

# HIST 5351: The Vietnam War

University of Texas at Tyler  
Online/Virtual  
Fall 2020

**Instructor:** Prof. Matt Stith  
**Email:** [mstith@uttyler.edu](mailto:mstith@uttyler.edu)  
**Office:** CAS 127  
**Office Hours:** In-Person --or-- Canvas Chat: TT 10:50a–11:50a; M 4:30-5:30p; and by appointment.

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

## Course Description:

We will explore—through intensive readings and discussion—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.

## Course Learning Objectives:

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

1. Demonstrate a mastery 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 (in order):**Secondary Sources

- Fredrik Logevall, *Embers of War: The Fall of an Empire and the Making of America's Vietnam* (New York: Random House, 2012)
- Heather Marie Stur, *Beyond Combat: Women and Gender in the Vietnam War Era* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011)
- Doug Bradley and Craig Werner, *We Gotta Get Out of This Place: The Soundtrack of the Vietnam War* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2015)
- Christian G. Appy, *American Reckoning: The Vietnam War and Our National Identity* (New York: Penguin, 2015)
- Viet Thanh Nguyen, *Nothing Ever Dies: Vietnam and the Memory of War* (New York: Harvard University Press, 2016)

Primary Sources

- Tim O'Brien, *If I Die in a Combat Zone Box Me Up and Ship Me Home* (1975; 1999)
- 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)
- Philip Caputo, *A Rumor of War* (1977; New York: Henry Holt, 1996)

**Recommended Reading:**Secondary Sources

- \*Max Hastings, *Vietnam: An Epic Tragedy, 1945-1975* (New York: Harper Collins, 2018)
- Randall Bennett Woods, *Quest for Identity: America Since 1945* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005)
- Gregory Daddis, *Westmoreland's War: Reassessing American Strategy in Vietnam* (Oxford University Press, 2014)
- George C. Herring, *America's Longest War: The United States and Vietnam, 1950-1975*, 5<sup>th</sup> Ed. (McGraw Hill, 2013)
- Ron Milam, *Not a Gentleman's War: An Inside View of Junior Officers in the Vietnam War* (Chapel Hill: UNC 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)
- 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)

Primary Sources

- \*Christian G. Appy, *Patriots: The Vietnam War Remembered from All Sides* (2003)
- Troung 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 (2007)
- Robert S. McNamara and Brian VanDeMark, *In Retrospect: The Tragedy and Lessons of Vietnam* (1995)
- Marilyn B. Young, et al., eds., *The Vietnam War: A History in Documents* (New York Oxford University Press, 2002)

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](http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/active_learning/explorations/vietnam/vietnam_menu.cfm)

Documentary Films

- *The Vietnam War*, Ken Burns and Lynn Novick, dirs., PBS, 2017
- *Vietnam: A Television History*, WGBH, 1983.
- *Vietnam in HD*, The History Channel, 2011.

Music

- Doug Bradley, "I Served in Vietnam. Here's My Soundtrack," *New York Times*, March 13, 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/13/opinion/vietnam-war-rock-music.html>
- Anne Meisenzahl and Roger Peace, "Protest Music of the Vietnam War," United States Foreign Policy History and Resource Guide website, 2017, updated March 2019, <http://peacehistory-usfp.org/protest-music-vietnam-war>.

**Book Reviews:**

A single-spaced 600-word review is required for the five secondary books you read. The reviews are due on Canvas at 6:00pm on Mondays. A 1,200-word essay on the three primary-source books (O'Brien, Caputo, and Tram) is due on Week 8.

**Research Paper:** You will prepare a 7,000+ word research paper (exclusive of endnotes) based on primary sources and contextualized by relevant secondary sources. This paper will form the basis for your individualized MA comprehensive exam should you choose to take exams in the modern America field. It is worth 100 points and due by 11:59pm on Friday, December 11, via Canvas.

**Attendance and Participation:**

Active and informed participation in addition to assigned presentations is mandatory. Poor, hostile, or no discussion will result in the loss of a letter grade. More than two unexcused absences will also result in the loss of a letter grade.

