USA Reading List

1. Paul S. Boyer, *By the Bomb’s Early Light: American Thought and Culture at the Dawn of the Atomic Age,* (University North Carolina Press, 1994)
   1. This is the first book to explore the quick and penetrative impact of nuclear armament on America based on the cartoons, movies, radio programs and other media of the age. Through these materials, Boyer also discusses recent changes in nuclear politics and attitudes towards the nuclear age.
2. John Mueller, *Atomic Obsession: Nuclear Alarmism from Hiroshima to Al-Qaeda*, (Oxford University Press, 2009)
   1. Following 9/11, Americans were swept up in a near hysteria-level fear of terrorists, especially of Islamic extremists working domestically. The government and media reports stoked fears that people living in the US have the desire and means to wreak extreme havoc and destruction. These tactics have not, statistically speaking, been efficient or successful.
3. Peter Hennessey, *The Secret State: Preparing for the Worst, 1945-2010,* (Penguin, 2010)
   1. Hennessey maps the size and shape of the Cold War state built in response to the perceived Soviet threat. He also traces the arguments used by generations of ministers to justify the British nuclear capability.
4. Kenneth D. Rose, *One Nation Underground: The Fallout Shelter in American Culture*, (NYU Press, 2004)
   1. The preoccupation with the image and controversy of the fallout shelter forced many Americans to grapple with disturbing dilemmas about what it means to be an upstanding citizen and a good human being. But why did so few of them actually build shelters? And would a post-war world even be worth living in?
5. Bruce Cumings, *The Korean War: A History*, (Modern Library, 2010)
   1. With access to new evidence and secret materials from both here and abroad, Bruce Cumings reveals the Korean War as it was actually fought. He describes its origin as a civil war, shares the neglected history of America’s post–World War II occupation of Korea, and tells of the United States officially entering the action on the side of the South, exposing as never before the appalling massacres and atrocities committed on all sides.
6. Steven Hugh Lee, *The Korean War*, (Routledge, 2001)
   1. This narrative uniquely examines the social history of the conflict, and includes material on the newly racially integrated US fighting forces, war and disease, women and war and life in the POW camps. While most surveys stop at 1953, Steven Hugh Lee carries the story through to the Geneva Conference in the spring of 1954, the last major international effort before recent years to negotiate a permanent peace for the Korean peninsula.
7. Mary Fulbrook, *A History of Germany 1918-2008: The Divided Nation*, 3rd ed., (Wiley-Blackwell, 2008)
   1. This third edition traces the dramatic social, cultural, and political tensions in Germany since 1918. It covers East and West German history in equal depth, as well as the Weimar Republic, the Cold War division and unification in 1990.
8. Wolfram F. Hanrieder, *Germany, America and Europe: Forty Years of German Foreign Policy*, (Yale University Press, 1989)
   1. This book discusses how the goals of the Federal Republic of Germany (security, unity, political and economic integration into the West) were shaped by the conditions of the post-war state system and the Germans' response to them. Also included are Hanreider’s views on the fall of the Berlin Wall.
9. Lothar Kettenacker, *Germany since 1945*, (Oxford University Press, 1997)
   1. Kettenacker's book offers a fascinating survey of the fortunes and features of East and West Germany--how the two states drifted apart; the differences between their economies, politics, and cultures; and the problems and events surrounding their recent unification.
10. James E. Cronin, *The World the Cold War Made*, (Routledge, 1996)
    1. An examination of the Cold War from the creation and structure of the post-war settlement to the eventual coming apart of the post war order in the 1980s and early 1990s.
11. Mark J. White, *Missiles in Cuba: Kennedy, Khrushchev, Castro and the 1962 Crisis*, (Ivan R. Dee, 1998)
    1. Mark White provides a much clearer understanding of the policy strategies pursued by the United States and the Soviet Union (and, to a lesser extent, Cuba) that brought on the crisis. His almost hour-by-hour account of the confrontation itself also destroys some venerable myths, and his assessment of the consequences of the crisis points to questionable influences on Soviet defence spending and on Washington's perception of its talents for "crisis management," later tested in Vietnam.
12. Aleksandr Fursenko & Timothy Naftali, *‘One Hell of a Gamble’: Khrushchev, Castro and Kennedy, 1958-1964*, (W. W. Norton & Company, 1998)
    1. This important and controversial book draws the missing half of the story from secret Soviet archives revealed exclusively by the authors, including the files of Nikita Khrushchev and his leadership circle. Contained in these documents are the details of over forty secret meetings between Robert Kennedy and his Soviet contact, records of Castro's first solicitation of Soviet favour, and the plans, suspicions, and strategies of Khrushchev. This unique opportunity has allowed the authors to tell the complete, fascinating, and terrifying story of the most dangerous days of the last half-century.
