

**WOH 3241
THE VIETNAM WAR
FALL 2016**

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Class Time: Tuesdays, 7th per. (1:55-2:45) and Thursdays, 7th-8th pers. (1:55-3:50)
Class Location: FLI 0105

Course Description and Objectives

Four decades after the conclusion of its U.S. phase, the Vietnam War remains one of the most contested and debated moments in modern American history. It also remains an immensely popular subject of study for scholars, students, documentary filmmakers and others. If that is the case for Americans, the conflict holds even greater significance for those who are Vietnamese, as its consequences were felt even more deeply in Vietnam than they were in the United States. I therefore have designed this class to allow us to explore the Vietnam War from a multitude of perspectives, American and Vietnamese. Students can expect each class period to contain a mixture of lecture and discussion, as well as the occasional film or music clip. More specifically, by the end of the class students should:

- Develop a clear knowledge and understanding of conflict in Vietnam from the late nineteenth century through the late twentieth century, with a particular focus on the U.S. phase of that conflict;
- Critically analyze the cultural, economic, political, and social implications of conflict within Vietnam, the United States, and elsewhere;
- Consider a variety legacies of conflict in Vietnam; and
- Use our analysis of Vietnam to provide an analytical foundation for considering the two wars—Afghanistan and Iraq—that have superceded Vietnam as the longest conflicts in U.S. history and have dominated international politics and U.S. political culture during your lifetime.

Organization and Assignments

To accomplish the above objectives, I have organized the class around a mixture of lecture, readings, discussion, other in-class activities, and a variety of written assignments. Though we will have more formal discussions and in-class activities during the Thursday double-period classes, students should come to every class prepared to participate. Indeed, the overall

success of the class will depend to a significant degree on students' willingness to engage in conversations about the course material. Students will also write four short papers, due on 20 September, 11 October, 1 November, and 6 December. Each paper will focus on the following topics: the coming of the war (paper one), the ending of the war (paper two), debating and experiencing the war (paper three), and the legacies and memories of war (paper four). I will provide more details for each assignment as they draw near. ***Please note: I reserve the right to turn any of these written assignments into in-class exams if class attendance and participation becomes problematic.***

Grading

The assignments listed above will carry the following weights in the final, overall grade:

Assignment	Percent of Grade
Participation	15%
Paper One	15%
Paper Two	20%
Paper Three	25%
Paper Four	25%

Letter grades on papers will be based on three major, closely related criteria:

- Evidence--how good is the command and deployment of the relevant course material, and is the student employing the best evidence available to make his/her points;
- Interpretation--has the student developed an argument or point of view that is pertinent to the issue at hand, and that has breadth, coherence, and insight; and
- Expression (style)--is the prose (writing) clear, concise, and engaging?

We will weight these criteria equally, and will factor them into letter grades as follows:

- A—Excellent: Your work is outstanding in all three areas. It offers an integrated, insightful argument based on ample, sound evidence and is written in clear and engaging prose.
- B—Good: Your work is strong in all three areas, or is outstanding in one area while having significant weaknesses in another.
- C—Average: Your performance is adequate in one or more areas, but also has significant weaknesses in others, leaving the presentation fragmented, murky, or narrow.
- D—Poor: Your work demonstrates notable weaknesses in all three areas. Remedial work may be needed to improve substantive understanding or basic communication skills.

- E—Unacceptable: Your work has serious flaws in all areas, or demonstrates limited engagement in the assignment.

Participation grades will rest on discussions of the relevant materials and engagement in class activities. Adequate participation will indicate that a student did the readings and was actively engaged in discussion. If students have questions about how participation is being evaluated, or if students feel uncomfortable speaking in front of others, they should see me as early in the semester as possible.

