The Vietnam War
(HIS 452 001, Fall 2017, TR 9:30 – 10:45, Boynton 105)
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Office hours: TR 8–9:15 & 2–3:15; or by appointment

Course Description
The course will examine the origins, evolution, and consequences of the Vietnam conflict from the 1940s through the 1970s. Within a broadly chronological framework, it will analyze the key issues – diplomatic, political, economic, and military – that shaped events, as well as the fierce historical debates that continue to rage about the causes and conduct of the conflict. The U.S. role will be emphasized, but significant attention will also be devoted to the Vietnamese and international sides of the stories, which are critical to understanding the nature of the conflict.

Texts and Materials
The following books are required reading and can be purchased at the bookstores:

- Edward Miller, ed., *The Vietnam War: A Documentary Reader*

In addition to the two books, I will provide copies of further reading material (documents and articles). Hard copies of this material will be handed out in class and electronic copies can be found on the course D2L site. The readings for each class session are listed on the course calendar. You should complete the relevant reading assignments in preparation for each class meeting, because we will discuss in class the readings assigned for that particular day. Your familiarity with the reading material will also be tested on the midterm and final exams. Please keep up with the reading assignments and bring them to class, so that you can refer to them during our discussions.

Course Requirements

Class Participation:
Class periods will consist of lecture interspersed with discussion. Because the class will involve significant discussion, you should actively participate; indeed, the success of the class discussions depends upon your conscientious preparation and participation. To reflect the importance of this aspect of the course, class participation will form part of the grade (see under “Grades”).

Exams:
There will be a midterm exam on October 17 and a final exam on December 12. These will be in-class examinations consisting of map, identification, and essay questions. The
final exam will not be cumulative; it will only deal with material covered after the midterm. No make-up exams will be given unless you make prior arrangements with me to miss the scheduled test. If you miss a test due to an emergency on the day, you will not be allowed to take a make-up unless you can provide me with an appropriate excuse and/or documentation to justify your absence.

Written Assignment:
Your assignment is to choose an individual who played a prominent role in the Vietnam conflict and write a paper examining that person’s actions and impact on events. The paper’s completion will involve the following steps:

- **Proposal and Bibliography.** Write a 1-page proposal identifying the person you intend to write about and the questions or issues you will address in examining that person’s role in the conflict. In addition, attach to the proposal a bibliography listing the sources relevant to your chosen topic. **Due September 26.**
- **Written Paper.** Your finished paper should be about 10 pages in length (approximately 3,000 words), typed and double-spaced (12-point type; 1 inch margins). Please submit both a hardcopy and an electronic copy. To be fair to those who submit papers on time, late ones will be penalized by a loss of 5% for each day they are late. **Due December 5.**

Please see the second part of the syllabus for further details about this assignment.

**Course Policies**

**Academic Integrity:**
Academic integrity is a responsibility of all university faculty and students. Faculty members promote academic integrity in multiple ways including instruction on the components of academic honesty, as well as abiding by university policy on penalties for cheating and plagiarism.

**Definition of Academic Dishonesty**
Academic dishonesty includes both cheating and plagiarism. Cheating includes but is not limited to (1) using or attempting to use unauthorized materials to aid in achieving a better grade on a component of a class; (2) the falsification or invention of any information, including citations, on an assigned exercise; and/or (3) helping or attempting to help another in an act of cheating or plagiarism. Plagiarism is presenting the words or ideas of another person as if they were your own. Examples of plagiarism are (1) submitting an assignment as if it were one’s own work when, in fact, it is at least partly the work of another; (2) submitting a work that has been purchased or otherwise obtained from an Internet source or another source; and (3) incorporating the words or ideas of an author into one’s paper without giving the author due credit.

Please read the complete policy, including penalties and the appeal process, at [http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/4.1-student-academic-dishonesty.pdf](http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/4.1-student-academic-dishonesty.pdf)
Attendance:
There will be no grade given for class attendance. However, it is most unlikely that
students will do well unless they attend regularly. You are responsible for all material
covered during class time. Any consequences of absence from class are the responsibility
of the student.