13. Robert F. Kennedy, *Thirteen Days: A Memoir of the Cuban Missile Crisis*, (W. W. Norton & Company, 1999)
    1. During the thirteen days in October 1962 when the United States confronted the Soviet Union over its installation of missiles in Cuba, few people shared the behind-the-scenes story as it is told here by the late Senator Robert F. Kennedy. In this unique account, he describes each of the participants during the sometimes hour-to-hour negotiations, with particular attention to the actions and views of his brother, President John F. Kennedy.
14. Odd Arne Westad, *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times*, (Cambridge University Press, 2007)
    1. This volume shows how the globalization of the Cold War during the 20th century created the foundations for most of today's key international conflicts, including the "war on terror." Odd Arne Westad examines the origins and course of Third World revolutions and the ideologies that drove the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. towards interventionism. He focuses on how these interventions gave rise to resentments and resistance that, in the end, helped to topple one and to seriously challenge the other superpower.
15. Piero Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions: Havana, Washington and Africa 1959-1976*, (The University of North Carolina Press, 2003)
    1. Piero Gleijeses's narrative tracks Cuba's first steps to assist Algerian rebels fighting France in 1961, to the secret war between Havana and Washington in Zaire in 1964-65, and finally to the dramatic dispatch of 30,000 Cubans to Angola in 1975-76, which stopped the South African advance on Luanda and doomed Henry Kissinger's major covert operation there.
16. Jussi M. Hanhimaki and Odd Arne Westad, *The Cold War: A History in Documents and Eyewitness Accounts,* (Oxford University Press, 2004)
    1. This is the first truly multi-faceted account of the Cold War, as told through a selection of official and unofficial sources. Not only does this book put a human face on the conflict, but it draws emphasis to the variety of ways in which it was experienced. The final selection of documents illustrates the Cold War’s continuous global impact and establishes links between it and the events of 9/11.
17. Ernesto “Che” Guevara, *The African Dream: The Diaries of Revolutionary War in the Congo,* (Grove Press, 2001)
    1. This is the unabridged collection of Guevara’s journals about Che Guevara 1965 expedition to the Congo to assist Laurent Kabila in his struggles for the newly independent nation. A record of the demise of their political and ideological dreams, it also provides new insight into the thoughts and emotions of a great revolutionary martyr.
18. Craig A. Daigle & Artemy Kalinovsky, *The Routledge Handbook of the Cold War,* (Routledge, 2014)
    1. This new Handbook offers a wide-ranging overview of current scholarship on the Cold War, with essays from many leading scholars. Organized into nine parts, it draws on the wealth of new Cold War scholarship, bringing together essays on a diverse range of topics such as geopolitics, military power and technology and strategy.
19. Alan McPherson, *Intimate Ties, Bitter Struggles: The United States and Latin America since 1945*, (Potomac Books, 2006)
    1. This book uses multinational sources to survey and analyse the relationship between the US and Latin America. Major topics include the debate over economic dependency, the U.S. response to revolutions in Latin America during the Cold War, covert operations, human rights, migration, the North American Free Trade Agreement and economic integration, the Iran-Contra affair, the war on drugs, and Latinos in the United States.
20. Thomas C. Wright, *Latin America in the Era of the Cuban Revolution*, 3rd ed., (Praeger, 2018)
    1. This is an in-depth explanation of how the Cuban Revolution dictated Latin American politics and U.S.-Latin American relations from the 1950s to the present, including widespread democratization and the rise of the "Pink Tide."
21. Stephen G. Rabe, *The Killing Zone: The United States Wages Cold War in Latin America*, 2nd ed., (Oxford University Press, 2015)
    1. Rabe argues that the sense of joy and accomplishment that accompanied the end of the Cold War is counteracted by the price paid by Latin Americans between 1945 and 1989. Countries such as Argentina, Brazil, Chile, El Salvador, and Guatemala endured appalling levels of political violence. The U.S. repeatedly intervened in their internal affairs in the name of “anticommunism”, which ended up destabilizing constitutional governments and aiding and abetting those who murdered and tortured scores of people.