We will assign letter grades for papers and for final course grades according to the following numerical scales:

Letter Grade	Numerical Equivalent (Paper and Final Grades)	GPA Equivalent (Final Grades)
A	93 and above	4.0
A-	90-92	3.67
B+	87-89	3.33
B	83-86	3.0
B-	80-82	2.67
C+	77-79	2.33
C	73-76	2.0
C-	70-72	1.67
D+	67-69	1.33
D	63-66	1.0
D-	60-62	0.67
E	Below 60	0.0
E1	Stopped attending or participating prior to the end of class	0.0
I	Incomplete (Note: I rarely agree to these)	0.0

Policies and Expectations

History classes are most rewarding when students interact with the materials, each other, and the professor on a sustained and regular basis. While lectures and readings provide the raw material for the class, much learning will take place in both formal and informal discussions. Effective class participation (see above) is therefore essential. Students can expect an atmosphere in which opinions are expressed, and received, in a thoughtful and respectful manner. It also is important to note that many students will hold very strong opinions about the issues we will be discussing this term. Disagreement and lively debate are encouraged as long as all students remain respectful of one another. I also encourage all students to be willing to challenge their own preconceptions and to have other students challenge them as well.

Students are expected to attend all class sessions and to be respectful of themselves, other students, the graduate assistant, and me at all times. In addition to arriving in a timely manner, this includes, but is not limited to, refraining from text messaging, playing cell phone or computer games, checking email, surfing the web, reading newspapers or other non-course related material, and other distracting behavior. I will ask students who do not observe these general guidelines to leave class, and students who persist in such behavior will receive grade penalties.

Unless otherwise noted, students will submit all written assignments electronically through the CANVAS class portal. Students encountering technical problems while submitting assignments should email the paper to me and the graduate assistant by the appropriate due date and time. We will accept papers up to one week after the due date, but with a significant penalty for each day they are late. Should there be any in-class exams, no make-ups will be allowed without the presentation of a valid and verifiable excuse. I will handle requests for extensions and other possible exceptions to these policies on a case-by-case basis.

We will handle concerns about grades on specific assignments in the following manner. We will release grades for all students simultaneously for each assignment, and will observe a "twenty-four hour rule" at that point. In short, this means that we are happy to entertain questions about grades and comments on papers, but students must wait twenty-four hours after receiving their grade to contact us. This rule allows the graduate student and me to get some much-needed rest and distance, while also allowing potentially disappointed or upset students time to calm down. Students with concerns about how their papers have been graded should first speak with the individual who graded that assignment (usually the graduate assistant). If the student still has questions following that conversation, s/he should feel free to see the professor, but please bring a clean printed version of the paper to our meeting. After speaking with the student, I will read the clean copy first and then read the comments and evaluation of the original grader. Students should not worry that they will be penalized for engaging in this process, as I will not reduce a grade that has been appealed (though I may or may not raise it). Students with grade concerns should initiate the process by contacting the original grader of the assignment within one week of when the assignment is returned.

Cheating in any form undermines the integrity and mutual trust essential to a community of

learning and places at a comparative disadvantage those students who respect and work by the rules of that community. It is understood that any work a student submits is indeed his/her own. Plagiarism—that is, lifting without giving credit from something someone else has written such as a published book, article, or even a student paper—is forbidden and is, in most cases, fairly easily detected. There are other, more obvious forms of academic dishonesty, such as turning in work completed by someone else, bringing inappropriate notes into an exam, and offering or receiving whispered, signaled, or other forms of assistance during an exam. Working with fellow students in study groups or having someone else read a draft of a paper is not only acceptable but also encouraged, as long as one is refining ideas that are essentially his or her own. Included within this definition of academic integrity is the assumption that all documents and excuses provided as explanations for late or missed assignments have not been falsified. Please review the University’s policies regarding [student conduct and conflict resolution](#), available through the [Dean of Students Office website](#).

Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to me when requesting accommodation. For more information regarding University policies on this issue, please visit the [Disability Resource Center's website](#).

Please do not hesitate to contact me or the graduate assistant at any point during the semester with any individual concerns or issues you may need to discuss. It is best for all parties if this happens as early in the semester as possible. Problems are much easier for us to address if we know about them sooner rather than later, and can be particularly difficult to handle if left until exam week or after final grades have been submitted.

