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Determining the truth
by [Joe Escobar](#) - Sunday, 10 October 2010, 12:40 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?

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Re: Determining the truth
by [Sheila Daughtry](#) - Monday, 11 October 2010, 08:07 AM

The first thing I do with conflicting information is research. In this case I went to the *Accuracy in Media* website to see what they were about. Next, I checked out the list of characters that were in the film-starting with Charlton Heston.

The textbooks are great! The Herring book has an extensive additional reading list in the back of the book as well as suggesting the reader to visit the *America's Longest War* website. I also noticed the Herring book reinforces the PBS documentary film. Even though the Appy book only contains one-third of the completed interviews, the reader is immersed with a well rounded view of the Vietnam/American war.

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Re: Determining the truth
by [Jolene Powell](#) - Monday, 11 October 2010, 09:27 AM

I absolutley agree. The Appy book is a fantastic book. When I first started this class, I was not sure about how I would like it, but I have to say I am getting alot out of this class and the Appy book draws you in. It to me, is the best way to gain knowledge first hand from someone who was there experiencing this nightmare.

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Re: Determining the truth
by [Donald Ebel](#) - Tuesday, 12 October 2010, 06:04 PM

Jolene, I agree with you that the Appy book is fantastic. It certainly fills the "make history interesting" void for me, as I find the Herring book extremely dry and long-winded. However, I will have to respectfully disagree with you when you say that books such as the Appy book are the best way to gain first-hand knowledge. While it is true that the author did go out and interview hundreds of people who were there and lived through the war, Mr. Escobar makes a good point that the author did have the power to edit what they said as he saw fit for whatever point he wants to make without changing exactly what they said. This happens all the time in the media. Reporters LOVE to take things people say out of context. For an absurd example, Sarah Palin could say something like, "Yay seal clubbing!" The media would be all over her and her seal-clubbing exploits, how she wears lots of real animal fur, and how she raises seals just so she can club them, when in fact she just made an off-color joke to a colleague where both of them were being extremely sarcastic. And the media jumps on it and exaggerates it just to sell a paper. Everyone's seen those dumb tabloid covers from the National Enquirer about Oprah being gay and all that stuff. Most people know that those articles are complete trash, but they sell anyway.

That sort of went in a weird direction, but my point is that the Appy book is a secondary source of information comprised of accounts of primary sources. While many of the stories the people tell are true, there is still a possibility that they could be skewed by the collector of the stories. So, where going out and actually interviewing

someone who was in the war yourself would be the absolute best way possible in this day an age to get correct information about the war (assuming they are telling the 100% truth and their memory still holds), this book is still probably second best.

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Re: Determining the truth

by [Jolene Powell](#) - Wednesday, 13 October 2010, 01:37 PM

Donald, I do agree exactly with what you are saying, I guess I did not clarify my self good enough. I was trying to say a book with interviews from people that were there first hand is better then a book written by someone who has done the research themself gathering from any direction. I agree to how people twist and turn that is exactly why you have to research a little deeper. Also maybe I just love the way the Appy book was written, it sinks deeper, the Herring book drags and has lost me a time or two.

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Re: Determining the truth

by [Justin Powell](#) - Wednesday, 13 October 2010, 01:28 PM

The Appy book does have a way of drawing you in. I wish these stories were longer and more in depth, you know that they have so much more to say.

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Re: Determining the truth

by [Marla Davis](#) - Wednesday, 13 October 2010, 04:43 PM

Justin:

I'm with you, I wish the stories in the Appy book were more detailed and a bit longer. In a lot of them I feel like I'm just barely getting to the tip of the iceberg and the story ends. Disappointing as this is, at least they are interesting.

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Re: Determining the truth

by [Brock Berg](#) - Monday, 11 October 2010, 10:23 PM

I like the *Accuracy in Media* website as well. They can be an extremely useful tool when doing research. I agree that the *Herring* book reinforces the film, and your conclusion following the Appy book is spot on, it is an organized and well put together book if you ask me.

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Re: Determining the truth

by [Jennifer Wilson](#) - Saturday, 16 October 2010, 02:05 PM

I think that I like the Appy book out of all the information provide for this course because of the diverse information of the stories. It is hard to tell if the information in the stories is truthful or not. But you just have to look at the stories in a way that helps you to believe the information that the reader is giving.

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**Re: Determining the truth**by [Jolene Powell](#) - Monday, 11 October 2010, 09:23 AM

Research, research, research. If i need to find a fact, i continue to look into more than just one piece of literature. However all journalists and reporters, writers etc. add alot of there opinion, how there percieve things. Each person percieves things so different, like when you set in a circle, one person whispers something into the ear of the person next to them and by the time it makes full circle its not what it was when it started, it has been changed, twisted and turned, just a bit. So to me, pictures, letters and documents from the people that were directly there, such as those in the Appy book, have a little more bearing than someone that was not.