22. Hal Brands, *Latin America’s Cold War,* (Harvard University Press, 2012)
    1. In this first book to take an international perspective on the post-war decades in Latin America, Brands sets out to explain what exactly happened there from the late 1940s through the early 1990s and why it was so traumatic. He chronicles major events such as the Cuban Revolution, the National Security Doctrine, and the democratic reforms of the 1980s in a way that is both multinational and multi-layered.
23. Nigel J. Ashton, *The Cold War in the Middle East,* (Routledge, 2007)
    1. This edited volume re-assesses the relationship between the United States, the Soviet Union and key regional players in waging and halting conflict in the Middle East between 1967 and 1973. These were pivotal years in the Arab-Israeli conflict, with the effects still very much in evidence today.
24. Douglas Little, *American Orientalism: The United States and the Middle East Since 1945,* 3rd ed., (The University of North Carolina Press, 2008)
    1. Little explores the stormy American relationship with the Middle East, focusing on the complex and often inconsistent attitudes that helped put the United States on a collision course with radical Islam in the new millennium, as well as the peculiar blend of arrogance and ignorance has led American officials to overestimate their ability to shape events in the Middle East.
25. Yazid Sayigh & Avi Shlaim, *The Cold War and the Middle East*, (Clarendon Press, 1997)
    1. The impact of the Cold War is analysed on the behaviour of individuals at three levels: international politics, regional politics, and domestic politics. As a result, this book sheds a great deal of new light on the Middle East of the post-war era.
26. Massimiliano Trentin, *The Middle East and the Cold War: Between Security and Development,* (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2012)
    1. Algeria, Sudan, Jordan as well as Syria, Israel and Iran during the embattled 1950s and 1960s are the subjects of this volume. Both the Cold War superpowers and their European allies showed restraint in their interventions to shape the political and economic dynamics of these regions according to their own plans: Middle Eastern rulers enjoyed remarkable autonomy to achieve their goals, and fully exploited the competition and rivalry which divided the industrial countries during the Cold War.
27. John Lamberton Harper, *The Cold War,* (Oxford University Press, 2011)
    1. The East-West struggle for supremacy from 1945 to 1989 shaped the lives of hundreds of millions and brought the world to the brink of disaster on several occasions. More than two decades on, the debate over its causes and dynamics is far from over. Drawing on the latest archival evidence and scholarly research, prize-winning historian John Lamberton Harper provides a concise, briskly-written assessment of the Cold War.
28. John Lewis Gaddis, *The Cold War,* (Penguin Books, 2006)
    1. Drawing on newly opened archives and the reminiscences of the major players, Gaddis explains not just what happened but why from the months in 1945 when the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. went from alliance to antagonism to the barely averted holocaust of the Cuban Missile Crisis to the manoeuvers of Nixon and Mao, Reagan and Gorbachev.
29. Melvyn P. Leffler, *For the Soul of Mankind: The United States, the Soviet Union and the Cold War,* (Hill and Wang, 2008)
    1. Leffler homes in on four crucial episodes when American and Soviet leaders considered modulating, avoiding, or ending hostilities and asks why they failed: Stalin and Truman devising new policies after 1945; Malenkov and Eisenhower exploring the chance for peace in 1953; Kennedy, Khrushchev, and LBJ trying to reduce tensions after the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962; and Brezhnev and Carter aiming to sustain détente after the Helsinki Conference of 1975. All these leaders glimpsed possibilities for peace, yet they allowed ideologies, political pressures, international expectations and dynamics, and their own fearful memories to trap them in a cycle of hostility that seemed to have no end.
30. Odd Arne Westad, *The Cold War: A World History*, (Basic Books, 2017)
    1. Westad argues that the Cold War must be understood as a global ideological confrontation, with early roots in the Industrial Revolution and ongoing repercussions around the world. Today, many regions are plagued with environmental threats, social divides, and ethnic conflicts that stem from this era. Its ideologies influence China, Russia, and the United States; Iraq and Afghanistan have been destroyed by the faith in purely military solutions that emerged from the Cold War.
31. Vladislav M. Zubok, *A Failed Empire: The Soviet Union in the Cold War from Stalin to Gorbachev,* (The University of North Carolina Press, 2009)
    1. Explaining the interests, aspirations, illusions, fears, and misperceptions of the Kremlin leaders and Soviet elites, Zubok offers a Soviet perspective on the greatest standoff of the twentieth century. Using recently declassified Politburo records, ciphered telegrams, diaries, and taped conversations, among other sources, Zubok offers the first work in English to cover the entire Cold War from the Soviet side.
