HISTORY 287: The Vietnam War (ONLINE)
Summer 2015 Syllabus
May 31-June 25, 2016

Professor: Dr. Chia Youyee Vang (vangcy@uwm.edu)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Why did the United States become involved in Vietnam for a quarter of a century? This course explores why today policymakers continue to debate the “lessons of Vietnam” and ordinary Americans, Vietnamese and other Southeast Asians, both in the United States and in Southeast Asia, are still learning to come to terms with the impact of the war on their lives. The availability of government data in recent years clearly show that the American war in Vietnam was an extremely complex phenomenon in which a struggle for decolonization and social revolution became enmeshed in Cold War politics. As U.S. relations with the Soviet Union and China changed, so did the rationale for continued American involvement in the war, from the containment of communism to the pursuit of credibility. The causes of the communist insurgency in Vietnam were similarly complex and changing. The use of powerful new technology by one side and of guerrilla warfare by the other raised serious ethical questions. In addition, the nature of the war coincided with domestic turmoil in the U.S. and, in Vietnam, led to the displacement of huge numbers of people and strained the social fabric of Vietnamese society.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES AND ASSIGNMENTS

Upon successful completion of this course, students should be able to:
• Gain a better understanding of the role Vietnamese struggle for independence played in the outcome of the war;
• Understand the organizational and institutional structures that placed the former Indochinese colonies as a crucial battleground during the Cold War;
• Be able to critically analyze the various dimensions of the conflict with respect to the organizations, individuals and institutions relevant to that period; and
• Be able to understand the global impact of the war through exploring the experiences of many involved that have been excluded from narratives of the Vietnam War era.

READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS

All assigned readings are either from the three books below, which are required for purchase, or they are available on our D2L website under the unit with which they are associated. The chapters and articles on the website will be marked on the syllabus with (e).

The following three books are required for purchase. They are available at Neebo (formerly Panther Bookstore) on Downer Avenue, (414) 967-1111. You can also order the books from its website: http://www.neebo.com/School/university-of-wisconsinmilwaukee/Stores.

James S. Olson and Randy Roberts. 1998. My Lai: A Brief History with Documents (Boston and New York: Bedford/St. Martin’s)


D2L
Most of the course materials, including lectures and readings, will be accessible through the course D2L website. You will upload your papers to the Dropbox on the D2L website, and quizzes and exams will also take place over D2L. You can access D2L by going to the UWM homepage (http://www4.uwm.edu) and in the quick links at the top of the page select D2L and then click go. This takes you to the login screen where you will be asked to provide your Panther ID and password (these are the same as your UWM email username and password). Or, go to the login page with the direct address for D2L: (https://uwm.courses.wisconsin.edu/). Note that there is no “www” in the address and there is an “s” on https. On the login page, notice the “For Students” link that offers several help files for dealing with various aspects of D2L. These help documents are indeed very helpful, so keep them in mind if you ever get stuck. If you need further assistance, contact the Information Management and Technology (IMT) Help Desk (open 24 hours per day, 7 days per week). You can visit the Help Desk in person in EMS E173A, call 414-229-4040 (toll-free at 1-877-381-3459), or send an email to help@uwm.edu. You must have access to a reliable computer and a high-speed internet connection to take this online course. If you do not have this at home you can use computers on campus or in public libraries.

Quizzes
You will take 4 timed quizzes during the term, each lasting twenty minutes. Each quiz will be worth 5% of your final grade; together they will make up 20% of the final grade. Once you begin the quiz you will only have 20 minutes to complete it so DO NOT begin the quiz until you are caught up with the readings, lectures, and films. You are allowed only one attempt. NOTE: If you misspell words or provide a response that is correct but not exactly as listed on the answer key, the system will mark it wrong. For example, the correct response to a question is “United States” and your answer is “U.S”. I will manually review the quizzes and give you credit for these types of mistakes. Quiz dates and units covered are listed in the “Schedule of Readings and Assignments” below.

Exams
You will take a mid-term and a final exam. The exams will include short, interpretive essays and multiple choice and true/false questions. The mid-term will cover only materials up to the examination date, and the final exam will include materials from the entire course, with greater emphasis on the second half. Study guides will be available to you before the exams. You will have 60 minutes for the mid-term and 120 minutes for the final exam. (Exams are under the “Quizzes” section). The essay questions will need to be graded manually so you will not receive points immediately upon completion.
Essays
In this course you will write two 4-5 page essays. The dates by which these must be uploaded onto the D2L dropbox are listed in the “Schedule of Readings and Assignments”. Detailed directions are available on our D2L site. These two papers will constitute 20% of your grade and will be evaluated for both content and grammar. Late papers will be accepted but they will be penalized a grade for each day that they are late. Comments will be posted in the respective dropbox. Please submit essays as Word files (.doc or .docx).

