THE VIETNAM WAR
HIST 425

Course Information

Course Description
This course considers the Vietnam War – the American War to the Vietnamese from a global perspective. It surveys the main phases of that conflict, and explores the strategies, internal debates, and disagreements, as well as concerns and purposes, that conditioned US and North Vietnamese policymaking before and during the conflict. Beyond addressing the war’s evolution in Vietnam and in the rest of Indochina, it considers its implications for the socialist camp, the Third World, and the West, including United States. The Vietnam War, this course demonstrates, was a global event that left an indelible mark on the history of not just the United States and Southeast Asia, but the entire world.

Course Need/Rationale
The Vietnam War was the most consequential conflagration of the Cold War, a symbolic crucible for testing the staying power of the “Free [i.e., capitalist] World” against that of the “Progressive [i.e., communist] World.” It has been the most far-reaching armed conflict since World War II, impacting the world in several profound and meaningful ways. The Vietnam War defined a global period: the 1960s, the “cultural decade,” and 1970s, the “pivot decade,” would have been very different, in the United States and around the world, without the war and its effects. Thus, making sense of the Vietnam War is critical to understanding the Cold War international system and the world that system bequeathed.

Course Themes
- Origins of the Vietnamese Communist Party
- World War II in Indochina/Southeast Asia
- Origins and Effects of Global Cold War
- Franco-Vietnamese War of 1946-54
- National Liberation
- US Military Intervention
- Socialist Bloc & Cold/Vietnam War
- Third World & Cold/Vietnam War
- Internationalism
- Peace/Antiwar Movement in US & West Europe
- Domestic & International Legacies of Vietnam War
Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)

1. Students will gain content knowledge of topics, themes, events, places, and people related to the Vietnamese struggle for national liberation and reunification and the American military intervention in Vietnam, including appeal of communist in the Third World, socialist internationalism, American diplomacy and militarism.

2. Students will analyze through writing the relationships between “superpowers” and newly-independent, decolonizing nations; national liberation and containment; states and the Cold War; and the socialist and capitalist camps.

3. Students will distinguish among and describe political and philosophical currents that inspired and guided US and North Vietnamese policymakers;

4. Students will understand the emergence and perpetuation of ideas about nationalism, internationalism, containment, and counter-culturalism through the history of the war in different geographic contexts;

5. Students will demonstrate an understanding of the global ramifications and overall impact of the Vietnam War.

General Education
Courses that fulfill the 9-unit requirement for Explorations in General Education take the goals and skills of GE Foundations courses to a more advanced level. Your three upper division courses in Explorations will provide greater interdisciplinary, more complex and in-depth theory, deeper investigation of local problems, and wider awareness of global challenges. More extensive reading, written analysis involving complex comparisons, well-developed arguments, considerable bibliography, and use of technology are appropriate in many Explorations courses.

This is an Explorations course in the Humanities and Fine Arts. Completing this course will help you to do the following in greater depth: 1) analyze written, visual, or performed texts in the humanities and fine arts with sensitivity to their diverse cultural contexts and historical moments; 2) describe various aesthetic and other value systems and the ways they are communicated across time and cultures; 3) identify issues in the humanities that have personal and global relevance; 4) demonstrate the ability to approach complex problems and ask complex questions drawing upon knowledge of the humanities.

Required Readings

**Course Structure & Conduct**
This course will primarily consist of lectures, class discussions, and weekly assignments. Given the format, students are expected to attend class consistently, and encouraged to participate regularly and enthusiastically.

**Course Assessment, Grading, & SLO Assessment Strategies**
Requirements include 4 review papers, 1 peer review, 1 research paper, 2 quizzes, 1 midterm examination, and 1 final examination. Students are graded on a 400-point scale, with the following distribution:

- review papers: 10% (40 points [4 x 10 points]) to satisfy SLOs 1, 3, 4
- peer review: 5% (20 points) to satisfy SLO 1
- research paper: 25% (100 points) to satisfy SLO 2
- quizzes: 10% (40 points [2 X 20 points]) to satisfy SLO 5
- midterm examination: 25% (100 points) to satisfy SLO 5
- final examination 25% (100 points) to satisfy SLO 5

There will be no make-up assignments/extensions unless a valid excuse and corroborating evidence are presented to the instructor.

