

HIST 4094

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Fall 2009

Office: LeConte Room 334

MWF: 11:15 AM to 12:05 PM

Office Hours: MW 9:45 to 11:00 AM

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THE VIETNAM WAR

HIST 4094 provides a detailed examination of the United States' involvement with Vietnam from World War II until the present. The largest portion of the course will concentrate on events from 1960 to 1973, when the U.S. deployed its military in an effort to prevent the collapse of the South Vietnamese government. This course will also place the Vietnam War within a broader international context, examine the origins of American involvement, look at key military battles and campaigns, discuss opposition to America's participation in Vietnam, explore arguments for why the U.S. lost the war and, finally, try to understand how Americans have crafted a legacy of the Vietnam War over the past thirty-four years.

Core Questions

While this course will cover a great deal of material, no one-semester course can adequately discuss all the issues and topics relevant to the Vietnam War. To help guide lectures and discussions, this class will focus on five core questions. These questions will help you identify key sections in the readings and prepare for lectures and discussions. Additionally, these questions form the basis of exam essay questions.

1. What motivated U.S. leaders to make both an initial and long term commitment to the preservation of South Vietnam?
2. What were the primary political goals of Ho Chi Minh and the North Vietnamese government; what strategies did they use to achieve these goals; and did these goals and strategies change over time?
3. What challenges did the United States military face in fighting NVA and NLF forces, and how did these challenges impact American policy and conduct on the battlefield?
4. How did the antiwar movement impact the development of American opinion and policy during the Vietnam War?
5. Why and how did the Vietnam War continue to play an important role in American politics and culture long after the end of the war?

Required Texts

Vietnam and America, Marvin Gettleman

America's Longest War: The United States and Vietnam, 1950-1975, George Herring

The Spitting Image: Myth, Memory, and the Legacy of Vietnam, Jerry Lembcke

My Lai: A Brief History with Documents, James S. Olson

The Things They Carried, Tim O'Brien

Antiwarriors: The Vietnam War and the Battle for America's Hearts and Minds, Melvin Small

Invisible Enemies: The American War on Vietnam, 1975-2000, Edwin Martini

Additional readings will be placed on electronic reserve at the library or are available through GALILEO. The electronic reserve password is VIETNAM.

All of the books listed above will be available at the university bookstore. They can also be purchased online, which I recommend doing since it will save you a good deal of money. If you cannot afford to purchase all of the books, make sure you do get your own copies of the Herring and Gettleman books since we will be using them throughout the semester. Also, print out online readings and those from electronic reserve and bring them to class on the day they are assigned.

Attendance Policy

It is expected that you will attend class on a regular basis. You can miss up to five classes without being penalized. I do not differentiate between excused and unexcused absences. For each absence after the fifth, you will lose three percentage points off your final grade. I will take attendance at the beginning of each class. If you are not present when I take roll, it is your responsibility to see me at the end of class to make sure I mark you as present.

Written Assignments

You will write two papers over the course of the semester; each paper will be 1500 words long. You will receive more detailed instructions regarding what you will need to do for each paper as the semester progresses but, for now, I have provided below a brief description of each assignment.

1. Publications Paper

You will choose one event from a list provided by the instructor. Using newspapers, magazines and other published sources available at the time of the event, write a paper that discusses how the event is portrayed in the media.

Then, compare that to how the event is understood today.

2. Film Review Paper

During the second half of the semester, six films will be screened outside of regular class periods. Students are required to attend AT LEAST two of these screenings and write a paper that analyzes the two films they viewed. This paper will be due no later than one week after the student views the second film.

Exams

There will be two exams, a midterm and a final. These exams will not be cumulative. You will receive more information about the exams as the semester progresses.

Reading Response

We will have regular discussion sections that explore in-depth a particular aspect of the war. To help focus your thoughts and facilitate the discussion you will write a 250 word “response” to the readings for that discussion. You will receive a handout that describes the assignment more fully.

