

THE VIETNAM WAR

HIS 3938: The Vietnam War
Summer 2006
Session A
CRN 54846 Section 770

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course examines the origins, events, and consequences of the war in Vietnam from 1945 to 1975. Special emphasis is placed on the evolution of American involvement in Southeast Asia and the reasons why the conflict ended as it did. Attention is also devoted to understanding Vietnamese perceptions of the war.

This course is structured around the eleven episode PBS series *Vietnam: A Television History*. Assigned readings complement each video in the series. The PBS website associated with this series is <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/vietnam/>. This site contains maps, timelines, biographies of important individuals, a glossary of terms and acronyms, reference material, episode transcripts, and a bibliography of additional reading.

FIVE IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS

1. This course is delivered entirely online (including exams). **Students must have regular and reliable internet and email access.** You are responsible for ensuring that your internet connection and email are operating properly! I will periodically send out important information and reminders via email. You are responsible for checking your email. Blackboard automatically sends email to your official USF email account, and this is the account that will be used in this course. Technical assistance with email is available from Academic Computing in LIB 618; tel (813) 974-1222.

2. **Please ensure that you are able to take the online exams at the scheduled times** (Friday, June 2nd 6:00-7:00 PM and Friday, June 23rd 6:00-7:00 PM). To discourage academic dishonesty, no make-up exams or alternative exam times are available. In the event of an unavoidable emergency such as surgery, at the instructor's discretion students may be allowed to complete an extensive essay exam.

3. **This course does not count for credit toward the History major, nor does it count for general education Historical Perspectives credit.** It does count as a Major Works/Major Issues course.

4. **This web-based course is delivered through Blackboard.** Students are advised to spend some time exploring the course site on Blackboard and to regularly check back for updates. A guide for first-time Blackboard users is available at <http://www.acomp.usf.edu/myUSF/howtomyusf.pdf>. To access your Blackboard course, go to <https://my.usf.edu>. Login with your NetID and password. Then click on the “Courses” tab and classes that you have registered for will be displayed.

5. **Technical problems?** Tampa Distance Learning Student Support Services is located in SVC 1072; tel (813) 974-2996, hotline (813) 974-3063. Academic Computing is located in LIB 618; tel (813) 974-1222. For web assistance try these addresses:

<http://www.acomp.usf.edu/myUSF/howtomyusf.pdf>
<http://www.acomp.usf.edu/portal.html>
<http://help.acomp.usf.edu/netid.html>

REQUIRED VIDEO AND READINGS

You will need to purchase the following video series and books available at the USF Tampa campus book store and other locations:

1. *Vietnam: A Television History*. Public Broadcasting Service (PBS). This series is available on either VHS or DVD in a four-volume set. You can purchase this series through PBS’s web site: <http://www.shoppbs.org/home/index.jsp>. The series can also be purchased (currently for a lower price) at www.amazon.com. Order early to ensure availability and timely delivery! Copies are also available at the USF bookstore.
2. George Donelson Moss. *Vietnam: An American Ordeal*. 5th edition. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2006.
3. Philip Caputo. *A Rumor of War*. New York: Owl Books, 1996. This book is optional, not required. You may receive up to 10 extra credit points from questions based on this book.

You will also read the following three articles which are available in PDF format in the “Course Documents” section of Blackboard:

1. David Chandler. “Revolution in Cambodia.” In *A History of Cambodia*. Boulder: Westview Press, 2000.
2. Robin Wagner-Pacifici and Barry Schwartz. “The Vietnam Veteran’s Memorial: Commemorating a Difficult Past.” *The American Journal of Sociology* 97, 2 (1991): 376-420.
3. William J. Duiker. “Why the Communists Won.” In *Sacred War: Nationalism and Revolution in a Divided Vietnam*. Boston: McGraw Hill, 1995.

COURSE OUTLINE

Please be aware that the schedule is subject to change. All changes will be announced via Blackboard.

Week 1 (May 15-19)

1. Reading: Moss 1-2 and Video: *Roots of a War*
2. Reading: Moss 3 and Video: *America's Mandarin*

Week 2 (May 22-26)

3. Reading: Moss 4 and Video: *LBJ Goes to War*
4. Reading: Moss 5 and Video: *America Takes Charge*

Week 3 (May 29-June 2)

5. Reading: Moss 6 and Video: *America's Enemy*

Midterm Exam: Friday, June 2nd 6:00-7:00 PM

Week 4 (June 5-9)

6. Reading: Moss 7 and Video: *Tet, 1968*
7. Reading: Moss 8 and Video: *Vietnamizing the War*

Week 5 (June 12-16)

8. Reading: Chandler article [in Course Documents] and Video: *Cambodia and Laos*
9. Video *Peace Is at Hand* and Reading: none
10. Reading: Wagner-Pacifi and Schwartz article [in Course Documents] and Video: *Homefront USA*

Extra Credit Quiz: Friday, June 16th 6:00-6:15 PM

Week 6 (June 19-23)

11. Reading: Moss 9 and Duiker article [in Course Documents] and Video: *The End of the Tunnel*

Final Exam: Friday, June 23rd 6:00-7:00 PM

STUDY GUIDES

For each of the eleven topics listed in the course outline there is a study guide available on Blackboard under “Course Documents.” This study guide will help focus your attention on main themes in both the videos and the readings. The first five topics are covered on the midterm exam. The last six topics are covered on the final exam. I recommend that you download and print the week’s study guides before viewing the videos and reading the assigned chapters for the week.

GRADING AND EXAMS

Your grade in this course will come from a midterm and final exam. Each exam will consist of 50 multiple-choice questions worth 1 point each. The total number of points available in the course is thus 100. You will have 1 hour to complete each exam. Exam questions will come from the videos and the assigned readings. Two kinds of multiple choice questions will appear on the exam: content questions and interpretive questions. As their names suggest, content questions cover basic facts, information, and chronology, while interpretive questions address the more complex issues of how and why. See the study guides on each topic for more information. The final exam will not be cumulative. Final grades will be determined using a +/- point scale in which (for example) 89-87% is a B+, 86-83% is a B, 82-80% is a B-, et cetera.

Extra Credit: At the end of week 5, students have the opportunity to gain up to 10 points of extra credit on an extra credit quiz of ten multiple choice questions. These questions will cover the optional book *A Rumor of War* by Philip Caputo. You do not have to read this book or answer the questions on the extra credit quiz. Please email me if you have any questions.

COURSE POLICIES

Academic Dishonesty – Be very careful that you do not commit any form of academic dishonesty. You are responsible for knowing what this entails! See the current USF Undergraduate Catalog for more details about this serious offence. *Any student discovered to have committed academic dishonesty or to have disrupted the course website will automatically receive either an F or a FF (a grade which indicates failure due to academic dishonesty and which cannot be removed from your record) for the course.*

Grade Changes – In case of a clear error, please see me as soon as possible so I can correct your grade. If you feel that a grade is unfair, please submit a detailed written explanation stating your case within one week of receiving the grade. Do not send this by email. I will respond in writing. Please refer to the USF College of Arts & Sciences handbook for further information on grade grievance procedures.

Disabilities – The Student Disability Services Office coordinates auxiliary learning aid and other assistance to eligible students with disabilities. Students are encouraged to contact this office as soon as possible to make arrangements for services. Contact Student Disability Services in SOC 204 or by phone at 974-4309 (voice) and 974-5651 (TDD).