Final grades are determined by the overall accumulation of points, according to the following scale:

- A/A- = 360-400 points
- B+/B/B- = 320-359 points
- C+/C/C- = 280-319 points
- D+/D = 240-279 points
- F = 239 points or less

**Quizzes & Exams**
Quizzes and examinations are based on class lectures and assigned readings. Each quiz will consist of 20 multiple choice questions, and take place at the very beginning of class. Each examination will be a combination of multiple choice and essay questions. See Course Schedule for dates of quizzes and midterm examination; the date and time of the final examination will be announced in class.

**Assignments**

**Review Papers**
Students will produce 4 assessments of assigned readings (see Course Schedule for readings and due dates). Each assessment must:
• include 5-6 “bullets” succinctly summarizing the most important issues raised in the readings;
• include a substantive critical response (i.e., What are your overall thoughts on the information/history presented in the readings?) comprising “lessons learned” about the history of the Vietnam War from the readings;
• be no more than 1 single-spaced page in length (typed, 12-point font, 1" margins on all sides).

Papers submitted electronically or late will receive no credit. Papers will be graded according to the following scale:

★ = 10 points
✓ = 7 points
- = 5 points
○ = 0 points

Research Paper
Students will produce a research paper on a relevant topic of their choice, pending approval by the instructor. The paper should revolve around one relatively narrow and precise research question, answerable using existing and readily available source material. The final paper must:

• be 5-7 pages in length (typed, double-spaced, 12-point font, 1" margins on all sides);
• include a bibliography of no fewer than 7 sources, including at least one primary source;
• include endnotes or footnotes.

For general tips on writing a History paper and organizing notes and the bibliography, see Writing Guides on the SDSU History Department website at http://history.sdsu.edu/writing_guides.htm. See also https://writingproject.fas.harvard.edu/files/hwp/files/bg_writing_history.pdf.

Final draft of the paper will be submitted to the instructor in both hardcopy and electronic format. See Course Schedule for due date.

Peer Review
Students will exchange a rough draft of their final paper with one of their peers on the date listed in the Course Schedule. Each student will then proceed to evaluate and comment on their peer’s paper (using the “Research Paper Peer Review Form” at the end of this syllabus), as well as correct spelling, grammatical, and stylistic errors in the draft paper. Students should also critique the paper’s analytical foundation. The peer review, including the form and edited draft paper, will be returned to the paper’s author within two weeks, and submitted to the instructor with the final draft of the research paper. Students who fail to produce a draft paper by the set
deadline will be unable to participate in this exercise, and thus 1) earn no credit for the review assignment and 2) receive no peer feedback on their own paper.

**Participation**

Students are expected to participate actively in the class. Participation includes asking and answering questions during sessions, and getting involved in class discussions. Participation may determine the final grade in “borderline” cases.

**Etiquette**

Food is not permitted in the classroom. Use of cellular phones is strictly prohibited, and ringers must be turned off prior to the start of class. Students who use laptops may do so for the sole purpose of taking notes (and absolutely unobtrusively); other usage is prohibited. Failure to abide by the above and other student conduct that violates the rules of San Diego State University may result in a loss of points, a grade of “F” for the course, or dismissal from the course.

**Students with Disabilities (Standard Policy)**

If you are a student with a disability and believe you will need accommodations for this class, it is your responsibility to contact Student Disability Services at (619) 594-6473. You can also learn more about the services provided by visiting the [Student Disability Services](http://studentaffairs.sdsu.edu/srr/student-disability-services) website. To avoid any delay in the receipt of your accommodations, you should contact Student Disability Services as soon as possible. Please note that accommodations are not retroactive, and that accommodations based upon disability cannot be provided until you have presented your instructor with an accommodation letter from Student Disability Services. Your cooperation is appreciated.

**Academic Honesty (Standard Policy)**

The University adheres to a strict policy regarding cheating and plagiarism. These activities will not be tolerated in this class. Become familiar with the policy and what constitutes plagiarism (http://studentaffairs.sdsu.edu/srr/cheating-plagiarism.html). Any cheating or plagiarism will result in failing this class and a disciplinary review by the University. These actions may lead to probation, suspension, or expulsion. Examples of plagiarism include but are not limited to:

- Using sources verbatim or paraphrasing without giving proper attribution (this can include phrases, sentences, paragraphs and/or pages of work)
- Copying and pasting work from an online or offline source directly and calling it your own
- Using information you find from an online or offline source without giving the author credit
- Replacing words or phrases from another source and inserting your own words or phrases
- Submitting a piece of work you did for one class to another class
**Turnitin (Standard Policy)**

Students agree that by taking this course all required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to Turnitin.com for the detection of plagiarism. All submitted papers will be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers. You may submit your papers in such a way that no identifying information about you is included. Another option is that you may request, in writing, that your papers not be submitted to www.turnitin.com. However, if you choose this option you will be required to provide documentation to substantiate that the papers are your original work and do not include any plagiarized material.

