

# INS 159 – A History of the Vietnam Conflict

Syllabus -- Telecourse  
(Revised Fall 2005)



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Ins 159 – Telecourse

## A History of the Vietnam Conflict

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### Prerequisites:

None

### Description:

This course explores America's longest war, which remains one of the confusing, emotionally turbulent periods involving combat in American history. Its long shadow, as will be shown, crosses all other national interests including domestic, foreign, social, and interplanetary (yes, it impacted the space race too), continues to inflame and influence national politics (as the 2004 Presidential election demonstrated) and also colors military tactics and strategy. Two Presidents fell from grace. As the generation who lived through the period as young men and women are now taking control of our country's military and political structures, an examination of the Vietnam War as a military, social, racial, and political conflict becomes important. There are many other important issues that do fall outside the range of this course; this course remains in the realm of the war itself, from roughly World War II until 1975.

Heated arguments have raged (and still do) in homes, schools, office break-rooms, playgrounds, street corners, classrooms, beauty salons, Pentagon planning rooms, the Oval Office and halls of Congress. Books, films, magazines, song lyrics, and lectures have all attempted to resolve these questions brought on by the war. A complete understanding of the many questions still plague and trouble our political, social, military, international policies and institutions may never occur but we must make the attempt.

### Videos:

The video series *Vietnam: A Television History* is an objective attempt to present facts. Included in the series is some of the same film which many of us watched on the evening news. By viewing it decades removed we will be able to interpret it a way we could not do 35 years ago. In addition, there is footage that was neither not available to the U.S. networks during the war or which the networks chose at that time elected not to include for various broadcasts. There are also taped interviews of key people who remember the war and associated events

This series includes 13 one-hour tapes that trace the history of Southeast Asia from the early part of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century to the expulsion of all foreign powers (including China) in 1975.

This series is still required viewing at West Point and Annapolis Military Academies.

### Texts:

Moss, George Donelson. *Vietnam: an American Ordeal*. 5<sup>th</sup> ed. New York: Prentice Hall, 2002.

O’Nan, Stewart, ed. *The Vietnam Reader*. New York: Anchor Books, 1998.

### Course Requirements:

Each of you is required to complete reading the appropriate chapters or pages in the texts prior to viewing each of the 13 videos (see reading lists below). As you progress through the reading and viewing, you ought to consider the various perspectives of the different groups involved in the war.

Drawing upon the information gathered the videos, texts, and other library sources, you are to develop **three research papers, fully documented**, during the period allowed for the telecourse. Other topics are subject to the approval of the instructor.

These papers need to about 5 –6 pages each.

The papers are expected to cite sources other than required texts.

The papers are expected to be proper research papers, with the use of Sources Cited, citations (may be parenthetically or footnotes), and **library** research. Students cannot rely on internet sources only. The internet contains more “Baloney Slings” (to be polite) on this topic than can be imagined.

Papers may be in APA or MLA format only. Correctly formatted papers are essential. Contact your instructor or librarians as needed for assistance.

These papers are expected to reasonable and not a forum for soapbox ranting. They are to be serious college-level investigations.

Plagiarism will result in student failing the course.

There is also a comprehensive final exam that must be taken. It is multiple choice, true-false and yes-no.

### Additional Information:

Remember that this war’s shock waves continue to reverberate, as the experiences of those involved continue to attest. This instructor served, as a draftee rifleman, in Vietnam with the 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Division from late 1968 to 1970. Learning FACTS are essential in understanding any history. However, in this case, I feel that it’s important to perceive the war and its issues on personal levels, although I know this is impossible without direct experience. See “How to Tell a True War Story” by Tim O’Brien from his work *The Things that We Carried*. That’s all that we can to do.

As you go through this course, contact the instructor by email to have questions answered.

## Reading List

| Video Programs                            | Reading: <i>Vietnam</i>                              | Reading: <i>V. Reader</i>                                                                            |
|-------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Program 1<br><b>Roots of War</b>          | Chapter 1<br><b>Vietnam: a Place &amp; a People</b>  | (None)                                                                                               |
| Program 2<br><b>First Vietnam War</b>     | Chapter 2<br><b>The Elephant &amp; the Tiger</b>     | (None)                                                                                               |
| Program 3<br><b>America's Mandarin</b>    | Chapter 3<br><b>An Experiment in Nation Building</b> | "One Very Hot Day"<br>53-72                                                                          |
| Program 4<br><b>LBJ Goes to War</b>       | Chapter 4<br><b>Raising the Stakes</b>               | "Green Berets" 17-40<br>"Ballad of the Green Berets" 285<br>"I-Feel-like-I'm Fixin to Die Rag" 286-7 |
| Program 5<br><b>American Takes Charge</b> | Chapter 5<br><b>America Goes to War</b>              | "How They Were Organized" 47-50<br>"Tu Do Street" 628-9                                              |
| Program 6<br><b>With America's Enemy</b>  | Chapter 6<br><b>The Chain of Thunders</b>            | "Search & Destroy"<br>461-469                                                                        |
| Program 7<br><b>Tet, 1968</b>             | Chapter 7<br><b>The Year of the Monkey</b>           | From <i>The Things that they Carried</i> 507-12, 533-535                                             |
| Program 8<br><b>Vietnamizing the War</b>  | Chapter 8<br><b>A War to End the War</b>             | "The Edge" 630-31<br><i>13<sup>th</sup> Valley</i> : Chpt. 9, 385-402                                |
| Program 9<br><b>No Neutral Ground</b>     | None                                                 | "The Only War we Had" 495-502                                                                        |
| Program 10<br><b>"Peace is at Hand"</b>   | Chapter 9<br><b>The End of the Tunnel</b>            | None                                                                                                 |

Program 11  
**Homefront USA**

None

“Fortunate Son” 288  
“Monkey” 586-87  
“Starlight Scope  
Myopea” 621-22

Program 12  
**End of the Tunnel**

None

None

Program 13  
**Legacies**

**Chronology**

“In Celebration of  
Spring” 111-12  
“The Names of the  
Dead” 680-85

#### NOTE:

The Drop Policy of ECC was changed in January of 2005. If students wish to receive a grade of W (withdraw), they must do so by the tenth week after enrolling. See your telecourse enrollment card for that date. After that time, a grade of W is not possible. Contact your instructor for further details.