Grading and Due Dates

Publications Paper (Sept. 16) – 15%
Midterm (Oct. 9) – 15%
Film Paper (Oct. 21, Nov. 4, Nov. 18) – 20%
Final Exam (Dec. 10) – 25%
Reading Responses – 15%
Class Participation – 10%

A+= 97 to 100, A = 93 to 96, A- = 90 to 92
B+= 87 to 89, B = 83 to 86, B- = 80 to 82
C = 70 to 79 (see B for plus/minus scale)
D = 60 to 69 (see B for plus/minus scale)

F = 00 to 59

I reserve the option to administer pop quizzes on lecture days to determine if students are completing assigned readings. The results of these quizzes will be used when determining the class participation grade.

Academic Honesty, Plagiarism, and Cheating

This course has absolutely no tolerance for cheating. Students need to review and understand the University of Georgia's policy on cheating, *A Culture of Honesty: Policy on Academic Honesty at The University of Georgia*, which can be found online at http://www.uga.edu/honesty/ahpd/culture_honesty.htm

Any work that violates this policy will, at minimum, receive a "0" grade. The instructor reserves the right to pursue official disciplinary action up to and including suspension or expulsion.

Technology in the Classroom

Classroom technology is meant to enhance, not distract from, the learning experience. Cell phones and portable listening devices are not to be seen or heard in the classroom. Laptop computers can be used ONLY to take notes.

ANY INTERRUPTION DUE TO CELL PHONES WILL RESULT IN TWO POINTS OFF YOUR FINAL GRADE!

Disability Services

If you have any condition that will make it difficult to complete work as outlined in this syllabus, please notify both the instructor and the Disability Resource Center in the first two weeks of class. Appropriate arrangements will be made to help you succeed in this class and all information and documentation will remain confidential.

Classroom Expectations

It is required that students actively participate during each and every class. This means more than simply showing up and participating in discussions. It also means that, while in the classroom, students are expected to be quietly listening to the instructor and taking notes when appropriate. Any other behavior is distracting and disrespectful to both the instructor and the other students in the class. At minimum, disruptive behavior will negatively affect the class participation grade. The instructor also reserves the right to withdrawal officially any student from the class who repeatedly disrupts the classroom and ignores warnings from the instructor to cease such behavior.

You are also expected to show up on time and stay until class is dismissed.

From time to time, class discussions may touch on topics that appeal emotionally to students. It is important that, when making a contribution to discussions, students do so in a respectful manner. Disagreeing with other students' positions on an issue is fine, being derogatory or insulting when responding is, without exception, unacceptable.

This syllabus acts as a guide to the course, not a binding contract between the student and instructor. The instructor reserves the right to make changes to the syllabus if the need arises.

Course Schedule

Week 1

Mon. Aug 17 – Introduction to the course

Wed. Aug 19 - The First 2000 Years

READING: Olson and Roberts, “Eternal War: The Vietnamese Heritage,”
electronic reserve

Fri. Aug 21 - Discussion: What did Americans know about Vietnam?

Week 2

Mon. Aug. 24 – Ho Chi Minh and Vietnamese Nationalism

READING: Gettleman, *Vietnam and America*, 3-18

Bradley, “America’s Symbolic Importance for Vietnamese Nationalists,” **electronic reserve**

Wed. Aug 26 – Indochina in World War II

READING: Duiker, “A Call to Arms,” **electronic reserve**

Fri. Aug 28 – Discussion: Who Wanted Vietnam and Why They Wanted It

READING: Gettleman, *Vietnam and America*, 18-28, 41-48

Week 3

Mon. Aug 31 – The Cold War and Vietnam

READING: Lawrence, “Transnational Coalition-Building and the Making the Cold War in Indochina, 1947-1949,” *Diplomatic History* Vol. 26 No. 3 (Summer 2002) 453-480 **JSTOR**