**Technical Support for Blackboard (standard Policy)**

Student support for Blackboard is provided by the Library Computing Hub, located on the 2nd floor of Love Library. They can be reached at 619-594-3189 or hub@mail.sdsu.edu.

**Student Services (standard Policy)**

A complete list of all academic support services is available on the Academic Success section of the SDSU Student Affairs website. For help with improving your writing ability, the staff at the SDSU Writing Center is available in person and online. Counseling and Psychological Services offers confidential counseling services by licensed psychologists, counselors, and social workers. More info can be found at their website or by contacting (619) 594-5220. You can also Live Chat with a counselor [http://go.sdsu.edu/student_affairs/cps/therapist-consultation.aspx](http://go.sdsu.edu/student_affairs/cps/therapist-consultation.aspx) between 4:00pm and 10:00pm, or call San Diego Access and Crisis 24-hour Hotline at (888) 724-7240.
Course Schedule

- Week 1: Introduction

- Week 2: Pre-Modern & Colonial Vietnam
  - Turley, Second Indochina War, Ch. 1
  - Asselin, Vietnam’s American War, Ch. 1
  - Goscha, Vietnam, Chs. 2, 3

- Week 3: Origins of Vietnam’s Communist Movement
  - Goscha, Vietnam, Chs. 4, 5
  - Review paper 1 due

- Week 4: World War II & Containment
  - Goscha, Vietnam, Chs. 6, 7
  - Quiz 1

- Week 5: The Franco-Vietnamese War, 1946-1954
  - Asselin, Vietnam’s American War, Ch. 2
  - Qiang Zhai, China and the Vietnam Wars, Ch. 1
  - Herring, Ch. 1

- Week 6: Geneva Conference
  - Qiang Zhai, China and the Vietnam Wars, Ch. 2
  - Review paper 2 due

- Week 7: Midterm Examination

  - Asselin, Vietnam’s American War, Ch. 3
  - Qiang Zhai, China and the Vietnam Wars, Ch. 3-5
  - Gaiduk, The Soviet Union and the Vietnam War, Chs. 1, 2

- Week 9: US Military Intervention, 1964-65
  - Qiang Zhai, China and the Vietnam Wars, Ch. 6
  - Gaiduk, The Soviet Union and the Vietnam War, Ch. 3
  - Turley, The Second Indochina War, Ch. 3
  - Draft paper due

- Week 10: US Military Intervention, 1966-68
  - Asselin, Vietnam’s American War, Ch. 4
- Qiang Zhai, *China and the Vietnam Wars*, Ch. 7
- Turley, *The Second Indochina War*, Ch. 4
- Review paper 3 due

  o Week 11: **Global Response to US Intervention**
    - Herring, *America’s Longest War*, Ch. 6
    - Peer review due

  o Week 12: **US Military Intervention, 1969-73**
    - Asselin, *Vietnam’s American War*, Ch. 5
    - Qiang Zhai, *China and the Vietnam Wars*, Ch. 8
    - Turley, *The Second Indochina War*, Ch. 7
    - Assignment 9 due

  o Week 13: **Quest for Peace & Paris Agreement**
    - Qiang Zhai, *China and the Vietnam Wars*, Ch. 9
    - Gaiduk, *The Soviet Union and the Vietnam War*, Chs. 7, 9, 10
    - Herring, *America’s Longest War*, Ch. 7
    - Quiz 2

  o Week 14: **Civil War, 1973-75**
    - Asselin, *Vietnam’s American War*, Ch. 6
    - Turley, *The Second Indochina War*, Ch. 8
    - Review paper 4 due

  o Week 15: **Lessons & Legacies**
    - Asselin, *Vietnam’s American War*, Epilogue
    - Turley, *The Second Indochina War*, Ch. 9
    - Review paper 4 due

  o Week 16: **Conclusion**
    - Final paper due

  o Week 17: **Final Examination**