

University of Texas at Tyler
HIST 4397: The Vietnam War
MWF, 12:20-1:15; BUS 259
 Spring 2016

Instructor: Dr. Matt Stith
Email: mstith@uttyler.edu
Office: BUS 238
Office Hours: MWF, 10:10-11:10; Or by appointment.

“Doubt is not a pleasant condition, but certainty is absurd.” ~ Voltaire

Course Description:

We will explore the complex political, military, diplomatic, economic, and ideological undercurrents that led to and perpetuated the Vietnam War. In so doing, we will carefully evaluate Vietnamese history, French imperialism, communist ideology, and the causes, course, and consequences of the Cold War. A majority of the course will focus on America’s involvement in Vietnam and how such involvement impacted domestic, cultural, and political issues within the United States.

Content Objectives:

Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:

1. Demonstrate a strong understanding of the causes, course, and consequences of the Vietnam War.
2. Think critically and objectively about the United States and its role in influencing, and being influenced by, global diplomacy, economics, politics, and ideology.
3. Develop analytical skills through thinking, speaking, and writing about modern American history generally and the Vietnam War specifically.

Important Note:

I encourage you to meet with me regularly to discuss or clarify lecture, discussion, or reading—or to talk about history in general. My job (and satisfaction) is as much to work with students on an individual basis as it is to lecture and facilitate discussion. Please keep this in mind throughout the semester.



Required Reading:

BOOKS:

- David Farber, *Age of Great Dreams: America in the 1960s* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1994)
- Frederick Downs, Jr., *The Killing Zone: My Life in the Vietnam War* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1978)
- Philip Caputo, *A Rumor of War* (1977; New York: Henry Holt, 1996)
- Tim O'Brien, *If I Die in a Combat Zone, Box Me Up and Ship Me Home* (New York: Broadway Books, 1975)

SUPPLEMENTAL REQUIRED SOURCES:

American Leadership

- Pres. Lyndon B. Johnson, "Why We Are in Vietnam," July 28, 1965, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k9KJyiXzp34>
- Pres. Lyndon B. Johnson, "Address to the Nation," March 31, 1968, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FFyhAcp2DG4>
- "Interview with William C. (William Childs) Westmoreland, 1981," 04/27/1981, WGBH Media Library & Archives, accessed January 8, 2016, <http://openvault.wgbh.org/catalog/vietnam-b463a4-interview-with-william-c-william-childs-westmoreland-1981>.
- "Interview with Henry Kissinger, 1982," 04/17/1982, WGBH Media Library & Archives, accessed January 8, 2016, <http://openvault.wgbh.org/catalog/vietnam-ce422e-interview-with-henry-kissinger-1982>.
- "Interview with Horace W. Busby, 1981," 04/24/1981, WGBH Media Library & Archives, accessed January 8, 2016, <http://openvault.wgbh.org/catalog/vietnam-fa3035-interview-with-horace-w-busby-1981>.

American Soldiers

- "Interview with John Kerry, 1982," 11/05/1982, WGBH Media Library & Archives, accessed January 8, 2016, <http://openvault.wgbh.org/catalog/vietnam-306cf2-interview-with-john-kerry-1982>.
- "Interview with Charles Sabatier, 1982 [Part 1 of 2]," 10/08/1982, WGBH Media Library & Archives, accessed January 8, 2016, <http://openvault.wgbh.org/catalog/vietnam-c7c7c9-interview-with-charles-sabatier-1982-part-1-of-2>.
- "Interview with Charles Sabatier, 1982 [Part 2 of 2]," 10/08/1982, WGBH Media Library & Archives, accessed January 8, 2016, <http://openvault.wgbh.org/catalog/vietnam-eebf58-interview-with-charles-sabatier-1982-part-2-of-2>.

Vietnamese Leadership

- "Vietnamese Declaration of Independence, 1945," <http://legacy.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/1945vietnam.html>.
- "President Lyndon Johnson to Ho Chi Minh: Letter Exchange, 1967," <http://legacy.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/1967-vietnam-letters1.html>.
- "Interview with Vo Nguyen Giap," *Peoples Century: Guerrilla Wars*, PBS, <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/peoplescentury/episodes/guerrillawars/giaptranscript.html>

Vietnamese Civilians and Soldiers

- "Interview with Ngo Thi Tan, 1981," 02/26/1981, WGBH Media Library & Archives, accessed January 8, 2016, <http://openvault.wgbh.org/catalog/vietnam-b18d7f-interview-with-ngo-thi-tan-1981>.
- "Interview with Hoang Thi Dan, 1981," 02/10/1981, WGBH Media Library & Archives, accessed January 8, 2016, <http://openvault.wgbh.org/catalog/vietnam-1cdfce-interview-with-hoang-thi-dan-1981>.
- "Interview with Duong Long Sang, 1981," 03/10/1981, WGBH Media Library & Archives, accessed January 8, 2016, <http://openvault.wgbh.org/catalog/vietnam-3203c6-interview-with-duong-long-sang-1981>.

