**The Vietnam War**  
(HIS 452 001, Spring 2019, MW 1–2:15, Ferguson 477)  
Philip E. Catton, Liberal Arts North 361  
Contact Information: Tel. 468-2387; E-mail – pcatton@sfasu.edu  
Office hours: MW 2:30–4 & TR 8–9; 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 US role will be emphasized, but significant attention will also be devoted to the Vietnamese and international aspects of the story, 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 (I have also placed copies on reserve at the reference desk in the Library):

- Michal R. Belknap, *The Vietnam War on Trial: The My Lai Massacre and the Court-Martial of Lieutenant Calley*
- 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. Because we will discuss in class the readings assigned for that particular day, you should complete the relevant reading assignments in preparation for each class meeting. 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:
The exam will be a midterm exam on March 13 and a final exam on May 15. 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 February 18.

- **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 May 6.

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

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 (1/23) Course Introduction

Reading 1/23: Miller, Introduction (pp.xiii-xxxi)

Week 2 (1/28 – 1/30) Origins of the Revolution / Rise of Vietnamese Communism

Reading 1/28: Miller, ch.1.1 & 1.2 (pp.1-6); “A Vision of Vietnamese Renewal” (X)
Reading 1/30: Miller, ch.1.3, 1.4 & 1.5 (pp.7-14)

Week 3 (2/4 – 2/6) First Indochina War, 1945-49 / US Policy, 1945-50

Reading: 2/4: Miller, ch.2.1 (pp.15-20); “People’s War” (X)
Reading 2/6: Miller, ch.2.3 (pp.22-25); “Consequences to the US of Communist Domination of Mainland Southeast Asia” (X)


Reading 2/11: Billings-Yun, Decision Against War: Eisenhower and Dien Bien Phu, 1954, pp.75-102 (X)
Reading 2/13: Miller, ch.2.7 (pp.32-35)

Week 5 (2/18 – 2/20) Two Vietnams: the North / Two Vietnams: the South

Reading 2/18: Miller, ch.3.4 & 3.5 (pp.52-60)
Reading 2/20: Miller, ch.3.1, 3.2 & 3.3 (pp.37-52)

February 18: PROPOSAL AND BIBLIOGRAPHY DUE


Reading 2/25: Miller, ch.4.1, 4.2, 4.3 & 4.4 (pp.61-80)
Reading 2/27: Miller, ch.5.2 & 7.1 (pp.88-90 & 115-20)

Week 7 (3/4 – 3/6) Death of Two Presidents / Escalation, 1963-65

Reading 3/4: Miller, ch.5.1, 5.3 & 5.5 (pp.81-88, 90-92, 93-95); “Interview with the President” (X)
Reading 3/6: Miller, ch.6.1, 6.2 & 6.3 (pp.96-104)

Week 8 (3/11 – 3/13) Lyndon Johnson’s War?

Reading 3/11: Logevall, Choosing War, pp.375-413 (X)
March 13: **MIDTERM EXAM**

**SPRING HOLIDAYS**

**Week 9 (3/25 – 3/27) DRV/NLF Armed Forces / Army of the Republic of Vietnam**

- Reading 3/25: Miller, ch.7.2 (pp.120-24); “The Impact of U.S. Intervention” (X)
- Reading 3/27: Brigham, *ARVN*, pp.1-26 (X)

**Week 10 (4/1 – 4/3) US Armed Forces / Ground War, 1965-68**

- Reading 4/1: Daddis, “Eating Soup with a Spoon: The U.S. Army as a ‘Learning Organization’ in the Vietnam War” (X)
- Reading 4/3: Miller, ch.10.1 (pp.197-99); Schell, *The Real War*, pp.204-08 (X)


- Reading 4/8: Miller, ch.7.5 & 7.6 (pp.135-44); “An Appraisal of Rolling Thunder” (X)
- Reading 4/10: Miller, ch.8 ALL (pp.147-71)

**Week 12 (4/15 – 4/17) My Lai Massacre / War at Home**

- Reading 4/15: Belknap, ALL
- Reading 4/17: Miller, ch.9.1, 9.2, 9.3, 9.6, 9.8, 9.9 (pp.172-78, 181-83 & 190-95)


- Reading 4/22: Miller, ch.10.4 & 10.5 (pp.205-13)
- Reading 4/24: Miller, ch.10.2 & 10.3 (pp.200-05)

**Week 14 (4/29 – 5/1) Paris Peace Accords / Fall of Saigon, 1973-75**

- Reading 4/29: Miller, ch.10.6 (pp.213-14); “Coercing Saigon to Accept a Deal” (X)
- Reading 5/1: Miller, ch.11 ALL (pp.216-25): “The Final Offensive” (X)


- Viewing of chosen film 5/8

May 6: **WRITTEN PAPER DUE**

**Final Examination: Wednesday May 15, 1 – 3 PM**
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.