

University of North Carolina at Greensboro
HIS 588: East Asian History Selected Topics - The Viet Nam Wars

Spring Semester 2008

M 3:30pm- 6:20pm

MHRA 1209

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Office Hours: MW 11:00-11:50 a.m., and by appointment

Introduction:

In the eyes of many Americans, there is little separation between the image of “Vietnam” and the tragic outcome of US involvement in the Second Indochinese War. However, Viet Nam as a nation and the Vietnamese as a people have existed in the region for over two thousand years, fighting during much of this time for both political autonomy and cultural self-identity. During the course of its history, Viet Nam’s military adversary and cultural ally has often been China. Conversely, Chinese leaders have long believed that their empire shared a special bond with Viet Nam, which at times promoted the impulse to subjugate their smaller neighbor. This course will consider the history of wars fought on Vietnamese soil within the larger context of political, social and cultural change. The course themes include; resistance of foreign aggression as an integral part of the Vietnamese nationalist narrative, Vietnamese self-identity in the shadow of Chinese domination, the anti-colonial origins of the Vietnamese nationalist and Communist movements, and Vietnamese government’s uneasy relations with border ethnic groups. It is my desire that, after the completion of this seminar course, we will have a larger historical context in which we can more clearly evaluate the events of the last 50 years.

Students taking this course should reach the following goals by the end of the semester:

- Construct persuasive written arguments regarding issues of historical interpretation.
- Utilize the latest methods of Web-based technology to communicate with fellow students.
- Understand better the effect the ancient past has had on the modern world.
- Exhibit self-motivation and self-expression by exploring and asking questions regarding historical topics beyond personal life experiences.

Course Requirements

I expect all students to attend and participate in all discussion sections. More than three absences during the course of the semester, for any reason, will result in a failing grade. Moreover, the completion of all written assignments is necessary for a passing grade. No "incompletes" will be given for this class. Please remember to plan ahead! I will also require that all students establish e-mail accounts with Internet access. This course will occasionally

involve interaction between the instructor and students outside of the lecture period. Please set up these accounts as soon as possible. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Grading (Undergraduates)

Annotated bibliography (4-5 pages)	20%
Class presentation	10%
Historiographical essay (8-10 pages)	40%
Class participation	30%

Grading (Graduate students)

Historiographical essay (15-20 pages)	50%
Class presentation	20%
Class participation	30%

Annotated bibliography

All undergraduate students will produce short annotated bibliographies as their first written assignments. All graduate students will supply annotated bibliographies with their final historiographical essays. An annotated bibliography is a list of books, articles, and documents, in which each entry is followed by a brief description of the source itself. These descriptions, or annotations, are provided to advise the reader on the accuracy and usefulness of the materials you have cited in your bibliography. For a better sense of what it entails to create an annotated bibliography, I urge everyone to visit the Cornell University Library's web page "How to Prepare an Annotated Bibliography" at <http://www.library.cornell.edu/olinuris/ref/research/skill28.htm>. This page contains a very good overview of the process.

Web Site contributions

This class is served by a companion Blackboard site, through which you may access all the on-line e-reserves. I also have created a web site for this classroom, which I will continue to expand as the quarter progresses. Here students can access course information, such as scheduled events (i.e. the syllabus you now hold in your hand), as well as terms mentioned in lecture. I will also list links to web sites of interest to our class. Please refer to the class site periodically for such materials. I urge everyone to visit the Jim Kapoun's web page on the Cornell Library site "Five Criteria for Evaluating Web Pages" (<http://www.library.cornell.edu/olinuris/ref/webcrit.html>) before "surfing" through these on-line materials. Moreover, I December include additional materials on the library's Electronic Reserve list. Please refer to the class Web site periodically for such materials.

Class presentations

All students will be required to present to the class a short summary and salient points from their final essays. We will discuss the nature of these presentations later on in the course.

Historiographical Essay

An historiographical essay is a critical overview of a variety of historical interpretations of an oftentimes narrowly focused topic. Such essays can take different forms, and we will discuss these forms during this course. As an example, I will place one of my own essays from graduate student days on reserve at the library. Please remember that the quality of your writing, particularly the clarity and persuasiveness of your argument, will factor into the final grading. Late papers will be penalized half a letter grade for each day beyond the original due date.