Recommended Sources:

PRIMARY SOURCES

- *Truong Nhu Tang, *A Vietcong Memoir: An Inside Account of the Vietnam War and Its Aftermath* (New York: Vintage Books, 1986)
- *Le Ly Hayslip, *When Heaven and Earth Changed Places: A Vietnamese Woman's Journey from War to Peace* (New York: Penguin, 1990)
- *Dang Thuy Tram, *Last Night I Dreamed of Peace: The Diary of Dang Thuy Tram*, transl. Andrew X. Pham (New York: Three Rivers Press, 2007)
- *Robert S. McNamara and Brian VanDeMark, *In Retrospect: The Tragedy and Lessons of Vietnam* (New York: Times Books, 1995)
- *Marilyn B. Young, et al., eds., *The Vietnam War: A History in Documents* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002)

SECONDARY SOURCES

- Christian G. Appy, *American Reckoning: The Vietnam War and Our National Identity* (New York: Viking, 2015)

- Gregory Daddis, *Westmoreland's War: Reassessing American Strategy in Vietnam* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014)
- George C. Herring, *America's Longest War: The United States and Vietnam, 1950-1975*, 5th Ed. (New York: McGraw Hill, 2013)
- Lien-Hang T. Nguyen, *Hanoi's War: An International History of the War for Peace in Vietnam* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012)
- Ron Milam, *Not a Gentleman's War: An Inside View of Junior Officers in the Vietnam War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009)
- Mark Atwood Lawrence, *The Vietnam War: A Concise International History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008)
- Robert D. Schulzinger, *A Time for War: The United States and Vietnam* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997)
- Stanley Karnow, *Vietnam: A History* (1984; New York: Penguin, 1997)

WEBSITES

- *The Vietnam Collection*, WGBH Open Vault, from <http://openvault.wgbh.org/collections/vietnam-the-vietnam-collection#Interviews>
- *The Vietnam Center and Archive*, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas, from <http://www.vietnam.ttu.edu>
- S. Mintz and S. McNeil, "Explorations: The Vietnam War as History," *Digital History* from http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/active_learning/explorations/vietnam/vietnam_menu.cfm

DOCUMENTARY FILMS

- *Vietnam: A Television History*, DVD, WGBH, 1983.
- *Vietnam in HD*, DVD, The History Channel, 2011.

Exams:

There will be two exams worth 50 points each. We will have a study session during the class before each exam. The final is *not* comprehensive. The exams will consist of one essay question that will ask you to incorporate BOTH lecture and reading into your answer.

Movie Essay:

Choose one film from the following list, watch it, and write a 3-5 page double-spaced analytical essay about it. Be sure to carefully situate the movie in proper historical and cultural context, and use the following questions to inform your essay: 1) What is historically accurate about the movie (think big picture)? 2) What is wrong with the film, historically speaking? 3) What use might this film have to students and historians of the Vietnam era? 4) Why? Further instructions will be distributed in class.

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|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| - <i>The Deer Hunter</i> (1978) | - <i>Full Metal Jacket</i> (1987) |
| - <i>Apocalypse Now</i> (1979) | - <i>Casualties of War</i> (1989) |
| - <i>Platoon</i> (1986) | - <i>We Were Soldiers</i> (2002) |
| - <i>Good Morning Vietnam</i> (1987) | |

Essay (Final Exam):

Write a 10-12 page double-spaced essay in which you place the three assigned memoirs in context of the wider Vietnam War using other work from the "recommended reading" section. The essay is worth 50 points. Detailed instructions will be distributed early in the semester.

Attendance and Participation:

This is an upper-level university course. Attendance and participation are mandatory. *More than four un-excused absences will result in the loss of a letter grade in the class.*

Point Breakdown:

Exam I:	50 pts
Exam II:	50 pts
Movie Essay:	25 pts
<u>Essay (Final)</u>	<u>50 pts</u>
Total:	175 pts

Make-up Policy:

I will work with you on an individual basis with regard to any missed exams or deadlines.

