Fear Itself: The New Deal and the Origins of Our Time* (2014).
- Sparrow, James. *Warfare State: World War II Americans and the Age of Big Government* (2011).

## March 2 – No Meeting

## March 9 – Race in Twentieth Century America

- Ngai, Mae M. *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America* (2014).
- Gerstle, Gary. *American Crucible: Race and Nation in the Twentieth Century* (2017).
- Wilkinson, Charles F. *Blood Struggle: The Rise of Modern Indian Nations* (2006).
- Muhammad, Khalil Gibran. *The Condemnation of Blackness: Race, Crime, and the Making of Modern Urban America, With a New Preface* (2019).

## March 16 – No Meeting (Spring Break)

## March 23 – Cold War Era

- Dudziak, Mary L. *Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy* (2011).
- Engelhardt, Thomas M. *The End of Victory Culture: Cold War America and the Disillusioning of a Generation* (2007).
- Herring, George. *America's Longest War: The United States and Vietnam, 1950-1975* (2019).
- Westad, Odd Arne. *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times* (2005).

## March 30 – No Meeting

## April 6 – Mid-Century America

- Cohen, Elizabeth. *A Consumers' Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America* (2003).
- Dochuk, Darren. *From Bible Belt to Sunbelt: Plain-Folk Religion, Grassroots Politics, and the Rise of Evangelical Conservatism* (2012).
- Lassiter, Matthew D. *The Silent Majority: Suburban Politics in the Sunbelt South* (2007).
- Sugrue, Thomas J. *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit* (2014).

## April 13 – No Meeting

## April 20 – Neoliberal Era

- Cowie, Jefferson. *Stayin' Alive: The 1970s and the Last Days of the Working Class* (2010).

- Geismer, Lily. *Don't Blame Us: Suburban Liberals and the Transformation of the Democratic Party* (2015).
- Gerstle, Gary. *The Rise and Fall of the Neoliberal Order* (2023).
- Hayward, Steven F. *The Age of Reagan: The Fall of the Old Liberal Order, 1964-1980* (2001).
- Hemmer, Nicole. *Partisans: The Conservative Revolutionaries Who Remade American Politics in the 1990s* (2022).
- Rodgers, Daniel T. *Age of Fracture* (2012).

**April 27 – No Meeting**