32. Hal Brands, *From Berlin to Baghdad: America’s Search for Purpose in the Post-Cold War World,* (University Press of Kentucky, 2008)
    1. Many American diplomats and politicians viewed the fall of the Soviet empire as a mixed blessing. For more than four decades, containment of communism provided the overriding goal of American foreign policy, allowing generations of political leaders to build domestic consensus on this steady, reliable foundation. *From Berlin to Baghdad* incisively dissects the numerous unsuccessful attempts to devise a new grand foreign policy strategy that could match the moral clarity and political efficacy of containment. Brands takes a fresh look at the key events and players in recent American history.
33. Nicholas Guyatt, *Another American Century? The United States and the World Since 9/11,* 2nd ed., (Zed Books, 2004)
    1. How does the US media propagate the myth of a "good" superpower waging war on "evil?" Can an open-ended "War on Terror" make the world safe, and for whom? This book draws on our knowledge of the past decade to outline the effects and consequences of the USA's power. It looks at how US policymakers understand their role in the world, and the ideologies that enable them to pursue policies with often harmful consequences for people outside North America.
34. Joseph S. Nye Jr, *The Paradox of American Power: Why the World’s Only Superpower Can’t Go It Alone,* (Oxford University Press, 2003)
    1. Not since the Roman Empire has any nation had as much economic, cultural, and military power as the United States does today. Yet, as has become all too evident through the terrorist attacks of September 11th and the impending threat of the acquisition of nuclear weapons by Iran, that power is not enough to solve global problems--like terrorism, environmental degradation, and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction--without involving other nations. Here Joseph S. Nye focuses on the rise of these challenges and explains why America must adopt a more cooperative engagement with the rest of the world.
35. Derek Chollet & James Goldgeier, *America Between the Wars: From 11/9 to 9/11-The Misunderstood Years Between the Fall of the Berlin Wall and the Start of the War on Terror,* (Public Affairs, 2009)
    1. Chollet and Goldgeier blend deep expertise with broad access to both parties' political and policy establishments to find out how—and why—America failed to recognize that when it became the sole superpower with responsibility for the world's oversight, it overlooked how the new world actually worked.
36. Aldon D. Morris, *The Origins of the Civil Rights Movement: Black Communities Organizing for Change,* (Free Press, 1986)
    1. Morris tells the complete story behind the decade that transformed America, tracing the essential role of the black community organizations that was the real power behind the civil rights movement. Drawing on interviews with more than fifty key leaders, he brings to life the people behind the scenes who led the fight to end segregation, providing a critical new understanding of the dynamics of social change.
37. Steven F. Lawson & Charles Payne, *Debating the Civil Rights Movement, 1945-1968,* 2nd ed., (Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2006)
    1. Lawson examines the individuals who made the movement a success, both at the highest level of government and in the grassroots trenches. Designed specifically for college and university courses in American history, this is the best introduction available to the glory and agony of these turbulent times.
38. Ann Bausum, *Freedom Riders: John Lewis and Jim Zwerg on the Front Lines of the Civil Rights Movement,* (National Geographic Children’s Books, 2005)
    1. *Freedom Riders* compares and contrasts the childhoods of John Lewis and James Zwerg in a way that helps young readers understand the segregated experience of our nation's past. It shows how a common interest in justice created the convergent path that enabled these young men to meet as Freedom Riders on a bus journey south.
39. Taylor Branch, *The King Years: Historic Moments in the Civil Rights Movement,* (Simon & Schuster, 2013)
    1. Branch presents selections that recount the essential moments of the Civil Rights Movement. *The King Years* delivers riveting tales of everyday heroes whose stories inspire us still by effectively showing the full sweep of an era that transformed America and continues to offer lessons for today’s world.
40. Janet Dewart Bell, *Lighting the Fires of Freedom: African American Women in the Civil Rights Movement*, (The New Press, 2018)
    1. Bell shines a light on women’s all-too-often overlooked achievements in the Movement. Through wide-ranging conversations with nine women, several now in their nineties with decades of untold stories, Bell vividly captures their inspiring voices. *Lighting the Fires of Freedom* offers these deeply personal and intimate accounts of extraordinary struggles for justice that resulted in profound social change, stories that are vital and relevant today.