Academic Honesty:

Cheating of any kind, including plagiarism, will result in immediate failure of the class and possibly further sanctions from the University of Texas at Tyler. Plagiarism, put simply, is using another's work as your own without proper citation or usage. This includes everything from copying and pasting from the Internet to failing to cite an idea from another source that you put in your own words. I strongly recommend reviewing the university policy for cheating and academic dishonesty at the following website: <http://www.uttyler.edu/judicialaffairs/scholasticdishonesty.php>

- PART I: Centuries of Conflict: Imperialism and Communism (1780s-1954)
- PART II: America in Indochina (1941-1960)
- PART III: Kennedy to Ia Drang (1961-1965)
- PART IV: Escalation (1966-1967)
- PART V: Tet to Kent (1968-1970)
- PART VI: Vietnamization at Home and Abroad (1971-1975)

Important Dates:

Exam I: Wednesday, March 18
NO CLASS: Wednesday, March 23 & Friday, March 25 (Work on Essays)
Movie Essay: Friday, March 25 (by 11:59pm on Blackboard)
Exam II: Friday, April 29
Essay (aka Final): Wednesday, May 4 (by 11:59pm on Blackboard)



POLICIES THAT MUST APPEAR IN EACH COURSE SYLLABUS

The following University policies must appear on each course syllabus or be provided as an informational sheet (web-links to these policies may be used in the print or electronic syllabus) <http://www.uttyler.edu/academicaffairs/syllabuspolicies.pdf>

Students Rights and Responsibilities

To know and understand the policies that affect your rights and responsibilities as a student at UT Tyler, please follow this link: <http://www.uttyler.edu/wellness/rightsresponsibilities.php>

Grade Replacement/Forgiveness and Census Date Policies

Students repeating a course for grade forgiveness (grade replacement) must file a Grade Replacement Contract with the Enrollment Services Center (ADM 230) on or before the Census Date of the semester in which the course will be repeated. Grade Replacement Contracts are available in the Enrollment Services Center or at <http://www.uttyler.edu/registrar>. Each semester's Census Date can be found on the Contract itself, on the Academic Calendar, or in the information pamphlets published each semester by the Office of the Registrar.

Failure to file a Grade Replacement Contract will result in both the original and repeated grade being used to calculate your overall grade point average. Undergraduates are eligible to exercise grade replacement for only three course repeats during their career at UT Tyler; graduates are eligible for two grade replacements. Full policy details are printed on each Grade Replacement Contract.

The Census Date is the deadline for many forms and enrollment actions that students need to be aware of. These include:

- Submitting Grade Replacement Contracts, Transient Forms, requests to withhold directory information, approvals for taking courses as Audit, Pass/Fail or Credit/No Credit.
- Receiving 100% refunds for partial withdrawals. (There is no refund for these after the Census Date)
- Schedule adjustments (section changes, adding a new class, dropping without a "W" grade)
- Being reinstated or re-enrolled in classes after being dropped for non-payment
- Completing the process for tuition exemptions or waivers through Financial Aid

State-Mandated Course Drop Policy

Texas law prohibits a student who began college for the first time in Fall 2007 or thereafter from dropping more than six courses during their entire undergraduate career. This includes courses dropped at another 2-year or 4-year Texas public college or university. For purposes of this rule, a dropped course is any course that is dropped after the census date (See Academic Calendar for the specific date).

Exceptions to the 6-drop rule may be found in the catalog. Petitions for exemptions must be submitted to the Enrollment Services Center and must be accompanied by documentation of the extenuating circumstance. Please contact the Enrollment Services Center if you have any questions.

Disability/Accessibility Services

In accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the ADA Amendments Act (ADAAA) the University offers accommodations to students with learning, physical and/or psychological disabilities. If you have a disability, including non-visible a disability diagnosis such as a chronic disease, learning disorder, head injury or ADHD, or you have a history of modifications or accommodations in a previous educational environment you are encouraged to contact the Student Accessibility and Resources office and schedule an interview with an Accessibility Case Manager. If you are unsure if the above criteria applies to you, but have questions or concerns please contact the SAR office. For more information or to set up an appointment please visit the SAR webpage (<http://www.uttyler.edu/disabilityservices/>) or the SAR office located in the University Center, Room 3150 or call 903.566.7079. You may also send an email to saroffice@uttyler.edu.

Student Absence due to Religious Observance

Students who anticipate being absent from class due to a religious observance are requested to inform the instructor of such absences by the second class meeting of the semester.

Student Absence for University-Sponsored Events and Activities

If you intend to be absent for a university-sponsored event or activity, you (or the event sponsor) must notify the instructor at least two weeks prior to the date of the planned absence. At that time the instructor will set a date and time when make-up assignments will be completed.

Social Security and FERPA Statement:

It is the policy of The University of Texas at Tyler to protect the confidential nature of social security numbers. The University has changed its computer programming so that all students have an identification number. The electronic transmission of grades (e.g., via e-mail) risks violation of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act; grades will not be transmitted electronically.

Emergency Exits and Evacuation:

Everyone is required to exit the building when a fire alarm goes off. Follow your instructor's directions regarding the appropriate exit. If you require assistance during an evacuation, inform your instructor in the first week of class. Do not re-enter the building unless given permission by University Police, Fire department, or Fire Prevention Services.