

**Determining the Truth**by [Joe Escobar](#) - Saturday, 3 October 2009, 04:48 PM

This is a history class. We are trying to determine what really happened in history. How do you/should we deal academically with conflicting information? How can your two textbooks help you to approach this video information and be confident that you are learning accurate historical knowledge?

[Edit](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)**Re: Determining the Truth**by [Matthew McIntosh](#) - Tuesday, 6 October 2009, 11:28 PM

I feel when we get conflicting information we should look at another source of information, either other texts, movies, or even talk to someone that might have been there or has a lot of knowledge in the subject and cross reference the information that is in question. After reading the textbooks and watching the movies, I think the movies have really helped me with the readings because it has brought the texts alive with pictures and short interviews with some of the people that we are reading about. The texts are a good way to get information about Vietnam, and now knowing the videos' information is a little inaccurate, help cross check the videos. When learning anything that has been produced or edited, there is always room for some of the information to be lost in translation, so it's nice to have the textbooks that are really similar to help check the other and check the movies.

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**Re: Determining the Truth**by [Kim Tran](#) - Wednesday, 7 October 2009, 06:52 PM

I agree with you. You have a very similar idea to my idea. Both of the materials are good: textbooks and movies. However, I prefer to watch movies first and then read the books, because the movies give us the general information. From that point, we can go on to find out the details from each book.

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**Re: Determining the Truth**by [William Wymer](#) - Saturday, 10 October 2009, 07:46 PM

I like how you stated what I was trying to say also. I agree that the text books give you the information and the videos bring it to life as we were not there. I also think the same way about the videos that it depends on who is producing them and the views that they are trying to portray. I also think that the videos make it easier to go back and reread and see in your mind what they were telling you. The videos even if they are not totally correct they put life to the text books' information. I also think that when there is conflicting information that you need to do more research in order to make sense of the information and get to the real history of an event that happened.

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Re: Determining the Truth

by [Rebecca Mellnik](#) - Wednesday, 7 October 2009, 12:24 PM

When looking at the Vietnam War, or any event in history that has conflicting information, it is important to educate yourself on all the information provided. You can't learn about an event such as this by only studying one side. There is much debate surrounding the Vietnam War. This "bitter controversy" keeps people wondering if certain actions were justified and if mistakes were made. One of the most interesting questions posed is, was Ho Chi Minh a Nationalist or a Communist, or was he both? Some of the information in the PBS videos was very interesting to hear contradicted, such as the reason the group of Catholics from North Vietnam were attacked.

Our textbooks give us more information, from different sources on the Vietnam War. The Appy book is a great way to read accounts of specific people who witnessed many different aspects and events of the War. They may be slightly biased because War is a very emotional thing, but they allow the reader to better understand those experiences. The Herring book seems to be a wider source of information on the war. There are so many different texts out there with varying information, but it is up to the reader or the student to use that information to gain the historical knowledge.

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Re: Determining the Truth

by [William Wymer](#) - Saturday, 10 October 2009, 07:58 PM

I agree with your last statement that we need to use all the media materials that we are given as well as ones that we find in order to gain historical knowledge. I also think that by talking with one another in this class and seeing different thoughts about what we have just viewed and read that we will gain a better view and understanding of the Vietnam War, as we all see things in a different way and someone else may see something that you did not or may have missed. I also agree with your thoughts about the two text books that we have, but I think that the videos bring the facts to life. I also think that even though the videos may not be totally correct that they provide insight to the Vietnam War that we would not have if they were not available to us. I also think that the conflicting information makes us look at or for other sources to find an answer and judgment for ourselves.

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Re: Determining the Truth

by [Scott Burgess](#) - Saturday, 10 October 2009, 08:19 PM

I think that you hit it dead on. We as students must compile all of the data from the sources and hopefully draw the correct conclusion.