Discussions
You will be asked to participate in four online discussions during the session. The dates for the discussions are listed in the schedule below. Make sure you allow for time to view films and do the readings before posting to the discussion board. You will be asked to respond to specific questions I pose AND to your classmates’ responses. Each response will be worth 10 points. You will receive from 1-10 points for each response, which will be graded for thoughtfulness, clarity, and the degree to which it integrates class readings and materials (i.e., you need to cite specific passages from the assigned readings). You should put forth the same amount of effort in your response to your classmates’ posts as in your initial post. You may post as often as you wish, but only your original posting and first response to a classmate will be graded.

Evaluation
Grades will be calculated according to the following components:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4 Quizzes (5% each)</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Discussion Posts (6% each)</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Short essays (4-5 pages) (10% each)</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm exam</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final exam</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SCHEDULE OF READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS

This online course will take advantage of the flexibility that the virtual classroom provides; at the same time, it is designed with the assumption that you will devote a certain amount of time each day on the course. The following class schedule gives you the unit assignments as well as the suggested order in which they should be completed. For each unit there will be some combination of readings, films, power point lectures, response papers, and quizzes. In most cases, you will have a day to complete the assignments. It is up to you to decide when to allocate your time to work on the class. For your convenience, you will have access to all course materials for the entire session when the class begins. **Please read the dates for each unit carefully!**
TUESDAY, MAY 31
UNIT 1: THE VIETNAMESE AND THEIR EXPERIENCES WITH FOREIGN INVASIONS
1. Read through this syllabus thoroughly.
2. Make sure that you read the document “Introduction to History 287.” This document, together with the syllabus, has been emailed to every student registered in the class and is also available on our class D2L website under “Content” and “Course information.”
3. Submit a brief introduction of yourself to the Discussion forum entitled “Introduce Yourself!” by 11:59pm. In addition to your major(s) and interests, please share why you are taking this class. If you wish, you may attach a picture of yourself to this posting.
4. View the short powerpoint lecture entitled “Introduction.” (powerpoint lectures can be found at the D2L class website under “Content” for that unit.)
5. Review the powerpoint lecture “The Vietnamese and Their Experiences with Foreign Invasions.” This lecture will provide you with important background information about Vietnamese history before we begin to discuss U.S. involvement.
7. Read “Vietnam’s Revolutionary Tradition” by Ngo Vinh Long, pp. 4-18 (e). (Remember that all readings marked with (e) are available on the course website)

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 1
UNIT 2: FIRST INDOCHINA WAR, 1946-1954
1. Read the powerpoint lecture “First Indochina War, 1946-1954”
2. Read Robert J. McMahon, Major Problems in the History of the Vietnam War, pp. 47-80
3. Watch film, “Roots of a War”. (Remember all videos can be found on the D2L course website under that unit.)
4. Take online Quiz #1 (Units 1 and 2) by 11:59pm.
5. Submit your first posting to Discussion #1 by 11:59pm. Post a response to another student’s posting by 11:59pm on Thursday, June 2.

Question 1: Vietnamese nationalists, including Ho Chi Minh, had hoped for U.S. support of Vietnamese independence from France. What factors contributed to U.S. policies toward Vietnam following World War II?

THURSDAY, JUNE 2
UNIT 3: AMERICAN INTERVENTION IN VIETNAMESE POLITICS, 1954-1960
1. Read the powerpoint lecture “American Intervention in Vietnamese Politics, 1954-1960”
2. Read Frederik Logevall, “The Diem Experiment” from The Origins of the Vietnam War, pp. 25-38 (e)
Monday, June 6
Unit 4: Kennedy and Increased U.S. Involvement, 1961-1963
1. Read the powerpoint lecture “Kennedy & Increased U.S. Involvement, 1961-1963”
2. Read Robert J. McMahon, Major Problems in the History of the Vietnam War pp. 120-154
3. Watch film, “‘America’s Mandarins”
4. Take online Quiz #2 (Units 3 and 4) by 11:59pm.

