

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

Fall Semester 2003

M 6:00pm- 8:50pm

MCVR 225

Instructor: James A. Anderson

Telephone: (336) 334-5209

Office: MCVR 242

E-mail: [jamie\\_anderson@uncg.edu](mailto:jamie_anderson@uncg.edu) (This is the best way to contact me throughout the week.)

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**

**PLEASE NOTE:** This course will be conducted as an upper-level seminar with a strong emphasis on classroom discussion and student presentations. I expect all students to attend and participate in all discussion sections. Moreover, the completion of all written assignments is necessary for a passing grade. It is important to note that more than three (3) missed classes will result in a failing grade in this course. No further excuses, for any reason, will be permitted. I also wish to note that no "incompletes" will be given for this class. Please remember to plan ahead!

I will 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 (5-7 pages)	20%
Class presentation	10%
Historiographical essay (10-12 pages)	40%
Class participation	30%

### **Grading (Graduate students)**

Historiographical essay (20-25 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 site at <http://www.library.cornell.edu/okuref/research/skill28.htm>. This page contains a very good overview of the process.

### **Web Site contributions**

I have created a Web site for this classroom, which you and I will continue to expand as the semester progresses. Together we will discuss options for the expansion of the course web site during the first weeks of class. Students also 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. I urge everyone to visit the site *Critical Thinking on the Web: A Directory of Quality Online Resources* (<http://www.philosophy.unimelb.edu.au/reason/critical/>) before "surfing" through these on-line materials. Moreover, I may 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 historiographical 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. I will 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. Karnow, Stanley. *Vietnam: A History*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. New York: Penguin Books, 1997. ISBN: 0140265473.
2. Hue-Tam Ho Tai (Editor). *The Country of Memory: Remaking the Past in Late Socialist Vietnam*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001. ISBN: 0520222679.
3. Morris, Stephen. *Why Vietnam Invaded Cambodia: Political Culture and the Causes of the War*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999. ISBN: 0804730504.
4. Duiker, William J. *Sacred War: Nationalism and Revolution in a Divided Vietnam*. Boston: McGraw Hill, 1995. ISBN: 007018030X.
5. Bradley, Mark Philip *Imagining Vietnam and America: The Making of Postcolonial Vietnam, 1919-1950*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000. ISBN: 0807848611.

All other materials for this course will be available on reserve (or on electronic reserve) at the library.

A very useful starting point when you first “carve out” your research project this semester is Professor Moise’s on-line “Vietnam War Bibliography” at <http://hubcap.clemson.edu/~eemoise/bibliography.html>. An earlier bound version of this bibliography can be found in the Jackson Library collection.

### Reading Schedule

WEEK'S TOPIC	READINGS AND DISCUSSION
<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	
<b>August 18:</b> Course “nuts and bolts” and topical introduction	<b>Film:</b> <i>Changing Faces of Communism: Vietnam</i>
<b>WAR IN VIET NAM DURING THE IMPERIAL PERIOD</b>	
<b>August 25:</b> Defining Characteristics of Vietnamese Society. Warfare in the Origins of Viet Nam’s Historical Narrative. Chinese Domination and Local Rebellion in Viet Nam. Early French Colonial Expansion.	<p><b>Readings:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Karnow, <i>Vietnam</i>, pp.60-100.</li> <li>2. Taylor, <i>The Birth of Vietnam</i>, pp. 1-44 (<b>on reserve</b>).</li> <li>3. R.B. Smith, “The Cycle of Confucianization in Vietnam” (<b>on reserve</b>).</li> <li>4. Whitmore, “Social organization and Confucian thought in Vietnam” (<b>on reserve</b>).</li> <li>5. Lo, “Intervention in Vietnam” (<b>on reserve</b>).</li> <li>6. Truong Buu Lam. ”Resistance, Rebellion, Revolution” (<b>on reserve</b>).</li> </ol>
<b>Monday September 1<sup>st</sup>, Labor Day Holiday</b>	
<b>VIETNAMESE SOCIETY UNDER THE FRENCH</b>	
<b>September 8:</b> Vietnamese Society Under the French. Early Vietnamese Radicals.	<p><b>Readings:</b> Karnow, <i>Vietnam</i>, pp.101-138. Hue-Tam Ho Tai, <i>Radicalism and the Origins of the Vietnamese Revolution</i>, pp. 57-87 (<b>on reserve</b>). David Marr, <i>Vietnamese Tradition on Trial, 1920-45</i>, pp. 54-100 (<b>on reserve</b>). <b>Film:</b> <i>Roots of War</i> (VH1009)</p>
<b>September 15:</b> The US in Vietnamese Eyes; Viet Nam in American Eyes. The First Indochinese War.	<p><b>Readings:</b> Karnow, <i>Vietnam</i>, pp.139-221. Bradley, <i>Imagining Vietnam &amp; America</i> McNamara, Evolution of Washington's and Hanoi's Mindsets (<b>on reserve</b>). <b>Film:</b> <i>First Vietnam War: 1946-54</i> (VH1010)</p>
<b>THE U.S. CONFLICT IN VIET NAM</b>	
<b>September 22:</b> The RVN Government and the ARVN during Early US Involvement	<p><b>Readings:</b> Karnow, <i>Vietnam</i>, pp.222-327. Catton, <i>Diem's final failure</i> (<b>on reserve</b>).</p>