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Re: Determining the Truth

by [Jeffrey Harmon](#) - Wednesday, 7 October 2009, 02:55 PM

Well let me start off that what is accurate historical knowledge
??? I think that it can be determined through opinions. I would still believe the troops over any other source I have seen so far. It always seems to amaze me how religion always brings death! When the war was almost avoidable and the monks started lighting themselves on fire as torches, then it all got heated up again. I also believe that the press should not be allowed in war because they are people, and they will report not all facts,

but opinions can persuade what they write. Just like now, how all the news media writes their opinions and not FACTS. Also i believe all the story tellers over all media and military news articles.

What gets me though is the religion, and i am not trying to offend anyone, just what i see. 900,000 catholic refugees to the south, monks on fire, (doesnt god not like suicide)?

Why does the united states always put its nose where it does not belong? Do not get me wrong, I am very patriotic, but it seems no matter where in the world, we are there. I also think in an instance like this, there is not a right and wrong answer, parts are opinions!!! They need to pick a way they decide (they is historians) and teach people, because depending on who you talk to and who was where during the war, you can have different outcomes about the same news article. You just have to take what information they give you and make your own opinion, because the TRUTH will never be told.

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Re: Determining the Truth

by [Matthew McIntosh](#) - Thursday, 8 October 2009, 09:12 PM

I agree 100% with you that the united states is always putting its nose where it doesn't belong. I think that for the most part that the places the united states gets involved, the people in those parts of the world don't want us there.

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Re: Determining the Truth

by [Rebecca Mellnik](#) - Saturday, 10 October 2009, 04:45 PM

I thought that what the monks did was a very powerful statement. I have seen that photo many times, and i knew that it was a protest to the war, but seeing it on the film and hearing the details made it seem like i was there watching.

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Re: Determining the Truth

by [Scott Burgess](#) - Saturday, 10 October 2009, 07:44 PM

I agree with a few of your views. First, the one about the media; they only report it how they want you to know it. Leave a little fact out here or there and you have changed what truly happened to what you want people to believe has happened. I also believe that the people who told their stories in the books told the truth. Finally I agree that the US has a lot of problems right here that need fixed. We need to be ever vigilant but hundreds of billions of dollars would sure go along way in helping us out.

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Re: Determining the Truth

by [William Wymer](#) - Saturday, 10 October 2009, 08:10 PM

I can't say that I agree with you 100% about the media. I do agree that the media will tell or report the story the way that they want you to see it, that part I do agree with. I think that the media provides away for you to see things that you can't as we are not there. I think that you have to watch or read what they give us and pull out the truth from their opinion and form your own. I do think that the media helps us record history though, that is why I think that why important for the media to be there.

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**Re: Determining the Truth**by [Chad Schultz](#) - Wednesday, 7 October 2009, 04:37 PM

Conflicting information is always an interesting perspective. If I see two individuals and they have two different views on the same thing, the minor details are always important. So I would find the two textbooks being extremely helpful and would have plenty of minor detail. Everyone already knows the major details in a situation and can put their spin on it. That is why the minor details are very important and you would want to pay more attention on.

Also you could take the general grasp that everyone has and take it all in and see if there are any opinions that contradict or statements that they have made. If you are looking to sell something there are tendencies to stretch the truth and make an event seem rather exciting or more action packed. But then again I would think that the Vietnam War would already have quite the punch of action. Today's society people like to put their signature on the topic and maybe add a little additives rather than the raw truth.

Since I am the reader, I take in all the information and trust the author. So far I have not seen or read anything that contradicts each other and has been really a joyful experience.