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**Re: Determining the truth**by [Marla Davis](#) - Tuesday, 12 October 2010, 08:59 AM

Jolene:

I agree with you about research, it's always good to have a little extra information than not enough to be able to determine fact from fiction or at least figure out if the person delivering the information has an agenda of their own which could skew the information being delivered. Using several sources to gather information gives you a much wider view.

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**Re: Determining the truth**by [Tikoya Wiget](#) - Wednesday, 13 October 2010, 06:06 PM

I slightly disagree. Mostly in that, yes, the people that were directly in the war give a good picture of what the war was like in the battle field, but I fear that they may be highly subjective. They fought for there side and therefore can only tell one side of the story. I believe someone that was not at all involved in the war but that did the factual research would hold more bearing for me. They are not subjected by the strong feelings the war imposed on the people directly involved. Therefore I would find there testaments to the war more reliable.

I do like your metaphor of sitting in a circle though. Good job.

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**Re: Determining the truth**by [Marla Davis](#) - Thursday, 14 October 2010, 01:21 PM

I kind of disagree. don't you think that someone not involved in the war, but did factual research would probably be using some of the same resources that our books and DVDs used? I don't know, I'm just saying.

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**Re: Determining the truth**by [Jeremy Carlson](#) - Wednesday, 13 October 2010, 06:55 PM

True. I like everything you wrote in this post. I think if reflects the right idea that our instructor wants us to grasp. Also, your metaphor about people whispering in a circle and when the information comes back it isn't the same as when it started. Great job.

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**Re: Determining the truth**by [Marla Davis](#) - Monday, 11 October 2010, 07:13 PM

The text books and the DVD series for this class are fantastic. Although I grew up in the 1960s and lived through this tumultuos time, I was/am still ignorant of what exactly caused the US to become involved in Vietnam, and all that occurred during our time there. Through this class and my independent research I've already learned so much more than I could have imagined in this short time. With so many resources at our disposal, I anticipate many more enlightening moments and I continue to look forward to the readings, DVDs and especially to what my fellow classmates are gleaning from all of the above.

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Re: Determining the truth

by [Brock Berg](#) - Monday, 11 October 2010, 10:14 PM

I agree Marla. Although I was not born until the mid 80's, I too am ignorant to what happened. I had two great uncle's who were in Vietnam. Of the two, one of them was able to tell stories. I must say, I wish I had payed more attention at the time, because my interest level is much higher now. The other uncle had personal issue's with the tragedy's he witnessed, and has now passed away so I will never really know what happened to him. I am very eager to learn more about what they may have went through, and how tough it must have been for them.

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Re: Determining the truth

by [Marla Davis](#) - Thursday, 14 October 2010, 01:28 PM

Brock:

I've heard stories from friends about their experiences in Vietnam, but I really feel like they censored what stories they told as well as the content. Unfortunately or fortunately for those of us that weren't there fighting, we'll probably never know exactly what all sides went through. The stories I've heard, although censored, were frightening and very emotional for both the teller and myself. I truly can't begin to imagine how I personally would have handled being in the middle of it all.

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Re: Determining the truth

by [Jolene Powell](#) - Tuesday, 12 October 2010, 07:38 AM

This is amazing, I had no clue that so many people were learning as much as I was, That so many people were just as ignorant to this war, all my life I have met people who have had a very clear opinion and thought they knew exactly everything about this war. I am pleased to know alot of us are really learning together, this class will be a huge benefit to us all then.

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Re: Determining the truth

by [Sheila Daughtry](#) - Thursday, 14 October 2010, 09:58 PM

In 1963 my family moved from Boston, MA to Dallas, TX and I thought I had landed in a foreign country. I don't recall too much of what was going on in the world, let alone what was happening in Vietnam. I had no idea what a communist was. I remember my older brother turning 18 and registering for the draft. I recall watching on television the POW's arriving home and greeting their families.

As an adult I told myself it was because I was too young to know WHY we were involved in the Vietnam War. I recently had dinner with a couple of friends of mine who are well into their 60's. I asked them what they remember about the Vietnam War. My female friend, who grew up in Southern California, marched in protest of the war, but was unsure what it was all about. My male friend, who grew up in Oregon, said he thought it had to do with rubber and industry. He did not participate in any opposition to the war. I had thought because I was a little kid during much of the war, that explained my lack of knowledge about the Vietnam War. After exchanging stories with my friends, who

are 10 years older than me, I realized they did not understand why we were there either.