**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>

**Point Breakdown:**

Book Reviews:	5 x 10= 50
Primary Source Essay:	50
Participation:	50
<u>Research Paper:</u>	<u>100</u>
Total:	250

**Grade Scale:**

A = 225-250
B = 200-224
C = 175-199
D = 150-174
F = 0-149

**Reading List and Schedule:**

- **Week 1 (8/24):**
  - o Introduction the Course and to the Field of History; Reading: Logevall, *Embers of War*, chaps. 1-13
    - **1<sup>st</sup> Synchronous Zoom Meeting (6:00-7:00ish)**<sup>1</sup>—I'll email the invitation, password, etc.
- **Week 2 (8/31):**
  - o Logevall, *Embers of War*, chaps. 14-27; Review due 6:00pm, Monday, on Canvas
    - **2<sup>nd</sup> Synchronous Zoom Meeting (6:00-7:00ish)**—I'll email the invitation, password, etc.
    - Question: How and Why did the Vietnam War Happen?
- **Week 3 (9/7):**
  - o Stur, *Beyond Combat* (all); Review Due 6:00pm, Monday, on Canvas
- **Week 4 (9/14):**
  - o Bradley and Werner, *We Gotta Get Out of This Place* (all); Review Due 6:00pm, Monday, on Canvas
    - **3<sup>rd</sup> Synchronous Zoom Meeting (6:00-7:00ish)**—I'll email the invitation, password, etc.
    - Question: How did Vietnam shape gender and culture in the United States? How did gender and culture shape Vietnam?
- **Week 5: (9/21):**
  - o Appy, *American Reckoning* (all); Review Due 6:00pm, Monday

<sup>1</sup> 7:00ish could mean 6:45 or 7:45, but our *official* zoom will go no later than 7:45. Any or all are welcome to stick around on zoom should they have questions/concerns to further discuss. Same goes for all synchronous zoom meetings.

- **Week 6: (9/28):**
  - o Nguyen, *Nothing Ever Dies* (all); Review Due 6:00pm, Monday
    - **4<sup>th</sup> Synchronous Zoom Meeting** (6:00-7:00ish)
    - Question: How *do* we remember Vietnam? How *should* we remember Vietnam?
- **Week 7 (10/5):**
  - o **5<sup>th</sup> Synchronous Zoom Meeting; Debriefing/Take-a-breath-week**
- **Week 8 (10/12):**
  - o O'Brien, *If I Die*; Caputo, *A Rumor of War*; Tram, *Last Night I Dreamed of Peace*
  - o Pre-Recorded Lecture on Canvas: Combat in Vietnam
- **Week 9 (10/19): Research/Write**
  - o Pre-Recorded Lecture on Canvas: Researching, Writing, and Editing for Publication
- **Week 10 (10/26): Research /Write**
  - o Mandatory Research Paper Meetings: Via zoom or in-person. I'll post a sign-up sheet early in the semester.
- **Weeks 11-13 (11/2-11/16): Research/Write**
- **Week 14 (11/23): Thanksgiving**
- **Week 15 (11/30): Research/Write**
  - o **6<sup>th</sup> (and final) Synchronous Zoom Meeting: Paper Presentations**
- **Final Paper Due:** 11:59pm, Friday, December 11.



# University of Texas at Tyler Policies

## UT Tyler Honor Code

Every member of the UT Tyler community joins together to embrace: Honor and integrity that will not allow me to lie, cheat, or steal, nor to accept the actions of those who do.

## 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>

## Campus Carry

We respect the right and privacy of students 21 and over who are duly licensed to carry concealed weapons in this class. License holders are expected to behave responsibly and keep a handgun secure and concealed. More information is available at <http://www.uttyler.edu/about/campus-carry/index.php>

## UT Tyler a Tobacco-Free University

All forms of tobacco will not be permitted on the UT Tyler main campus, branch campuses, and any property owned by UT Tyler. This applies to all members of the University community, including students, faculty, staff, University affiliates, contractors, and visitors.

Forms of tobacco not permitted include cigarettes, cigars, pipes, water pipes (hookah), bidis, kreteks, electronic cigarettes, smokeless tobacco, snuff, chewing tobacco, and all other tobacco products.

There are several cessation programs available to students looking to quit smoking, including counseling, quitlines, and group support. For more information on cessation programs please visit [www.uttyler.edu/tobacco-free](http://www.uttyler.edu/tobacco-free).

## 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. (For Spring, the Census Date is January 29) 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 (January 29) is the deadline for many forms and enrollment actions of which students need to be aware. 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.