Acceptable Student Behavior:
Classroom behavior should not interfere with the instructor’s ability to conduct the class
or the ability of other students to learn from the instructional program (see the Student
Conduct Code). Unacceptable or disruptive behavior will not be tolerated. Students
who disrupt the learning environment may be asked to leave class and may be subject to
judicial, academic or other penalties. The instructor will have full discretion over what
behavior is deemed appropriate/inappropriate in the classroom.

Students with Disabilities:
To obtain disability related accommodations, alternate formats and/or auxiliary aids,
students with disabilities must contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS), Human
Services Building, Room 325, 468-3004 / 468-1004 (TDD) as early as possible in the
semester. Once verified, ODS will notify the course instructor and outline the
accommodation and/or auxiliary aids to be provided. Failure to request services in a
timely manner may delay your accommodations. For additional information, go to
http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/.

Grades:
The grades for the course will be determined as follows: 15% for class participation; 25%
for the midterm examination; 25% for the final examination; 35% for the written
assignment (5% for the proposal and bibliography; 30% for the finished paper). The
grading scale is as follows: A = 90-100, B = 80-89, C = 70-79, D = 60-69, F = 59 or less.

Withheld Grades:
Ordinarily, at the discretion of the instructor of record and with the approval of the
academic chair/director, a grade of WH will be assigned only if the student cannot
complete the course work because of unavoidable circumstances. Students must complete
the work within one calendar year from the end of the semester in which they receive a
WH, or the grade automatically becomes an F. If students register for the same course in
future terms the WH will automatically become an F and will be counted as a repeated
course for the purpose of computing the grade point average.

Course Calendar

Week 1 (8/29 – 8/31) Course Introduction / Origins of the Vietnamese Revolution

Reading 8/29: Miller, Introduction (pp.xiii-xxix)
Reading 8/31: Miller, ch.1.1 & 1.2 (pp.1-6); “A Vision of Vietnamese Renewal” (X)
Week 2 (9/5 – 9/7) Rise of Vietnamese Communism / First Indochina War, 1945-49

Reading 9/5: Miller, ch.1.3, 1.4 & 1.5 (pp.7-14)
Reading 9/7: Miller, ch.2.1 (pp.15-20); “People’s War” (X)

Week 3 (9/12 – 9/14) U.S. Policy, 1945-50 / End of the First Indochina War, 1950-54

Reading 9/12: “Consequences to the US of Communist Domination of Mainland Southeast Asia” (X)
Reading 9/14: Herring and Immerman, “Eisenhower, Dulles, and Dienbienphu: ‘The Day We Didn’t Go to War’ Revisited” (X); Billings-Yun, Decision Against War: Eisenhower and Dien Bien Phu, 1954, pp.75-102 (X)


Reading 9/19: Miller, ch.2.7 (pp.32-35)
Reading 9/21: Miller, ch.3.4 & 3.5 (pp.52-60)

Week 5 (9/26 – 9/28) Two Vietnams: the South / Origins of the Insurgency

Reading 9/26: Miller, ch.3.1, 3.2 & 3.3 (pp.37-52)
Reading 9/28: Miller, ch.4.1, 4.2, 4.3 & 4.4 (pp.61-80)

September 26: PROPOSAL AND BIBLIOGRAPHY DUE

Week 6 (10/3 – 10/5) Kennedy and Counterinsurgency / Death of Two Presidents

Reading 10/3: Miller, ch.5.2 & 7.1 (pp.88-90 & 115-20)
Reading 10/5: Miller, ch.5.1, 5.3 & 5.5 (pp.81-88, 90-92, 93-95); “Interview with the President” (X)

Week 7 (10/10 – 10/12) Escalation, 1963-1965 / Lyndon Johnson’s War?

