

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

Spring Semester 2013

M 3:30pm- 6:20pm

MHRA 1206

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Course web site: <http://www.uncg.edu/~jaander2/HIS588>

Office Hours: MW 10:00-10:50 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://olinuris.library.cornell.edu/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. 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://olinuris.library.cornell.edu/ref/research/webcrit.html>) before "surfing" through these on-line materials. Moreover, I 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 e-reserve. 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), short but detailed outlines (no more than 1 page) and two discussion questions for these chapters/articles to stimulate class discussion. When a reading has been assigned to the entire class, then everyone, including the week's volunteers, will prepare the above submissions for each required reading. 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 Titles:**

Hayton, Bill. *Vietnam: Rising Dragon*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010. ISBN: 9780300152036.

Brocheux, Pierre, Daniel Hémery, Ly-Lan Dill-Klein, Eric Jennings, Nora A. Taylor, and Noémi Tousignant. *Indochina: an ambiguous colonization, 1858-1954*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009. ISBN: 9780520245396.

Logevall, Fredrik. *Embers of War: The Fall of an Empire and the Making of America's Vietnam*. New York: Random House, 2012. ISBN: 9780375504426.

Nguyen, Lien-Hang T. *Hanoi's War: An International History of the War for Peace in Vietnam*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012. ISBN: 9780807835517.

Schwenkel, Christina. *The American War in Contemporary Vietnam: Transnational Remembrance and Representation*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009. ISBN: 9780253353061.

### **Recommended Supplemental Title:**

Young, Marilyn Blatt. *The Vietnam Wars, 1945-1990*. New York: HarperCollins, 1991. ISBN: 9780060165536.

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
<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	
<b>16 January:</b> Course “nuts and bolts” and topical introduction	Short lecture by instructor
<b>VIET NAM DURING THE IMPERIAL PERIOD</b>	
<b>23 January:</b> Defining Characteristics of Vietnamese Society. Warfare in the Origins of Viet Nam’s Historical Narrative. Chinese Domination and Local Rebellion in Viet Nam.	<p><b>Readings:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Taylor, “Lac Lords” in <i>The Birth of Vietnam</i>, pp. 1-44 (<b>on e-reserve; outlines required from all students</b>).</li> <li>2. Anderson, <i>The Rebel Den of Nùng Trí Cao</i>, Chapter 3, “Examples of Negotiated Autonomy” (<b>on e-reserve; outlines required from all students</b>)</li> <li>3. Whitmore, “Social Organization and Confucian Thought in Vietnam” (<b>on e-reserve; outlines required from all students</b>)</li> <li>4. Hayton, Bill. <i>Vietnam: Rising Dragon</i> (<b>individual chapter outlines by student volunteers</b>).</li> </ol>
<b>30 January:</b> The Rise of the Dynastic Vietnamese State. Ming Invasion and Local Resistance. Vietnam’s colonizing “March South.”	<p><b>Readings:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Lo, Jung-Pang “Intervention in Vietnam” article, pp. 154-182 (<b>on e-reserve; outlines required from all students</b>).</li> <li>2. Wook, Choi Byung “Vietnamization of Southern Vietnam” (<b>on e-reserve; outlines required from all students</b>).</li> <li>3. R.B. Smith, “The Cycle of Confucianization in Vietnam” article, pp. 1-29 (<b>on e-reserve; outlines required from all students</b>).</li> <li>4. Lam, Resistance, Rebellion, Revolution: Popular Movements in Vietnamese History, “Introduction” (<b>on e-reserve; outlines required from all students</b>).</li> <li>5. Hayton, Bill. <i>Vietnam: Rising Dragon</i></li> </ol>

	(individual chapter outlines by student volunteers).
<b>VIETNAMESE SOCIETY UNDER THE FRENCH</b>	
<b>6 February:</b> Vietnamese Society Under the French. Early Vietnamese Radicals.	<p><b>Readings:</b></p> <p>1. Brocheux, <i>Indochina: an ambiguous colonization</i> (individual chapter outlines by student volunteers).</p> <p>2. David Marr, <i>Vietnamese Tradition on Trial, 1920-45</i>, pp. 288-326. (on e-reserve; outlines required from all students).</p> <p>3. <b>Film:</b> <i>Roots of War</i> (VH1009)</p>
<b>13 February (3:30-4:45):</b> Vietnamese Society Under the French. Early Vietnamese Radicals. (cont.)	<p><b>Readings:</b></p> <p>1. Brocheux, <i>Indochina: an ambiguous colonization</i> (individual chapter outlines by student volunteers).</p> <p>2. Tai, <i>Radicalism and the Origins of the Vietnamese Revolution</i> Chapter 1, “My Father’s House” (on e-reserve; outlines required from all students).</p>
<b>13 February (5:00-6:20):</b>	Time reserved for undergraduate student conferences regarding annotated bibliographies
<b>THE U.S. CONFLICT IN VIET NAM</b>	

