

LIVING

McElreath Hall
Atlanta History Center
130 West Paces Ferry Rd NW
Atlanta, GA 30305

ROOM

LEARNING

ATLANTA
HISTORY
CENTER

Back for its 55th year, Living Room Learning was started by alumnae of Sweet Briar College and is designed for those who seek university level education without academic credit.

Now presented by Atlanta History Center, we hope that you'll join us for the next iteration of the series: *Marching Through the 20th Century: The 1980s*.

Location and time: All lectures will take place in McElreath Hall at Atlanta History Center, 130 West Paces Ferry Rd NW, Atlanta, GA 30305. Lectures begin promptly at 2pm, so participants are asked to arrive by 1:45pm.

Registration: \$110 for Atlanta History Center Members and Insiders, \$120 for non-members. Please purchase online or make checks payable to Atlanta History Center. Registration fee covers all 7 lectures in the series.

Weekly Lecture Schedule

January 17, 2024

The American Population in the 1980s

Lecturer: Patrick Allitt

- The American population grew by ten percent in the 1980s, from 226 million to 249 million. It was extremely diverse because the immigration reform act of 1965 permitted people from every part of the world to apply. Some observers feared the population was too big; others wanted it to be even bigger. This lecture will describe the unique characteristics of the American people in the 1980s and the arguments their future prospects.
- Recommended reading: Herbert S. Klein, *A Population History of the United States*
- Patrick Allitt is Cahoon Family Professor of American History at Emory University, where he teaches courses on American intellectual, environmental, and religious history, on Victorian Britain, and on the Great Books.

January 24, 2024

Ronald Reagan and the Conservative Revolution

Lecturer: Joseph Crespino

- Ronald Reagan, alongside Franklin Roosevelt, was one of the two most transformational presidents of the twentieth century. This lecture explains why, focusing primarily on Reagan's unlikely rise and the impact of his domestic agenda.
- Recommended Reading: Lou Cannon, *President Reagan: The Role of a Lifetime*
- Joseph Crespino is the Jimmy Carter Professor of History at Emory University. He is an expert in the political and cultural history of the twentieth century United States, and of the history of the American South since Reconstruction.

January 31, 2024

Catastroika? The Soviet 1980s:

From Stagnation to Reform to Dissolution

Lecturer: Matthew Payne

- The 1980s was the most consequential decade for Eurasia since the war as the superpower that dominated it tottered and then fell. This collapse was remarkably speedy as the Soviet Union went from occupying Afghanistan at the start of the decade to the brink of implosion at the end of it. The Soviet Union fell not because it was weak, indeed the Soviet Empire might have carried on for another generation without reform. Rather, the collapse was the result efforts by a reformer at the top, Mikhail Gorbachev. How this would-be reformer became the USSR's gravedigger is our topic.
- Recommended Reading: Stephen Kotkin, *Armageddon Averted: The Soviet Collapse, 1970–2000*
- Dr. Matthew J. Payne is an Associate Professor of History at Emory University, where he researches and teaches courses on modern Russian and Soviet history; Soviet social history; Kazakhstan and Soviet nationalities policy; labor and society, popular racism and the politics of famine.

“Lost Decade” or Democratic Revival?

Latin America in the 1980s

Lecturer: Thomas D. Rogers

- Through the 1980s, a consensus emerged that Latin America had “lost” the decade. While stagnation and foreign debt did bedevil the region, its countries’ experiences cannot be reduced to a series of economic struggles. Many nations simultaneously emerged from repressive dictatorships to embrace democratic institutions, in some cases ratifying new multicultural constitutions. Central America plunged into civil war in one of the last, bloody spasms of the Cold War. For this huge, diverse region, the decade was more than a period of oblivion between the populist and authoritarian past and the neoliberal future.
- Recommended Reading: Leon Fink, *The Maya of Morganton: Work and Community in the Nuevo New South*
- Thomas D. Rogers, the Arthur Blank/NEH Chair and Professor of History at Emory University, is a specialist in labor and environmental history and the author of two books about 20th-century Brazil.