Reading 10/10: Miller, ch.6.1 & 6.2 (pp.96-103)
Reading 10/12: Logevall, Choosing War, pp.375-413 (X)

Week 8 (10/17 – 10/19) DRV/NLF Armed Forces & Strategy

October 17: MIDTERM EXAM

Reading 10/19: Miller, ch.7.2 (pp.120-24); “The Impact of U.S. Intervention” (X)


Reading 10/24: Daddis, “Eating Soup with a Spoon: The U.S. Army as a ‘Learning Organization’ in the Vietnam War” (X)
Reading 10/26: Miller, ch.10.1 (pp.197-99); Schell, *The Real War*, pp.204-08 (X)

**Week 10 (10/31 – 11/2) Air War, 1965-1968 / Tet Offensive**

Reading 10/31: Miller, ch.7.5 & 7.6 (pp.135-44); “An Appraisal of Rolling Thunder” (X)
Reading 11/2: Miller, ch.8 ALL (pp.147-71)

**Week 11 (11/7 – 11/9) / My Lai Massacre / War at Home**

Reading 11/7: Belknap, ALL
Reading 11/9: Miller, ch.9.1, 9.2, 9.3, 9.6, 9.8, 9.9 (pp.172-78, 181-83 & 190-95)


Reading 11/14: Miller, ch.10.4 & 10.5 (pp.205-13)
Reading 11/16: Miller, ch.10.2 & 10.3 (pp.200-05)

**Week 13 (11/28 – 11/30) Paris Peace Accords / Fall of Saigon, 1973-75**

Reading 11/28: Miller, ch.10.6 (pp.213-14); “Coercing Saigon to Accept a Deal” (X)
Reading 11/30: Miller, ch.11 ALL (pp.216-25): “The Final Offensive” (X)

**Week 14 (12/5 – 12/7) Legacies: Vietnam / Legacies: United States**

Viewing of chosen film 12/7

December 5: **WRITTEN PAPER DUE**

**Final Examination: Tuesday December 12, 8:00 – 10:00 AM**
Learning Outcomes

Program Learning Outcomes:
The SFA History Department has identified the following Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) for all SFA students earning a B.A. degree in History. The SFA History major can:

(1) Interpret the past in context.
(2) Understand the complex nature of the historical record.
(3) Engage in historical inquiry, research, and analysis.
(4) Craft historical narrative and argument.
(5) Practice historical thinking as central to engaged citizenship.

This course will involve all of these PLOs.

Student Learning Outcomes:
The more specific outcomes for this particular course are as follows. In this class, you will:

(1) Explain the origins, evolution, and consequences of the conflict in Vietnam from the 1940s through the 1970s.
(2) Examine the scholarship on the war and demonstrate an understanding of the historical debates that continue to rage about the causes and conduct of the conflict.
(3) Critically analyze primary sources, identifying their audience and goals and recognizing both their value and limitations in reconstructing the past.
(4) Identify an historical issue, locate and evaluate appropriate sources, and construct an organized and effective analysis of your chosen topic.
Written Assignment

Your assignment is to choose an individual who played a prominent role in the Vietnam conflict and examine that person’s actions and impact on events. As long as a paper on that person will make a viable topic, you may pick anyone from any period of the conflict (from the 1940s through the 1970s) and from any nationality, background or position (civilian leader, military figure, antiwar activist, journalist, etc.). On the next page, you will find some suggestions.

I am more interested in analytical depth than in comprehensiveness. Therefore, you should not attempt to write a mini-biography of the individual, which is neither feasible nor desirable in an assignment of this kind. You might also – especially if you choose a person about whom a lot has been written – confine your analysis to that individual’s involvement in a particular episode in the war, in order to ensure that you have a topic of manageable size. In any case, you will want to find an issue or event that will provide a focus for your paper (otherwise, the paper risks becoming merely descriptive). For example: Was Ho Chi Minh primarily a nationalist or a communist? Was General Henri Navarre to blame for the French defeat at Dien Bien Phu? If he had lived, would John F. Kennedy have sent U.S. troops to Vietnam? Formulating questions like this will help you to establish the parameters of your paper, guide your research efforts, and provide direction for your writing.