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**Re: Determining the Truth**by [Michael Bellamy](#) - Wednesday, 7 October 2009, 06:25 PM

First of all I find it very discouraging to find out that in some instances the PBS series on the Vietnam War has altered, stretched and even left out important facts involving the war and everything leading up to it. After viewing the video *Accuracy in the Media – Part One*, I now question who exactly to trust. It's not that I was previously unaware of any fraud in the media, it just caught me off guard to find it in something as historical and important as this series on the Vietnam War. I understand that for the most part the series is historically accurate, otherwise it wouldn't be a big production, but I can't help to now be a little skeptical while watching it. The question I keep asking myself now is: *Is what I'm learning actually how it happened?* A question as simple as this can cause problems especially when it comes to academic research on the given topic. Questioning the credibility of a source can cause hesitation within a piece of written work, resulting in unclear facts and details that have been glossed over.

When you are writing about a research topic such as the Vietnam War, the most important thing to do after coming across conflicting information is acknowledge the fact that there are conflicting sides to it. This very dilemma itself can provide a strong core to an argumentative paper, with the multiple sides of the argument each having their own historical version. If this is the angle you choose to take, research the issue and look to see if there are any overlapping details from each side of the conflicting information, then chronologically piece the story together while taking note of any differences.

In this class we are looking at two textbooks, one video, and a second conflicting video. Since we now know that the accuracy in the PBS series can be a bit shaky, a good way to back up the information is by going to the textbooks. I personally favor the *Patriots* textbook because it contains first hand experiences coming directly from the people who were actually there. Even though we have to take into account that their stories have been edited and tweaked by the author himself, the events, names, and emotions remain genuine. For me I find it helpful to watch the video before reading the Herring book so I can get a strong mental image, and then conclude by reading the Appy book to get the individual detail. I feel more confident about what I am learning from the video when I see it again in the books. A piece of information is more reliable when you encounter it multiple times from different credible sources.

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Re: Determining the Truth

by [Matthew McIntosh](#) - Wednesday, 7 October 2009, 07:45 PM

I also was a little upset to find out that pbs series was a little shady or inaccurate how ever you look at it. Also I like the Patriot book the best, because it tells you about the war but gives you first hand knowledge at the same time.

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Re: Determining the Truth

by [Kelly Culhane](#) - Thursday, 8 October 2009, 12:54 PM

I also favor the Patriots book. I enjoy that it is first hand knowledge, and although that knowledge may be a little vague, due to time and age, at least it is coming from someone who was literally there. I was discouraged to find out about the pbs movie as well. I guess most poeple do not stop to think that some people will tell stories from their perspective and their emotions only. It is disturbing that it an be used as an educational tool after knowingly altering facts however.

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Re: Determining the Truth

by [Jennifer Mosier](#) - Wednesday, 7 October 2009, 06:34 PM

I don't see or view the information as conflicting, I see it as a different point of view. The information from the video and texts are just versions of the same truth. The book America's Longest War is like the commentary in the video and the Appy book are those interviewed. I use the books as a "precursor" leading up to the video. The books prepare me for what will be presented in the video and therefore by knowing a little bit of background information I can interpret and understand the video more accurately.

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Re: Determining the Truth

by [Kelly Culhane](#) - Thursday, 8 October 2009, 12:57 PM

I like your way of looking at it. maybe I will start trying that. To me the Longest War book is definitely the historical one, while the Patriots is the emotional text. It sort of gives you the feel of the emotions of the war. I did find it to be a little disappointing that the video was and still is allowed to be used as a teaching tool, if there are so called facts that are knowingly wrong though.

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Re: Determining the Truth

by [Michael Bellamy](#) - Saturday, 10 October 2009, 02:07 PM

You bring up a valid point. I find it more difficult to see the information as conflicting when relating the video to the textbooks due to the way the information is presented. It is much easier to gather information visually while watching the videos, and when reading over a contrasting story about the same event in a textbook it's harder to process it as conflicting. What happens instead is that we as readers end up seeing it as just another standpoint. As we all know the *Patriots* book contains many different points of views which often provide multiple angles to the same events or conflicts. Something to keep in mind is that since these are personal, they are hard to counter against the Herring textbook which is straightforward historical research.