February 14, 2024

The Crisis of “Really Existing:” East German Socialism and the Fall of the Berlin Wall

Lecturer: Joe Perry

- Why did East German Communism collapse? While ramped up Cold War pressure from NATO and the West challenged communist leaders, this talk suggests that internal weaknesses led to the ultimate breakdown of the East German state. The failure of communism to provide ordinary people goods and opportunities, and the relative success of western capitalism, undermined the legitimacy of the state to the point of implosion. To illustrate the peculiarities of East German ideology, the talk includes an exploration of the Buchenwald concentration camp memorial site, East Germany’s premier monument to the horrors of WWII and National Socialism.
- Recommended Reading: Robert Darnton, *Berlin Journal 1989-1990*
- Joe Perry is Associate Professor (Emeritus) of modern German/European history at Georgia State University and the author of *Christmas in Germany: A Cultural History*.

February 21, 2024

The War on Drugs—Its Origins, Impact, and Consequences

Lecturer: Joseph Crespino

- Drug addiction, crime, policing, and federal and state drug policy became a large and divisive topic in American life in the 1980s. Its implications can still be felt to this day. This lecture examines how and why that happened.
- Recommended reading: Matthew Lassiter, *The Suburban Crisis: White America and the War on Drugs*
- Joseph Crespino is the Jimmy Carter Professor of History at Emory University. He is an expert in the political and cultural history of the twentieth century United States, and of the history of the American South since Reconstruction.

February 28, 2024

Computers and the Internet in the 1980s

Lecturer: Patrick Allitt

- In 1980 less than one percent of the American population owned a computer. By 1990, 20 percent had personal computers in their homes. The mass production of user-friendly computers was one of the vast changes that reshaped America in the 1980s, making typewriters, slide rules, and pocket calculators obsolete. The internet, born in 1983 and available to ordinary citizens from 1989, grew out of Cold War military projects but soon joined with the computer revolution to transform our access to information.
- Recommended reading: Walter Isaacson, *Steve Jobs*
- Patrick Allitt is Cahoon Family Professor of American History at Emory University, where he teaches courses on American intellectual, environmental, and religious history, on Victorian Britain, and on the Great Books.

Registration Form

Name

Email Address

Phone Number

Address

Registration Selection (Required)

☐ AHC Member & Insider Registration: \$110 x ____ (number of registrations)

☐ Non-member Registration: \$120 x ____ (number of registrations)

Total Registration Amount: \$ _____

Book Order

(optional add-on; price reflects 15% discount off list price + sales tax):

☐ 1/17/24: Herbert S. Klein, *A Population History of the United States*

☐ Hardcover: \$75.42

OR

☐ Softcover: \$33.99

☐ 1/24/24: Lou Cannon, *President Reagan: The Role of a Lifetime*, \$24.06

☐ 1/31/24: Stephen Kotkin, *Armageddon Averted: The Soviet Collapse, 1970-2000*, \$15.69

☐ 2/7/24: Leon Fink, *The Maya of Morganton: Work and Community in the Nuevo New South*, \$39.35

☐ 2/14/24: Robert Darnton, *Berlin Journal 1989-1990*, \$23.14

☐ 2/21/24: Matthew Lassiter, *The Suburban Crisis: White America and the War on Drugs*, \$36.98

☐ 2/28/24: Walter Isaacson, *Steve Jobs*, \$33.32

☐ Ship to the address above for ☐ \$17.10 (3 or less books) or ☐ \$22.80 (4 or more books)
OR

☐ I'll pick this up at Atlanta History Center's Museum Shop (complimentary)

Total book + shipping amount (includes tax): \$ _____

Total (Required Registration + Optional Books): \$ _____

Please mail this order form with check made out to Atlanta History Center to:

Atlanta History Center
Attn: Living Room Learning
130 West Paces Ferry Rd NW
Atlanta, GA 30305

All registrations must be postmarked by December 15, 2023. After that date, any remaining registration slots will be available via online sales only.

Questions? Please email Claire Haley, Vice President of Special Projects, at chaley@atlantahistorycenter.com or call 404.814.4129.

Scan the below
QR code to
register online.