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Re: Determining the truth

by [Marla Davis](#) - Friday, 15 October 2010, 09:19 AM

I don't remember hearing a lot about the Vietnam War during my teens here in Oregon. I guess maybe I was too self-absorbed with my teenage self to pay much attention to what was going on outside my little world. The little I do remember is a protest at the U of O, the boys in my class worrying about the draft and sometimes someone would mention a brother or relative in the war, but, it was never mentioned in any class, and my parents never talked about it so, Vietnam to me was a complete world away from me, and since it never directly affected me, I never really gave it a second thought. After I graduated from high school and met some men that had returned from Vietnam, some missing limbs, all pretty messed up psychologically, some of the reality of what was happening came to me. I still to this day don't understand the why of it all though.

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Re: Determining the truth

by [Jaymie Skeslien](#) - Saturday, 16 October 2010, 07:26 PM

I grew up up in northren california, but i really didnt know anything about the war cause i was born in the 70's. but ive learned alot by the text books and media and the dvds ive been studing. so know i can tell family about the war cause of what i read.

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Re: Determining the truth

by [Jaymie Skeslien](#) - Monday, 11 October 2010, 10:06 PM

In this history class ive learned alot about the vietnam war. I know that our textbooks and our dvds for this class is fantastic. I never really new or understood anything about the vietnam war till this class. I realized that i have to do research and more research to find what information i needed. i was born in 1979 so didnt know what was really going on. I read both books and watch the dvds so i can get the right information i need to acomplish in this class.

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Re: Determining the truth

by [Justin Powell](#) - Wednesday, 13 October 2010, 01:31 PM

I too was born in the late 70's and did not really know what was going on, this class has shed alot of light on things for me and I am really pleased to have the opportunity to take this class.

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Re: Determining the truth

by [Joe Maxwell](#) - Wednesday, 13 October 2010, 04:07 PM

I agree with you Jaymie,
I too knew very little about this war until taking this class. The readings assigned and the videos we are watching has helped quite a bit in better understanding what led to such a controversial war. I enjoy the combination of reading and watching the videos is a very effective learning technique for me.

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Re: Determining the truth

by [Brock Berg](#) - Monday, 11 October 2010, 10:08 PM

What I tend to do with conflicting information is determine where the information is coming from. First, if the information is being presented from an individual, whether it be text or video, rather than factual information already proven true, I tend to take it for face value. If a statement seems outrageous, or spurious/suspicious, I will do research. The one thing I try not to forget is this: Every written text comes from the author's eyes, and memory of the occasion, so no story can be completely discredited. The text we have been assigned is a very useful tool to help define our video watching experience. The text provides insight and first-hand testimonies of time periods that lie hand in hand with the viewing. The video's, however detailed they may be, cannot paint an accurate well rounded picture of such a war, only give an overview of a documented timeline. The text provides more insight into the unknown occurrences in Vietnam.

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Re: Determining the truth

by [Jaymie Skeslien](#) - Tuesday, 12 October 2010, 01:34 PM

I agree on what you are stateing. you did a good job.

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Re: Determining the truth

by [Hector Perez](#) - Tuesday, 12 October 2010, 09:24 AM

I to use research to find facts that would help me understand more about the Vietam War. The books are very helpful and all the interviews and stories have really helped me understand more about what really was going on through out the period of the war.

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Re: Determining the truth

by [Donald Ebel](#) - Tuesday, 12 October 2010, 06:12 PM

A skill that is useful in any academic profession is determining which information to consider accurate and correct and which to consider as false or untrue. To take that even further, it is also important to understand what sets of information are relevant and which sets are irrelevant. In coming to understand said information and come to terms with it, we must also understand where the presenter of this information is coming from and what their goals are. For example, the producers of the PBS documentary wanted to tell a compelling story to make the series more interesting, so they slanted their facts to make Ho Chi Minh a more balanced and stable figure, in effect making him a sort of hero for Vietnam. (At least this is how it is explained by the Accuracy in Media clip, which I still have reservations about believing.) The Accuracy in Media clip, on the other hand, criticizes this approach by the PBS producers, attempts to set the record straight by demonizing Ho Chi Minh, and presents a case based on strong anti-communist sentiments. Reed Irvine, Chairman of Accuracy in Media states that "...they [PBS] failed to put across one of the most important lessons that should be learned form the Vietnam experience, and that is, that the imposition of Communist rule inevitably results in great human tragedy." That sounds more like an opinion than a historical fact to me. Charlton Heston even goes as far as to laugh at the information presented in the series, as to suggest that the producers were making a joke.

From these examples, we can see clearly that both the PBS series and the Accuracy in Media producers want to get a certain feeling or message across to the viewer by presenting untrue or extra information as fact. Therefore, it is important to learn to distinguish true facts from fabrication in order to make correct decisions based on truth.

