



2026 Spring CENFAD Speaker Series Schedule

- Thursday, January 29: **Aileen Teague**, Texas A&M University

Lecture recording: <https://temple.hosted.panopto.com/Panopto/Pages/Viewer.aspx?id=d3111943-c15b-48f3-aeb2-b3e10163dd24>

Policing on Drugs: The United States, Mexico, and the Origins of the Modern Drug War, 1969-2000

Today, images of cartels, security agents donning face coverings, graphs depicting egregious murder rates, and military guards at US border crossings influence the world's perception of Mexico. Mexico's so-called drug war, as generally conceived by journalists and academics, was the product of recent cartel turf wars, the end of the PRI's single party rule in 2000, and enhanced US border security measures post-9/11. These explanations are compelling, but they overlook state actions beginning in the 1970s that set the foundation for drug violence over the longer term.

In *Policing on Drugs*, Aileen Teague chronicles a largely ignored but critical prehistory of intensified bilateral antidrug efforts by exploring their origins and inherent contradictions in Mexico. Beginning in the 1960s, US leaders externalized their aggressive domestic drug control practices by forcing junior partners such as Mexico into adopting their policies. Leaders on both sides of the border situated counternarcotics within a larger paradigm of militarized policing, which increased the power and influence of the military and aggressive counternarcotics in both countries. However, different security imperatives motivated US and Mexican agents, complicating enforcement in Mexico. Between 1969 and 2000, Mexico's embrace of America's punitive antidrug policies strengthened the coercive capacities of the Mexican state, exacerbated crime, and were so ineffective in an era of open trade blocs that they hastened the expansion of the drug trade.

Drawing on such sources as records from the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), the US State Department, interviews with key officials, accounts from Mexican journalists, and rarely seen Mexican intelligence reports, Teague relates the war on drugs as a transnational story with deep historical roots in US and Mexican conceptions of policing and security. The negative impacts of US-led counternarcotics policies in Mexico can be attributed to the complex relationship between the United States' and Mexico's shared approach to the drug war—with critical implications for present-day relations.

Aileen Teague is an Assistant Professor at the Bush School of Government and Public Service at Texas A&M University. She is a former Marine Corps officer and a fellow at the Quincy Institute for Responsible Statecraft. Her writing has appeared in the *Washington Post* and *Time*, among other outlets.

• Thursday, February 12: **Greg Grandin**, Yale University

Lecture recording: <https://temple.hosted.panopto.com/Panopto/Pages/Viewer.aspx?id=618a2cda-3029-4665-9f35-b3ef016300d1>

America, América: The Current Crisis in Historical Perspective

This talk will present Greg Grandin's new book, *America, América: A New History of the New World*, and related to the increasingly fraught relations between Washington and many country's in Latin America, including Trump and Hegseth's killing spree in the Caribbean and the Pacific.

Greg Grandin is the Peter V. and C. Vann Woodward Professor of History at Yale University. He is the author of multiple studies including *The Last Colonial Massacre: Latin America During the Cold War* (2004) and *Empire's Workshop: Latin America, the United States and the Making of an Imperial Republic* (2006). His book *The End of the Myth: From the Frontier to the Border Wall in the Mind of America* (2019) won the Pulitzer Prize for Non-Fiction and was a finalist for the prize in History.

• Thursday, February 26: **Jonathan House**, Emeritus at US Army Command and General Staff College in Kansas and Gordon State College in Georgia

Lecture recording:

War and Disorder Since 1989

The dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991 left the United States as the sole remaining superpower, but a superpower that lacked a coherent strategy. Having reduced defense and intelligence spending in search of a "Peace Dividend," Washington and its allies became over-extended in conflicts stretching from Haiti to Afghanistan. Misguided attempts to avoid prolonged conflicts actually backfired; the Bush administration deployed inadequate force to defeat its adversaries, creating the very situation it tried to prevent. Ultimately, this failure returned American security policy to its post-Viet Nam indecision, when reluctance to risk "boots on the ground" encouraged aggression.

Jonathan M. House received his history doctorate and his Army ROTC commission at the University of Michigan in 1975. House is professor emeritus of military history at the Army's Command and General Staff College and a retired colonel of Military Intelligence. His military assignments included working on the joint staff in the Pentagon during both Iraqi conflicts.

House is the author of multiple studies, including *A Military History of the Cold War* (2 vols.), *A Military History of the New World Disorder, 1989-2022* (2025,) and *Intelligence and the State: Analysts and Decision Makers* (2022). With David M. Glantz, he co-authored *When Titans Clashed: How the Red Army Stopped Hitler* (Revd. Ed. 2015) and the one volume summary of Stalingrad (2017).

- Thursday, March 19: **Tore Olsson**, University of Tennessee-Knoxville

Lecture recording:

Red Dead's History: How a Video Game Can Help Us Understand America's Violent Past

Red Dead Redemption and *Red Dead Redemption II*, set in 1911 and 1899, are the most-played American history video games since *The Oregon Trail*. Beloved by millions, they've been widely acclaimed for their realism and attention to detail. But how do they fare as re-creations of history? In this lecture, American history professor Tore Olsson takes up that question and more. Weaving the games' plots and characters into an exploration of American violence between 1870 and 1920, Olsson shows that it was more often disputes over capitalism and race, not just poker games and bank robberies, that fueled the bloodshed of these turbulent years.

Tore Olsson is an associate professor of history at the University of Tennessee. He is a specialist on US history since the Civil War and its global implications, and is the author of *Red Dead's History* (2025) and *Agrarian Crossings* (2017).

- Thursday, April 16: **Sam Lebovic**, George Mason University

Lecture recording:

State of Silence: The Espionage Act and the Rise of America's Secrecy Regime

The Espionage Act is one of the most controversial laws in U.S. history, having been used not only to punish spies, but also to prosecute dissidents during World War 1 and leakers of classified information today. Tracing the surprising evolution of this confusing law over more than a century, this talk will reveal a fundamental shift in the way that the national security state has sought to police U.S. debate about foreign policy: where once the state used the Espionage Act to censor speech, today it uses the same law to keep secrets. The resulting secrecy regime – improvised, sprawling, flawed – poses real threats to American democracy, and is in dire need of reform.

Sam Lebovic is a professor of history at George Mason University, where he specializes in the histories of U.S. politics, culture, civil liberties, and foreign relations. His most recent book is *State of Silence: The Espionage Act and the Rise of America's Secrecy Regime* (Basic, 2023),

which was named a best book of 2023 by the New Yorker and was a finalist for the ABA's Silver Gavel Award. He currently serves as co-editor of the *Journal of Social History*.