Remember that, as Karl Marx once noted, people make their own history but not just as they please. In other words, a person’s ability to shape his or her own destiny is always constrained by the world around them. In focusing on a particular individual, you should not forget therefore that the role played by this person will have been subject to various influences (political demands, ideological mindsets, bureaucratic pressures, etc.) that will have affected his or her freedom of action, and you will want to factor this consideration into your analysis.

The completion of this assignment will be a process. This is something that you should work on throughout the course of the semester; it cannot be done well by waiting until the last minute. Thus, the assignment’s completion will involve the following steps:

1) Proposal and Bibliography
   - First, you need to establish who will be the focus of your paper. Read Miller’s introduction (pp.xiii-xxix) to get an idea of the overall story of the Vietnam War, which will help you to think about a person or area in which you are interested. Once you have chosen a person, draw up a list of sources you will use. Engaging in a thorough search for sources is important because it will help you to decide whether your idea for a paper is feasible given the timeframe you are working within and the materials available. You may find out that you have to refocus or tweak your topic. You may even discover that you have to completely start again because your original idea will not work. In either case, it is best to know these things sooner rather than later. For source materials, there is a good bibliography of the war available on-line at http://edmoise.sites.clemson.edu/bibliography.html. The Library contains a fine selection of books on the Vietnam conflict.
You must come and discuss your paper topic and sources with me – I will expect you to stop by my office at least once before the proposal is due in order to discuss it.

To complete this first phase of the assignment, write a 1-page proposal identifying the person you intend to write about and the questions or issues you will address in examining that person’s role in the conflict. In addition, attach to the proposal a bibliography listing the sources relevant to your chosen topic. I am loath to specify a particular number of sources that you should include because that seems rather arbitrary – after all, some sources are more substantial than others and/or will prove more valuable for the particular topic you have chosen. This is a substantial project, however, and the bibliography should reflect that fact – so, I would expect you to use at least 8 sources. Due September 26.

(2) Written Paper

Your finished paper should be about 10 pages in length (approximately 3,000 words), typed and double-spaced (12-point type; 1 inch margins).

In addition to providing me with a hard-copy of the paper, you must also submit an electronic one to an anti-plagiarism website – turnitin.com. If you have never used turnitin.com, you will first need to register as a user. On the main page, click on “create account” at the top right. You will need the class ID (16006549) and course enrolment key (Vietnam). You will also be asked for your email address, and you will choose a user password. When you are ready to submit your paper, follow the instructions to upload it. Due December 5.

The grade for the written assignment (which is worth 35% of the overall course grade) will be determined as follows: 5% for the paper proposal and bibliography; and 30% for the final paper.
**List of Persons**

Below is a list of persons that you might consider for your paper – it is by no means exhaustive; there may be another individual that you would like to examine and who you think would make a good subject for your paper.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>American: Policymakers</th>
<th>Vietnamese</th>
<th>Others</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>George Ball</td>
<td>Bao Dai</td>
<td>Mao Zedong</td>
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<tr>
<td>McGeorge Bundy</td>
<td>Duong Van Minh</td>
<td>Pierre Mendès-France</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clark Clifford</td>
<td>Ho Chi Minh</td>
<td>Henri Navarre</td>
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<td>John Foster Dulles</td>
<td>Le Duan</td>
<td>Norodom Sihanouk</td>
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<td>Dwight D. Eisenhower</td>
<td>Ngo Dinh Diem</td>
<td>Robert Thompson</td>
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<td>Lyndon B. Johnson</td>
<td>Ngo Dinh Nhu</td>
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<td>John F. Kennedy</td>
<td>Nguyen Khan</td>
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<td>Henry Kissinger</td>
<td>Nguyen Cao Ky</td>
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<td>Henry Cabot Lodge</td>
<td>Nguyen Van Thieu</td>
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<tr>
<td>Robert McNamara</td>
<td>Tran Le Xuan (Madame Nhu)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Richard M. Nixon</td>
<td>Tri Quang</td>
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<tr>
<td>Franklin D. Roosevelt</td>
<td>Vo Nguyen Giap</td>
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<td>Walt Rostow</td>
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<td>Dean Rusk</td>
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<tr>
<td>Harry S. Truman</td>
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| American: Military/Covert Personnel                 |                                                |                         |
| Creighton Abrams                                    |                                                |                         |
| William Calley                                      |                                                |                         |
| J. Lawton Collins                                   |                                                |                         |
| Paul Harkins                                        |                                                |                         |
| John Kerry                                          |                                                |                         |
| Edward Lansdale                                     |                                                |                         |
| Archimedes Patti                                    |                                                |                         |
| John Paul Vann                                      |                                                |                         |
| William C. Westmoreland                             |                                                |                         |
| Earle Wheeler                                       |                                                |                         |