Wed. Sep 2 – The First Indochina War

READING: Herring, *America’s Longest War*, 3-50

Gettleman, *Vietnam and America*, 53-62

Fri. Sep. 4 – Discussion: Cold War America

READING: “Blacklist: Post-World War II Red Scare,” **electronic reserve**
“The Cold War at Home: Joseph McCarthy and Anticommunism,” **electronic reserve**

Gettleman, *Vietnam and America*, 49-52

Selected Scenes from the film *Atomic Cafe*

Week 4

Mon. Sep 7 – NO CLASS: LABOR DAY

Wed. Sep 9 – The Growth of U.S. Involvement

READING: Herring, *America’s Longest War*, 53-87

Gettleman, *Vietnam and America*, 135-151

Fri. Sep 11 – Discussion: Women and the War

READING: Mithers, “Missing in Action: Women Warriors in Vietnam,”
Cultural Critique No. 3 (Spring 1986) 79-90 **JSTOR**

Turner, “Only Soldiers: Women and Men in War” **electronic reserve**

Van Devanter, "New Blood," **electronic reserve**

Week 5

Mon. Sep 14 – The Kennedy Administration and Vietnam

READING: Herring, *America's Longest War*, 89-122

Gettleman, *Vietnam and America*, 151-164, 201-215

Wed. Sep 16 – Revolutionary North Vietnam and the NLF, 1955-1963

READING: Gettleman, *Vietnam and America*, 165-201

PUBLICATIONS PAPER DUE

Fri. Sep 18 – Discussion: Impact of the Media

READING: Hammond, "The Press in Vietnam as Agent of Defeat: A Critical Examination," *Reviews in American History* Vol. 17 No. 2 (June 1989) p. 312-323 **JSTOR**

Hallen, "The Media, the War in Vietnam, and Political Support: A Critique of the Thesis of Oppositional Media," *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 46 No. 1 (Feb. 1984) p. 2-24 **JSTOR**

Week 6

Mon. Sep 21 – The Diem Coup

READING: Herring, *America's Longest War*, 122-129

Gettleman, *Vietnam and America*, 216-236

Wed. Sep 23 – The Gulf of Tonkin Incident and the 1964 Election

READING: Herring, *America's Longest War*, 131-147

FILM: *Vietnam: A Television History*, Episode 3, "LBJ Goes to War"

Fri. Sep 25 – Discussion: Race and Class in the Vietnam War

READING: Appy, "Working Class War," **electronic reserve**

Week 7

Mon. Sep 28 – LBJ and the Decision to Escalate the Vietnam War

READING: Herring, *America's Longest War*, 147-155

Gettleman, *Vietnam and America*, 255-274

Dallek, "Lyndon Johnson and Vietnam: The Making of a Tragedy," *Diplomatic History* Vol. 20 No. 2 (Spring 1996) p. 146-162 **JSTOR**

Wed. Sep 30 – The Escalation of the Vietnam War, 1965-1967

READING: Herring, *America's Longest War*, 155-201

Gettleman, *Vietnam and America*, 274-291

Fri. Oct 2 – Discussion: "What is Your Major Malfunction?!": Visual Depictions of the Vietnam War

READING: Desser, "'Charlie Don't Surf': Race and Culture in the Vietnam War Films," **electronic reserve**

John O'Conner, "History in Images/Images in History: Reflections on the importance of Film and Television Study for an Understanding of the Past," *American Historical Review* vol. 93 #5 (Dec 1988) pp. 1200-1209. **JSTOR**
Pierre Sorlin, "How to look at an 'Historical' Film,"
electronic reserve

Week 8

Mon. Oct 5 – *Sir, No Sir*
Wed. Oct 7 – *Sir, No Sir*
FILM SCREENING: *Platoon*
Fri. Oct 9 – MIDTERM EXAM