41. Booker T. Washington, *Up from Slavery,* (CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2018)
    1. In this autobiography, Washington details his personal experiences in working to rise from the position of a slave child during the Civil War, to the obstacles he overcame to get an education at Hampton University, to his work establishing vocational school to help black people and other disadvantaged minorities learn useful, marketable skills and work to pull themselves up by the bootstraps. He reflects on the generosity of both teachers and philanthropists who helped in educating blacks and native Americans and describes his efforts to instil manners, breeding, health and a feeling of dignity to students.
42. Marc Stein, *Rethinking the Gay and Lesbian Movement,* (Routledge, 2012)
    1. Focusing on four decades of change in the second half of the twentieth century, Stein examines the changing agendas, beliefs, strategies, and vocabularies of a movement that encompassed diverse actions, campaigns, ideologies, and organizations. From the homophile activism of the 1950s and 1960s, through the rise of gay liberation and lesbian feminism in the 1970s, to the multicultural and AIDS activist movements of the 1980s, this book provides a strong foundation for understanding queer politics today.
43. Greg Baldino, *The Early History of the Gay Rights Movement,* (Rosen Young Adult, 2019)
    1. This book explains why the need for the fight for nonheteronormative rights emerged in the nineteenth century. It goes into how the fight itself began to pick up steam in the 1950s and '60s as small groups of radicals grew into a national movement for social justice. Activists across the LGBTQ+ spectrum confront police and government officials, join forces with labor and civil rights struggles, and help reshape the modern world.
44. Randy Shilts, *And the Band Played On: Politics, People, and the AIDS Epidemic*, 1st ed., (St. Martin’s Press, 1987), 20th Anniversary revised ed., (St. Martin’s Griffin, 2007)
    1. Shilts reveals why AIDS was allowed to spread unchecked during the early 80's while the most trusted institutions ignored or denied the threat. One of the few true modern classics, it changed and framed how AIDS was discussed in the following years.
45. Ann Bausum, *Stonewall: Breaking Out in the Fight For Gay Rights,* (Speak, 2016)
    1. The Stonewall Inn, a Mafia-run, filthy, overpriced bar in New York City’s Greenwich Village, was one of a few safe havens for gay Americans in a time where being gay was a criminal offense. A riveting exploration of the 1969 Stonewall Riots and the national Gay Rights movement that followed is eye-opening, unflinching, and inspiring.
46. Randy Shilts, *The Mayor of Castro Street: The Life and Times of Harvey Milk,* (St. Martin’s Griffin, 1988)
    1. This is Shilts' acclaimed story of Harvey Milk, the man whose personal life, public career, and assassination mirrored the dramatic and unprecedented emergence of the gay community in America during the 1970s.
47. Leighton Brown & Matthew Riemer, *We Are Everywhere: Protest, Power, and Pride in the History of Queer Liberation,* (Ten Speed Press, 2019)
    1. *We Are Everywhere* is an essential and empowering introduction to the history of the fight for queer liberation. Combining exhaustively researched narrative with meticulously curated photographs, the book traces queer activism from its roots in late-nineteenth-century Europe--long before the Stonewall Riots of 1969--to the gender warriors leading the charge today.
48. Martin Duberman, *Stonewall: The Definitive Story of the LGBTQ Rights Uprising that Changed America,* revised ed., (Plume, 2019)
    1. In *Stonewall*, Duberman tells the full story of this pivotal moment in history. With riveting narrative skill, he re-creates those revolutionary, sweltering nights in vivid detail through the lives of six people who were drawn into the struggle for LGBTQ rights. Their stories combine to form an unforgettable portrait of the repression that led up to the riots, which culminates when they triumphantly participate in the first gay rights march of 1970.
49. Stephen Snyder-Hill, *Soldier of Change: From the Closet to the Forefront of the Gay Rights Movement,* (Potomac Books Inc, 2014)
    1. S*oldier of Change* captures not only the media frenzy that followed that moment, placing Captain Snyder-Hill at the forefront of this modern civil rights movement, but also his twenty-year journey as a gay man in the army: from self-loathing to self-acceptance to the most important battle of his life—protecting the disenfranchised.
50. Walter Frank, *Law and the Gay Rights Story,* (Rutgers University Press, 2014)
    1. Frank offers an in-depth look at the court cases that were pivotal in establishing gay rights. He also tells the story of those individuals who were willing to make waves by fighting for those rights, taking enormous personal risks at a time when the tide of public opinion was against them. His accessible style brings complex legal issues down to earth but never loses sight of the law’s human dimension and the context of the events occurring outside the courtroom.