## Student Accessibility and Resources

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 psychiatric disabilities. If you have a disability, including non-visible disabilities such as chronic diseases, learning disabilities, head injury, PTSD 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](#) (SAR) office and schedule an interview with the Accessibility Case Manager/ADA Coordinator, Cynthia Lowery Staples. 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 office located in the University Center, Room 3150 or call 903.566.7079. You may also send an email to [cstaples@uttyler.edu](mailto:cstaples@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.

### Student Standards of Academic Conduct

Disciplinary proceedings may be initiated against any student who engages in scholastic dishonesty, including, but not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, collusion, the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts.

i. "Cheating" includes, but is not limited to:

- copying from another student's test paper;
- using, during a test, materials not authorized by the person giving the test;
- failure to comply with instructions given by the person administering the test;
- possession during a test of materials which are not authorized by the person giving the test, such as class notes or specifically designed "crib notes". The presence of textbooks constitutes a violation if they have been specifically prohibited by the person administering the test;
- using, buying, stealing, transporting, or soliciting in whole or part the contents of an unadministered test, test key, homework solution, or computer program;
- collaborating with or seeking aid from another student during a test or other assignment without authority;
- discussing the contents of an examination with another student who will take the examination;
- divulging the contents of an examination, for the purpose of preserving questions for use by another, when the instructor has designated that the examination is not to be removed from the examination room or not to be returned or to be kept by the student;
- substituting for another person, or permitting another person to substitute for oneself to take a course, a test, or any course-related assignment;
- paying or offering money or other valuable thing to, or coercing another person to obtain an unadministered test, test key, homework solution, or computer program or information about an unadministered test, test key, home solution or computer program;
- falsifying research data, laboratory reports, and/or other academic work offered for credit;
- taking, keeping, misplacing, or damaging the property of The University of Texas at Tyler, or of another, if the student knows or reasonably should know that an unfair academic advantage would be gained by such conduct; and
- misrepresenting facts, including providing false grades or resumes, for the purpose of obtaining an academic or financial benefit or injuring another student academically or financially.

ii. "Plagiarism" includes, but is not limited to, the appropriation, buying, receiving as a gift, or obtaining by any means another's work and the submission of it as one's own academic work offered for credit.

iii. "Collusion" includes, but is not limited to, the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing academic assignments offered for credit or collaboration with another person to commit a violation of any section of the rules on scholastic dishonesty.

- iv. All written work that is submitted will be subject to review by Turn-It-In, available through Canvas.

#### UT Tyler Resources for Students

- [UT Tyler Writing Center](#) (903.565.5995), [writingcenter@uttyler.edu](mailto:writingcenter@uttyler.edu)
- [UT Tyler Tutoring Center](#) (903.565.5964), [tutoring@uttyler.edu](mailto:tutoring@uttyler.edu)
- The Mathematics Learning Center, RBN 4021, this is the open access computer lab for math students, with tutors on duty to assist students who are enrolled in early-career courses.
- [UT Tyler Counseling Center](#) (903.566.7254)

### Additional Syllabus Information

#### **Important Covid-19 Information for Classrooms and Laboratories**

Students are required to wear face masks covering their nose and mouth, and follow social distancing guidelines, at all times in public settings (including classrooms and laboratories), as specified by [Procedures for Fall 2020 Return to Normal Operations](#). The UT Tyler community of Patriots views adoption of these practices consistent with its [Honor Code](#) and a sign of good citizenship and respectful care of fellow classmates, faculty, and staff.

Students who are feeling ill or experiencing symptoms such as sneezing, coughing, or a higher than normal temperature will be excused from class and should stay at home and may join the class remotely. Students who have difficulty adhering to the Covid-19 safety policies for health reasons are also encouraged to join the class remotely. Students needing additional accommodations may contact the Office of Student Accessibility and Resources at University Center 3150, or call (903) 566-7079 or email [saroffice@uttyler.edu](mailto:saroffice@uttyler.edu).

#### **Recording of Class Sessions**

Class sessions may be recorded by the instructor for use by students enrolled in this course. Recordings that contain personally identifiable information or other information subject to FERPA shall not be shared with individuals not enrolled in this course unless appropriate consent is obtained from all relevant students. Class recordings are reserved only for the use of students enrolled in the course and only for educational purposes. Course recordings should not be shared outside of the course in any form without express permission.