| American: Media & Homefront                        |                                                |                         |
| Muhammad Ali                                        |                                                |                         |
| David Dellinger                                     |                                                |                         |
| Daniel Ellsberg                                     |                                                |                         |
| David Halberstam                                    |                                                |                         |
| J. William Fulbright                                |                                                |                         |
| Robert Kennedy                                      |                                                |                         |
| Martin Luther King, Jr.                             |                                                |                         |
| Mike Mansfield                                      |                                                |                         |
| Jane Fonda                                          |                                                |                         |
What makes a good paper?

There are two principal criteria by which the quality of an academic paper is judged: content and structure.

(1) CONTENT. The content of a good paper will:

   (a) Be relevant to the title. Your assignment asks you to examine a particular individual but otherwise leaves the content of the paper up to you. Therefore, you need to determine the question(s) or issue(s) that you intend to address. As noted in the instructions for the assignment, I do not want you to write a mini-biography of the person, but rather to find the question(s) or issue(s) related to that individual which will provide a good focus for your paper.

   (b) Contain an overall argument. There must be a consistent thread running through the whole essay. Make sure you have an idea of what this argument is going to be before you start writing, and incorporate it into your introduction. Having a strong overall argument does not mean that you give just one side of the picture; on the contrary, you should also examine opposing arguments and interpretations.

   (c) Demonstrate considerable research, which draws on sources appropriate for a scholarly assignment of this kind (i.e., no Wikipedia-type sources).

   (d) Make clear points, supported with evidence.

(2) STRUCTURE. A good paper will:

   (a) Have a useful introduction. An introduction will explain why the topic you have chosen to address is of interest, indicate your overall argument, and mention in general terms how you intend to structure your essay.

   (b) Contain logically arranged and well constructed paragraphs. Paragraphs should be arranged in such a way that your argument is smoothly and forcefully advanced. A well constructed paragraph often begins with a “topic sentence” that introduces the point that the paragraph will make; other sentences are then organized in support of it.

   (c) Have an appropriate conclusion. A conclusion should summarize your argument(s) but not introduce new points.

   (d) Be written in an “academic” style. The paper should be grammatically correct and include the proper citation of sources and a bibliography. As a guide, see the Chicago Manual of Style – there are several copies of this work available in the Library, including at the Reference Desk.
Avoiding Plagiarism
Plagiarism is an act of fraud and intellectual theft. As stated in the course syllabus, it will not be tolerated. Although most students think they already know what constitutes plagiarism, there is in fact a lot of confusion about the issue. After all, academic assignments ask you to formulate your own ideas but at the same time require you to use the work done by others. Oftentimes, students are unclear about how to properly use and acknowledge the sources that they have drawn from to write their papers. For example, do you know the difference between a legitimate paraphrase of someone else’s work and plagiarism?

There is a good summary of plagiarism – and how to avoid it – on the website of Indiana University’s writing tutorial services. Please take a look at this site:

https://wts.indiana.edu/writing-guides/plagiarism.html

If you are at all unsure about the issue of plagiarism, or any other aspect of the written assignment, please come and see me.