Week 9

Mon. Oct 12 – The Growth of the Antiwar Movement
READING: Herring, *America's Longest War*, 201-213
Gettleman, *Vietnam and America*, 295-300
Wed. Oct 14 – The Tet Offensive and Its Consequences
READING: Herring, *America's Longest War*, 213-252
Gettleman, *Vietnam and America*, 401-409
FILM SCREENING: *We Were Soldiers*
Fri. Oct 16 – Discussion: "War! What is it Good For? Absolutely Nothing!"
READING: Small, *Antiwarriors*, 1-94
Gettleman, *Vietnam and America*, 301-218

Week 10

Mon. Oct 19 – The 1968 Election
READING: Herring, *America's Longest War*, 252-268
Small, "The Election of 1968," *Diplomatic History* Vol. 28
No. 4 (Sept. 2004) p. 513-528 **E-JOURNALS**
Wed. Oct 21 – Vietnamization and Nixon's Indochina Policy
READING: Herring, *America's Longest War*, 271-288
Gettleman, *Vietnam and America*, 430-445
FILM SCREENING: *Go Tell the Spartans*
Fri. Oct 23 – Discussion: "If Its Dead and Vietnamese, Its VC"
READING: Olson and Roberts, *My Lai*, all

Week 11

Mon. Oct 26 – Cambodia and Kent State
READING: Herring, *America's Longest War*, 288-296
Gettleman, *Vietnam and America*, 451-455
Wed. Oct 28 – Discussion: Everybody Loves a Good War Story

READING: O'Brien, *The Things They Carried*, all
FILM SCREENING: *Good Morning, Vietnam*
Fri. Oct 30 – NO CLASS: FALL BREAK

Week 12

Mon. Nov 2 – The Antiwar Movement, 1968-1975
FILM: Excerpt from *Vietnam: A Television History*, Part 11, “Homefront U.S.A.”
Wed. Nov 4 – Discussion: “And Its 1,2,3, What are We Fighting For?”
READING: Small, *Antiwarriors*, 95-163
Gettleman, *Vietnam and America*, 319-335, 455-462
FILM SCREENING: *Coming Home*
Fri. Nov 6 – NO CLASS

Week 13

Mon. Nov 9 – Kissinger and the Search for Peace, 1970-1973
READING: Herring, *America's Longest War*, 296-320
Gettleman, *Vietnam and America*, 487-488
Wed. Nov 11 – The End of the Second Indochina War, 1973-1975
READING: Herring, *America's Longest War*, 323-349
Gettleman, *Vietnam and America*, 495-500
FILM SCREENING: *Born on the Fourth of July*
Fri. Nov 13 – Discussion: The Strange Story of the POW/MIA Campaign
READING: Franklin, “Missing in Action in the Twenty-first Century,”
electronic reserve

Week 14

Mon. Nov 16 – U.S.-Vietnam Relations since 1975
READING: Martini, *Invisible Enemies*, 12-39, 78-115
Wed. Nov 18 – *Hearts and Minds*
LAST DAY TO TURN IN FILM PAPER
Fri. Nov 20 - *Hearts and Minds*

Week 15

Mon. Nov 23 – NO CLASS: THANKSGIVING BREAK
Wed. Nov 25 – NO CLASS: THANKSGIVING BREAK
Fri. Nov 27 – NO CLASS: THANKSGIVING BREAK

Week 16

Mon. Nov 30 – The Vietnam War in Popular Memory

READING: Martini, *Invisible Enemies*, 40-77, 115-161

Wed. Dec 2 – The Vietnam War Veteran

READING: Martini, *Invisible Enemies*, 205-234

Fri. Dec 4 – The Vietnamese since 1975

Week 17

Mon. Dec 6 – Discussion: Photographs and Memories

READING: Lembcke, *The Spitting Image*, all

Tues. Dec 8 – Last Day of Class: Review for the Final Exam

FINAL EXAM: Thursday, December 10, Noon-3 P.M.