Classroom Discussions

Discussion and the exchange of ideas are very important components of this course. Everyone will be required to participate, and you should feel free to ask questions in every class. Each student will come to class having read the texts and prepared to discuss them. To facilitate discussion I will ask for volunteers to prepare short summaries (1-2 paragraphs) and outlines (no more than 2 pages) of chapters to stimulate class discussion. These outlines will be posted to the course Blackboard site. I will also not hesitate to call on all students to participate. However, you should feel free to speak with me before class, if you find it difficult to speak in a public setting. In that case, you may submit your questions before each class in writing.

Required Reading

1. Tran, Nhung Tuyet, and Anthony Reid. *Viet Nam: Borderless Histories*. New perspectives in Southeast Asian studies. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2006. ISBN: 0299217701.
2. Young, Marilyn. *The Vietnam Wars, 1945-1990*. New York: HarperCollins, 1991. ISBN-13: 978-0060921071.
3. Lawrence, Mark Atwood, and Fredrik Logevall. *The First Vietnam War: Colonial Conflict and Cold War Crisis*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2007. ISBN: 0674023714.
4. Duiker, William J. *Ho Chi Minh: A Life*. New York: Hyperion, 2001. New Ed edition. ISBN-13: 978-0786887019.
5. Randolph, Stephen P. *Powerful and Brutal Weapons: Nixon, Kissinger, and the Easter Offensive*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2007. ISBN: 0674024915.
6. Anderson, David L., and John Ernst. *The War That Never Ends New Perspectives on the Vietnam War*. Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2007. ISBN: 9780813124735.

All other materials for this course will be available on electronic reserve at the course Blackboard site.

READING SCHEDULE	
WEEK'S TOPIC	READINGS AND DISCUSSION
INTRODUCTION	
14- January: Course “nuts and bolts” and topical introduction	Short lecture by instructor
Monday 21 January	Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday. Classes dismissed; offices closed.
VIET NAM DURING THE IMPERIAL PERIOD	
28 January: Defining Characteristics of Vietnamese Society. Warfare in the Origins of Viet Nam’s Historical Narrative. Chinese Domination and Local Rebellion in Viet Nam.	Reading: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Tran, Nhung Tuyet, and Anthony Reid. <i>Viet Nam: Borderless Histories</i>. Introduction and Chapters. 1-4. (individual chapter outlines by student volunteers) 2. Taylor, <i>The Birth of Vietnam</i>, pp. 1-44 (on e-reserve; outlines required from all students) 3. Anderson, <i>The Rebel Den of Nùng Trí Cao</i>, Chapter 3, “Examples of Negotiated Autonomy” (on e-reserve; outlines required from all students)
4 February: Defining Characteristics of Vietnamese Society. Warfare in the Origins of Viet Nam’s Historical Narrative. Chinese Domination and Local Rebellion in Viet Nam. (cont.)	Readings: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Tran, Nhung Tuyet, and Anthony Reid. <i>Viet Nam: Borderless Histories</i>. Chapters. 5-10. (individual chapter outlines by student volunteers) 2. Whitmore, “Chiao-chih and Neo-Confucianism: The Ming Attempt to Transform Vietnam” (on e-reserve; Outlines required from all students). 3. Wook, Choi Byung “Vietnamization of Southern Vietnam” (on e-reserve; Outlines required from all students).
VIETNAMESE SOCIETY UNDER THE FRENCH	
11 February: Vietnamese Society Under the French. Early Vietnamese Radicals.	Readings: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Hue-Tam Ho Tai, <i>Radicalism and the Origins of the Vietnamese Revolution</i>, pp. 10-58 (on e-reserve; outlines required from all students). 2. David Marr, <i>Vietnamese Tradition on Trial</i>,

	1920-45, pp. 288-326 (on e-reserve; outlines required from all students). 3. Film: <i>Roots of War</i> (VH1009)
18 February: The First Indochinese War	Readings: 1. Lawrence, Mark Atwood, and Fredrik Logevall. <i>The First Vietnam War</i> (individual chapter outlines by student volunteers). 2. McNamara, "Evolution of Washington's and Hanoi's Mindsets" (on e-reserve; outlines required from all students). 3. Young, Marilyn, <i>The Vietnam Wars, 1945-1990</i> , Chapters 1-2 (background reading) 4. Film: <i>First Vietnam War: 1946-54</i> (VH1010)
THE U.S. CONFLICT IN VIET NAM	
No class meeting on February 25th	Day reserved for undergraduate student conferences regarding annotated bibliographies
3 March: The Legacy of Ho Chi Minh	Reading: Duiker, <i>Ho Chi Minh</i> (individual chapter outlines by student volunteers).
MONDAY, MARCH 3rd	UNDERGRADUATES' ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHIES DUE IN CLASS