I will have to disagree with you on one thing though. When it comes to the two videos (the PBS series and *Accuracy in the Media*) the information presented is clearly conflicting. They are not simply different viewpoints, such as a "one side versus the other" sort of thing. The *Accuracy in the Media* video makes it apparent that some of the facts in the PBS series are flat out wrong. So with this in mind, the biggest question now is: Which video can we actually trust?

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Re: Determining the Truth

by [Kim Tran](#) - Wednesday, 7 October 2009, 06:44 PM

Conflicting information means that the ideas, times, places, or names provided by a book, video, contradicts with the information provided by another source. If we are exposed to conflicting information, we should search for more related information about the same topic. This allows us to learn more about the subject and let us determine which source was more accurate. There are many ways to find sources to help us understand the accurate information. These sources include the Internet (Google, Wikipedia, Ask Jeeves, etc.) and library books. Sometimes, it is even better to ask someone who knows a lot about the information you need, such as a professor or a historian.

In this history class, videos are the best materials for me to learn. Since I don't read English that well, watching videos or looking at pictures is the quickest way for me to get the general ideas. However, I know that without the books, I may not be able to know exactly when and where something happened in history. I may not learn about the detailed story from each individuals who were involved in the war.

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Re: Determining the Truth

by [Jeffrey Harmon](#) - Thursday, 8 October 2009, 01:17 PM

I think they are all opinions because depending who you were ,are ect. gave different views, so what is the truth? Depends on who you are talking to.

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Re: Determining the Truth

by [Kelly Culhane](#) - Wednesday, 7 October 2009, 07:44 PM

I believe that we, as students, should realize that certain information should be taken with a grain of salt. I think that being able to have both of our textbooks can give us a better view as to what actually did happen. One book, is definitely more factual as far as historical events go, while the other one offers a more emotional and personal level. I am usually a firm believer that truth is usually somewhere in the middle. Especially when you are discussing something like a war which is definitely passionate on both sides.

Plus, there are always two sides to a story, and what someone thought might have been, might not have. I also realize that given all of the enormous amounts of media outlets, we the students, can also take the initiative to do extra investigating for ourselves. Realizing, of course, that we need to take into account where we have received our information.

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Re: Determining the Truth

by [William Wymer](#) - Wednesday, 7 October 2009, 07:59 PM

This question for myself, made me look back when I was in fifth and sixth grade and we were studying in history class about the effects that the war had on Germany. We had a teacher teaching history from a book and did not have other forms of media to show us what they were trying to show us, But I was able to help with giving a different view by providing movies and slides of Germany that show some of the devastation that happened there during the war, as my dad was stationed there in the Air Force and we were able to live there for almost 5 years. For myself I watch the video's or television program and then read the required texts. I then re-watch the video and see if I see something differently than I did the first time. I then try and find any information from any source, that come from people that have been there when the event had taken place. I try and find more than one as not all write their own story and when someone else is doing it for them or interpreting it for them then some of the information gets lost or omitted in order for the story to fit in the space provided or to sound better. By using more than one source I believe that you can take all the information in and make an educated decision and informed look at history.

I think that the DVD set lets us see things that would be hard for us to imagine and lets it become more real. The book Patriots lets us get to see the views of people that were there and involved in some way in Vietnam. The book America's Longest War lets us get more in depth with what the video was trying to show and teach us. As with all history books, videos or any form of media they are all subject to the writer or producer opinions. This could be just for the amount of time that they have to film or in the case of the writer interpreting what was the most important part of the interview and making it all make sense. Also in any form of media everyone has their views that will in most cases mix in with what they are trying to teach or show you, no matter how hard they try and not let it happen. this is why I like the three media's that this course gives you to use and help you make an informed and educated look and thought about the Vietnam war.