Tuesday, June 7
Unit 5: LBJ, Gulf of Tonkin & Decision for War, 1964-65
1. Read the powerpoint lecture “LBJ, Gulf of Tonkin & Decision for War, 1964-65”
3. Watch the film, "LBJ Goes to War, 1964-65”
4. Submit your first posting to Discussion #2 by 11:59pm. Post a response to another student’s posting by 11:59pm on Wednesday, June 8.

Question 2: The events that unfolded in the Gulf of Tonkin during late July/early August 1964 resulted in Congress passing the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution. What significance did this congressional action have on U.S. commitment in Vietnam? Based on the information from readings and the film, do you think President Johnson and Congress could have taken a different route? Why or why not?

Wednesday, June 8
2. Read Read Robert J. McMahon, Major Problems in the History of the Vietnam War, pp. 198-235
3. Take online midterm exam by 11:59pm.

Thursday, June 9
Unit 7: Race, Class and the Draft
1. Read the powerpoint lecture “Race, Class and the Draft”
4. Watch film excerpts from “Wisconsin Vietnam War Stories”
**MONDAY, JUNE 13**
**UNIT 8: NORTH VIETNAM AND THE TET OFFENSIVE**
1. Read the powerpoint lecture “North Vietnam & the Tet Offensive”
3. Watch the film, “Tet 1968”
4. Take online Quiz #3 (Units 7 and 8) by 11:59pm.

**TUESDAY, JUNE 14**
**UNIT 9: MY LAI MASSACRE AND WAR CRIMES**
2. Read “My Lai Essay Directions”
3. Watch film, “My Lai”

**WEDNESDAY, JUNE 15**
**UNIT 10: NIXON’S WARS**
1. Read the powerpoint lecture, “Nixon’s Wars”
3. Watch film, “Cambodia and Laos”
4. Submit your first posting to Discussion #3 by 11:59pm. Post a response to another student’s posting by 11:59pm on Thursday, June 16.

**Question 3: How and why were Cambodia and Laos pulled into the Vietnam War? (Could they have avoided becoming entangled in this conflict? Why or why not?)**

**THURSDAY, JUNE 16**
**UNIT 11: THE DIVIDED HOMEFRONT**
1. Read the powerpoint lecture “The Divided Homefront ”
3. Watch film, “Homefront USA”
4. Take online Quiz #4 (Units 9, 10, and 11) by 11:59pm.

**MONDAY, JUNE 20**
**UNIT 12: PEACE TALKS: CRISIS AND STALEMATE**
1. Read the powerpoint lecture “Peace talks: Crisis and Stalemate”
3. Watch film, “The End of the Tunnel”
Tuesday, June 21
Unit 13: Reassessing War

1. Read the powerpoint lecture “Lessons Learned: Reassessing War”
3. Watch excerpts from film, “Fog of War”
4. Submit your first posting to Discussion #4 by 11:59pm. Post a response to another student’s posting by 11:59pm on Wednesday, June 22.

Question 4: Throughout the session, we have covered the various dimensions of the war in Vietnam. This final discussion asks you to reflect on McNamara's 11 lessons from the Vietnam War (last page of the powerpoint lecture) and the film "Fog of War". In your opinion, has the U.S. learned from these lessons? If so, in what ways? If not, why do you think we have not learned? Feel free to give specific examples and make sure you cite sources.

Wednesday, June 22
Unit 14: Remembering War

1. Read the powerpoint lecture “Remembering War”
2. Read Marita Sturken, “The Wall and Screen Memory: The Vietnam War Memorial,” and “Reenactment and the Making of History: The Vietnam War as Docudrama” in Tangled Memories: The Vietnam War, the AIDS epidemic and the Politics of Remembering, pp. 44-120 (e)
3. Read “Catfish and Mandala Paper Directions”
4. Begin reading Andrew Pham, Catfish and Mandala (You may of course begin reading earlier!)

Thursday, June 23
Unit 15: Making Sense of The War

1. Read the powerpoint lecture “Making Sense of the War”
2. Read Dick McMichael, “William Calley Apologizes for My Lai Massacre” (e)
3. Read Melvin Laird, “Iraq: Learning the Lessons of Vietnam” (e)
4. Watch film, “Regret to Inform”

Upload Catfish and Mandala essay to D2L dropbox “Catfish and Mandala Paper” by 11:59PM on Friday, June 24.

Take final exam by 11:59pm on Saturday, June 25.