SPRING BREAK (SATURDAY, MARCH 8TH - SUNDAY, MARCH 16TH)

WEEK'S TOPIC	READINGS AND DISCUSSION
THE U.S. CONFLICT IN VIET NAM	
17 March: The RVN Government and the ARVN during Early US Involvement	Readings: 1. Catton, Philip, <i>Diem's final failure</i> (on e-reserve; outlines required from all students). 2. Anderson and Ernst. <i>The War That Never End</i> , chapters 2, 7, 6 (individual chapter outlines by student volunteers). 3. Young, Marilyn, <i>The Vietnam Wars, 1945-1990</i> , Chapters 3-5 (background reading) 4. Film: <i>America's Mandarin: 1954-1963</i> (VH1011)

<p>24 March: The PAVN, the NLF and Ha Noi's early strategy in the Second Indochinese Conflict</p>	<p>Readings:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. McNamara, "U.S. military victory in Vietnam: a dangerous illusion?" (Parts A&B) (On e-reserve; outlines required from all students). 2. Anderson and Ernst. <i>The War That Never Ends</i>, chapters 4, 5 (Individual chapter outlines by student volunteers). 3. Young, Marilyn, <i>The Vietnam Wars, 1945-1990</i>, Chapters 6-7 (background reading) 4. Film: With America's Enemy: 1954-67 (VH1014)
<p>31 March: Escalation in US Involvement, Cold War Considerations. US Domestic Considerations.</p>	<p>Readings:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Anderson and Ernst. <i>The War That Never Ends</i>, chapters 3, 8-14 (individual chapter outlines by student volunteers). 2. Young, Marilyn, <i>The Vietnam Wars, 1945-1990</i>, Chapters 8-10 (background reading) 3. Film: <i>America Takes Charge: 1965-67</i> (VH1013)
<p>THE END OF U.S. INVOLVEMENT</p>	
<p>7 April: The Tet Offensive</p>	<p>Readings:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ngo Vinh Long "The Tet Offensive and Its Aftermath" in Marc Jason Gilbert and William Head, eds., <i>The Tet Offensive</i>. (On e-reserve; outlines required from all students). 2. Young, Marilyn, <i>The Vietnam Wars, 1945-1990</i>, Chapter 11 (background reading) 3. Film: <i>Tet: 1968</i> (VH1015)
<p>14 April: The End of US Involvement in the Second Indochinese Conflict.</p>	<p>Reading:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Randolph, Stephen P. <i>Powerful and Brutal Weapons: Nixon, Kissinger, and the Easter Offensive</i>. 2. Young, Marilyn, <i>The Vietnam Wars, 1945-1990</i>, Chapters 12-14 (background reading) 3. Film: Vietnamizing The War (VH1016)
<p>THE LEGACY OF WAR</p>	
<p>21 April: The Third Indochinese War. The Legacy of the Second Indochinese War in US Society.</p>	<p>Readings:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. King C. Chen, <i>China's War With Vietnam, 1979</i>, pp. 69-117 (on e-reserve; outlines required from all students). 2. Anderson, David L., and John Ernst. <i>The War That Never Ends</i>, Introduction, chapters 1, 15, 16 (individual chapter outlines by student volunteers). 3. Young, Marilyn, <i>The Vietnam Wars, 1945-1990</i>, Chapter 14 (background reading) 4. Film: <i>No Neutral Ground: Cambodia &</i>

	<i>Laos</i> (VH1017)
28 April: 3:30-5:00pm	Class Presentations
28 April: 5:00-6:20pm	Undergraduate student conferences regarding historiographical essays
5 May:	Class Presentations, Final Discussion
MONDAY, MAY 5th	GRADUATE ESSAYS DUE
MONDAY, MAY 5th	UNDERGRADUATE ESSAYS DUE

Historiographical Essay Topic Suggestions	
Premodern Topics	Modern Topics
Trung Sisters Rebellion	Edwin E. Moïse's Vietnam War Bibliography
Ming Invasion of Việt Nam	http://www.clemson.edu/caah/history/facultypages/EdMoise/bibliography.html#st r
Tây Sơn Rebellion	Note: Please do <u>own</u> search after viewing Moïse's bibliography
Black Flags	(Topic of Own Choosing)
Phan Bội Châu	
Early VN Radicals	
WWII in Việt Nam	
Hồ Chí Minh	
(Topic of Own Choosing)	