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Re: Determining the Truth

by [Derek Abbott](#) - Wednesday, 7 October 2009, 08:16 PM

I feel confident that I am learning accurate facts because the information found in the two textbooks accurately co-inside with the information in the video. The information regarding earlier wars with both China and France, as well as Vietnam's struggle to stay a free country, is accurately displayed in both book and video. If this information was inaccurate then there would be a discrepancy in what did happen and what didn't happen. Since this is not the case with the material we are working with I can confidently say that the information stated is true and therefore a fact.

As long as the information found in the book stays the same then it can help you greatly. This is because it gives the reader multiple sides to the story, and all the bits and details of information. For me it helps to obtain the general idea of whatever you are learning and then go back and reread the information. Pick apart whatever is most important or whatever details stand out.

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Re: Determining the Truth

by [Name Withheld-6450](#) - Wednesday, 7 October 2009, 08:39 PM

When it comes to dealing with conflicting information, I usually take both points with grains of salt. I usually learn both points of view in which the information is expressed, and then decide for myself what is more credible and what is not. Usually I look for citations in written stuff and things like .org or .net or .edu on the web. (.edu sites are generally the best, as they are written for the purpose of academic settings.)

I think having the 3 forms of info in this class is a good thing. It presents viewpoints of the war from 3 very different points of view. The Patriots book is strictly opinions and first hand accounts of the war. The other two are more of an academic work, but the Herring book with less of a political leaning (which I would argue that PBS does tend to sway certain directions politically, hence the controversy from the Accuracy in the Media bit.) I think the culmination of different view points and different information is a good thing to have. It lets us as students to discern what information we feel is correct and what is simply a view point.

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Re: Determining the Truth

by [Chad Schultz](#) - Thursday, 8 October 2009, 07:35 PM

I never would have thought that a company as noble and modest as PBS would be involved in something like this. It discouraged me and now I am very hesitant to watch anything that PBS may broadcast. Who really knows what is the raw truth and what really happened? Like I previously stated people are more into stretching the truth to make something sound more exciting to get better reviews or maybe a little more fame. It is very dissappointing to hear that this would go on and be allowed.

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Re: Determining the Truth

by [Barbara Dunphy](#) - Saturday, 10 October 2009, 08:12 PM

PBS is a station that I believe is set up to be all that is good. Maybe in a time of much worry and uncertainty they were trying to sugar coat so to speak a very ugly and scary time to give people something positive to think about.

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Re: Determining the Truth

by [Matthew McIntosh](#) - Thursday, 8 October 2009, 07:42 PM

I agree with having three forms of information is a good thing, if we had only one what would we compare it to and do you look up lots of the information we get in class online?

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Re: Determining the Truth

by [Scott Burgess](#) - Saturday, 10 October 2009, 07:24 PM

I think that your text books like the videos must be used and evaluated the same way. You must weight who is talking, when they are taking, and in what context. Any piece of information you aquire from any source can be slanted to fit what that person at that time wants you to belive. I feel that people who can tell there story with no fear of repercussions and nothing to gain are more likely to give you the most honest information.

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Re: Determining the Truth

by [Name Withheld-6450](#) - Saturday, 10 October 2009, 08:07 PM

This is true, but how can you be certain that their information is the right one? I mean, people are brainwashed into thinking a certain way all the time, and can probably tell their story no problem. People can embellish things to slant things a certain way. (I cant safely say that everything people say in the interviews in the Patriots book are 100% accurate, and I doubt many of them, if any, feared any sort of repercussions)

I guess that is the trouble with media and discerning what information is right and what is not, it all comes down to what you think.

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Re: Determining the Truth

by [Barbara Dunphy](#) - Saturday, 10 October 2009, 08:06 PM

Determining the truth is not black and white. The accuracy in media that I listened to told of the pbs series that tried to portray things in a much different and better light than it was. Having lived during the vietnam war and remembering all of the issues surrounding the possibilities of communism, it was clear to me that the war was stricktly aimed at stopping a communist takeover of vietnam. From my readings in the books I believe that the information we are learning is more accurate and closer to the truth than the pbs series information because it is not trying to cover up the communist involvment.

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