	<b>Film:</b> <i>America's Mandarin: 1954-1963</i> (VH1011)
<b>No class meeting on September 29<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Day reserved for undergraduate student conferences regarding annotated bibliographies</b>
<b>October 6:</b> The PAVN, the NLF and Ha Noi's early strategy in the 2 <sup>nd</sup> Indochinese Conflict	<b>Readings:</b> Duiker, Sacred War Robert Brigham's chapter from <i>Why the North Won the Vietnam War</i> ( <b>on reserve</b> ). <b>Film:</b> <i>America Takes Charge: 1965-67</i> (VH1013)
<b>MONDAY, OCTOBER 6<sup>TH</sup></b>	<b>UNDERGRADUATES' ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHIES DUE IN CLASS</b>

**FALL BREAK: October 10, Friday - Instruction Ends for Fall Break 6:00 p.m**

**October 15, Wednesday - Classes resume after Fall Break 8:00 a.m**

WEEK'S TOPIC	READINGS AND DISCUSSION
<b>October 20:</b> The PAVN, the NLF and Ha Noi's early strategy in the Second Indochinese Conflict (cont.)	<b>Reading:</b> Duiker, Sacred War <b>Film:</b> <i>With America's Enemy: 1954-67</i> (VH1014)
<b>THE END OF U.S. INVOLVEMENT</b>	
<b>October 27:</b> The Tet Offensive	<b>Reading:</b> Karnow, <i>Vietnam</i> , pp.528- 581. Marc Jason Gilbert and William Head, eds., <i>The Tet Offensive</i> . ( <b>on reserve</b> ). <b>Film:</b> <i>Tet: 1968</i> (VH1015)
<b>November 3:</b> The End of US Involvement in the Second Indochinese Conflict.	<b>Reading:</b> Karnow, <i>Vietnam</i> , pp.582- 684. McNamara, "U.S. military victory in Vietnam: a dangerous illusion?" ( <b>on reserve</b> ). <b>Film:</b> <i>Vietnamizing The War</i> (VH1016)
<b>November 10:</b> The Third Indochinese War.	<b>Reading:</b> Morris, <i>Why Vietnam Invaded Cambodia</i> King C. Chen, <i>China's War with Vietnam, 1979</i> ( <b>on reserve</b> ). <b>Film:</b> <i>No Neutral Ground: Cambodia &amp; Laos</i> (VH1017)

<b>November 17:</b> Modern Viet Nam and the Historical Memory of War	Readings: Hue Tam Ho Tai, <i>The Country of Memory</i> <b>Film:</b> "How to Behave"
<b>November 24:</b>	<b>Class Presentations</b>
<b>December 1:</b>	<b>Class Presentations</b>
<b>December 8:</b>	<b>Class Presentations</b> <b>Final Discussion</b>
<b>MONDAY, DECEMBER 8<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>GRADUATE ESSAYS DUE</b>
<b>MONDAY, DECEMBER 8<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>UNDERGRADUATE ESSAYS DUE</b>
<b>MONDAY, DECEMBER 8<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Last Day Of His 588 Classes</b>