<b>20 February:</b> The First Indochinese War	<p><b>Reading:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. McNamara, “Evolution of Washington's and Hanoi's Mindsets” (<b>on e-reserve; outlines required from all students</b>).</li> <li>2. Logevall, Fredrik. <i>Embers of War</i> (<b>individual chapter outlines by student volunteers</b>).</li> <li>3. <b>Film:</b> <i>First Vietnam War: 1946-54</i> (VH1010)</li> <li>4. Young, <i>The Vietnam Wars Chapters 1-2</i> (<b>suggested background reading</b>)</li> </ol>
<b>20 February</b>	<b>UNDERGRADUATES' ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHIES DUE IN CLASS</b>
<b>27 February:</b> The RVN Government and the ARVN during Early US Involvement.	<p><b>Readings:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Catton, Philip, “The Ngos, Nationalism and Nation Building” <i>Diem's final failure</i> (<b>on e-reserve; outlines required from all students</b>).</li> <li>2. Logevall, Fredrik. <i>Embers of War</i> (<b>individual chapter outlines by student volunteers</b>).</li> <li>3. Young, <i>The Vietnam Wars Chapters 3-5</i> (<b>suggested background reading</b>)</li> <li>4. <b>Film:</b> <i>America's Mandarin: 1954-1963</i> (VH1011)</li> </ol>
<b>6 March:</b> Ha Noi's early strategy in the Second Indochinese Conflict. Escalation in US Involvement	<p><b>Readings:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. McNamara, “U.S. military victory in Vietnam: a dangerous illusion?” (Parts A&amp;B) (<b>On e-reserve; outlines required from all students</b>).</li> <li>2. Nguyen, Lien-Hang T. <i>Hanoi's War</i> (<b>individual chapter outlines by student volunteers</b>).</li> <li>3. Young, <i>The Vietnam Wars Chapters 6-10</i> (<b>suggested background reading</b>)</li> <li>4. <b>Film:</b> <i>With America's Enemy: 1954-67</i> (VH1014)</li> </ol>

**SPRING BREAK: 9-17 March, No Class Meetings.**

WEEK'S TOPIC	READINGS AND DISCUSSION
<b>20 March:</b>	<b>No Class.</b> Please work on your individual research projects.
<b>29 March:</b> The Tet Offensive. The End of US Involvement in the Second Indochinese Conflict.	<p><b>Readings:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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).</li> <li>2. Nguyen, Lien-Hang T. <i>Hanoi's War</i> (individual chapter outlines by student volunteers).</li> <li>3. Young, <i>The Vietnam Wars</i> Chapters 11-14 (suggested background reading)</li> <li><b>4. Film: <i>Tet: 1968</i> (VH1015)</b></li> </ol>
<b>THE LEGACY OF WAR</b>	
<b>3 April:</b> The Third Indochinese War. The Legacy of the Second Indochinese War in VN Society.	<p><b>Readings:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. King C. Chen, <i>China's War With Vietnam, 1979</i>, pp. 69-117 (on e-reserve; outlines required from all students).</li> <li>2. Schwenkel, Christina, <i>The American War in Contemporary Vietnam</i> (individual chapter outlines by student volunteers).</li> <li>3. Young, <i>The Vietnam Wars</i> Chapter 15 (suggested background reading)</li> <li><b>4. Film: <i>How to Behave</i></b></li> </ol>
<b>10 April:</b> Vietnam in the Post-war Era. Doi Moi Reforms. The Continued Legacy of War in VN Society.	<p><b>Readings:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Schwenkel, Christina, <i>The American War in Contemporary Vietnam</i> (individual chapter outlines by student volunteers).</li> <li><b>3. Film: <i>Saigon Electric</i> (2011)</b></li> </ol>
<b>17 April:</b>	<b>Class Presentations (Grad students first)</b>
<b>24 April:</b>	<b>Class Presentations, Final Discussion (Attendance required)</b>
<b>MONDAY, APRIL 24<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>GRADUATE ESSAYS DUE</b>
<b>MONDAY, APRIL 24<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>UNDERGRADUATE ESSAYS DUE</b>

<b>Historiographical Essay Topic Suggestions</b>	
<b>Premodern Topics</b>	<b>Modern Topics</b>
Historical Relationship of China and VN	French Colonization of Indochina
Ming Invasion of VN	Early Vietnamese Radicals
Tây Sơn Rebellion (1771-1802)	WWII in VN
Buddhism in VN	Hồ Chí Minh- Life and Legacy
Imperial vs. Local Culture in VN	VN Conflict in Literature (US/VN)
Trade and Cultural Exchange in VN	VN Conflict in Film (US/VN)
Kinh Relations with non-Kinh in VN Society	VN Conflict in the Visual Arts (US/VN)
Western Missionaries in late Imperial VN	Environmental Impact of War in VN
	Modern Sino-Vietnamese Relations
	State vs. Private Memorials of Wartime Sacrifice
	Psychological Impact of War in VN/US
	Impact of VN Conflict Beyond VN and US
	Media and Modern Viet Nam

For more modern topics, please see  
Edwin E. Moïse's Vietnam War Bibliography  
<http://www.clemson.edu/caah/history/facultypages/EdMoise/bibliography.html>

**Note:** Please conduct your own search after viewing Moïse's bibliography