Required Readings

There are two books required for this course, one of which is listed below. The second will be a memoir of each student’s choosing. There will also be a few additional readings assigned electronically, either as direct web links or as files posted to the E-Learning site.

- Michael H. Hunt, *A Vietnam War Reader: A Documentary History from American and Vietnamese Perspectives* (University of North Carolina Press).

Course Schedule

Date	Topics and Readings	Assignments
23 August	Course Introduction	
25 August	Part I: The Coming of War Setting the Stage Readings: Hunt, xiii-8	
30 August	World War II and War with the French Readings: Hunt, 8-24 Additional documents	

1 September	The French War and the Beginnings of U.S. Involvement: 1946-1954 Readings: Hunt, 24-27 Harry S. Truman, "The Truman Doctrine" Mark Atwood Lawrence, "Explaining the Early Decisions: The United States and the French War, 1945-1954"	
6 September	Geneva and Two Vietnams, 1954 Readings: Hunt, 29-36	
8 September	A Growing Crisis, 1954-1963 Readings: Hunt, 36-56 Le Duan, "The Path of Revolution in the South"	
13 September	Testing the Waters, 1963-1964 Readings: Hunt, 57-67 Documents on the Diem Coup	
15 September	Commitment, 1965 Readings: Hunt, 68-84 Sophie Quinn-Judge, "Through a Glass Darkly: Reading the History of the Vietnamese Communist Party, 1945-1975"	
20 September	Part II: Fighting and Ending a War Escalation, 1965-1967 Readings: Hunt, 85-93	Paper One on the coming of war due
22 September	Tet, My Lai, Attrition, and Acknowledging a Stalemate, 1968-1969 Readings: Hunt, 93-106 Documents assessing the Tet Offensive and its aftermath	
27 September	Expanding the War: Cambodia and Laos, 1970-1971 Readings: Hunt, 106-110	
29 September	Ending the (American) War, 1970-1973 Readings: Hunt, 110-121	
4 October	Ending the (Vietnamese) War, 1973-1975 Readings: Hunt, 188-192	
6 October	Southeast Asia after 1975 and Catch Up	

	Readings: TBA	
11 October	Part III: Experiencing War Framing the Issues and the Costs of War	Paper Two on the end of the war due
13 October	Fighting a War Readings: Hunt, 123-143 Lisa Munday, "The Combatants' Experiences"	
18 October	Fighting a Stalemate Readings: Hunt, 143-159	
20 October	The War at Home: U.S. Perspectives Readings: Hunt, 161-184	
25 October	The War at Home: Vietnamese Perspectives Readings: TBA	
27 October	Memories of War Readings: Memoir of your choosing	
1 November	Part IV: Legacies of War Framing the Issues	Paper Three on experiencing war due
3 November	Popular Culture and the Meaning of War Readings: Hunt, 185-208 Andrew C. McKeivitt, "'Watching the War Made Us Immune': The Popular Culture of the Wars"	
8 November	The War Movie, I Readings: Marilyn B. Young, "Now Playing: Vietnam," <i>OAH Magazine of History</i> , Oct. 2004: 22-26 Laurel Westrup, "Toward a New Canon: The Vietnam Conflict through Vietnamese Lenses," <i>Film and History</i> 36, 2 (2006): 45-51	
10 November	The War Movie, II: Screenings	
15 November	The Military and Policy Legacies Readings: TBA	
17 November	Finish the Military and Policy Legacies; <i>Aftermath</i> Discussion	Visit <i>Aftermath</i> exhibit at Harn Museum before

		this date
22 November	Finish <i>Aftermath</i> Discussion	
24 November	No Class—Thanksgiving Holiday	
29 November	Memorials and Their Meanings, I Readings: TBA	
1 December	Memorials and Their Meanings, II	
6 December	Course Conclusions	Paper Four on the legacies of war due