Now, in using the books to correct information given presented in the PBS documentary, we must assume that the facts presented in the books are more accurate than the "facts" presented in both the series and the clip. Since no doubt has been instilled in us as to dissuade us from accepting the Herring book as complete truth, then we can most likely safely assume that the information provided in the Herring book can serve as a yardstick by which to measure and compare information found in the series and the extra clips we watch. In addition, we can do extra research outside of the information given to us for class to determine whether or not the information from any source is factual.

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Re: Determining the truth

by [Sheila Daughtry](#) - Tuesday, 12 October 2010, 10:22 PM

Donald-Excellent, thought provoking response. But, I do have a question. How do you know "...PBS series...producers want to get a certain feeling or message across to the viewer by presenting untrue or extra information as fact"? Could it be possible that the producers are able to examine a war where many of the individuals involved are still alive and are able to paint a realistic picture of what actually happened?

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Re: Determining the truth

by [Jennifer Wilson](#) - Thursday, 14 October 2010, 09:19 AM

I must say that the people at PBS worked hard on the series and that not everyone will believe they stories or the truth the way they see it. But what I think of is clever editing and cutting that clipping to make the stories sound the way they need it to. I think that if the producers put this much time and effort into it there must be some truth.

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Re: Determining the truth

by [Donald Ebel](#) - Thursday, 14 October 2010, 05:46 PM

In answer to your question, Sheila, the point of the Accuracy in Media clip was to correct the facts that the PBS series got "wrong." (I put the quotes because I believe some of the things the clip "corrected" was simply a change of emotional appeal, such as my quote from the clip in my previous post.) The clip most clearly confronts this when Charlton Heston says, "Having portrayed the Communists as principled Nationalists, fighting for the independence and unity of Vietnam, the PBS series shows the South Vietnamese as the 'bad guys.' The story becomes a melodrama: white hats versus black hats. Our friends are the ones in the black hats." This quote supports the fact that the Accuracy in Media clip is accusing the PBS series of distorting the facts to create an entertaining story.

In response to your second question, yes, I believe that is possible. However now that we've watched this Accuracy in Media clip which denounces much of the PBS series as fiction and through my interactions with Mr. Escobar, I believe that it is true that not everything in the series is entirely accurate.

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Re: Determining the truth

by [Tikoya Wiget](#) - Wednesday, 13 October 2010, 05:51 PM

I agree with you that both the PBS series and the video clip have strong biases that make separating the truth from opinion harder to do. And i agree with you that we can trust the Herring book to help guide us in checking for real facts. Great job explaining.

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Re: Determining the truth

by [Jeremy Carlson](#) - Tuesday, 12 October 2010, 07:02 PM

I believe that the more resources I find and use the better my idea will be of the Vietnam War. I also think that using resources that are not related to one another (recources not sponsered by the same company's/owners). The Herring Book clarifies what the Appy Book is disgussing. Also, the Herring Book seems to shed more light on the videos I am watching. The different perceptions from different people definitely helps me understand the subject and allows me to come to my own conclusions.

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**Re: Determining the truth**by [Raina Kelley](#) - Wednesday, 13 October 2010, 09:09 AM

Jeremy,

I agree with you, finding more resources is key to a better understanding of information and to see if it is accurate. It is always good to get many different resources from all over just like you said, this way you are not consistently getting the same bias. I also have found that the herring book seems to give more information that the videos sometimes lack.

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**Re: Determining the truth**by [Justin Powell](#) - Wednesday, 13 October 2010, 01:25 PM

I agree. The books seems to provide a lot more information then the videos, they are a good way to get first hand knowledge from people that were there to.

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**Re: Determining the truth**by [Jaymie Skeslien](#) - Wednesday, 13 October 2010, 03:50 PM

i agree,you did a good job.and you are on the right track keep up the good work..

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**Re: Determining the truth**by [Joe Maxwell](#) - Wednesday, 13 October 2010, 04:13 PM

Jeremy I agree that it is important to make sure the sources we are researching are from different companies or publishers. This is important to be completely sure that the information we are taking in is fair and unbiased. Today it is hard to believe anything you read or hear right way. Multiple sources of info is the best way to get all the facts.

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**Re: Determining the truth**by [Sheila Daughtry](#) - Thursday, 14 October 2010, 10:14 PM

Jeremy, I agree that exploring different resources is a great way of understanding a subject and forming your own opinion. However, sometimes I feel I gather too much information and then I'm confused about what is true.

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**Re: Determining the truth**by [Raina Kelley](#) - Wednesday, 13 October 2010, 09:03 AM

Making sure your getting accurate information can be difficult. I always try to see if I can find other sources that have similar information or agree with the information I have found. The more consensus I can find the more reliable I feel the information is. I think the two textbooks in the course are very helpful. I have found the Appy book to be inspiring and make me feel like I understand more about what it was like to be there. The Herring book is more factual and has helped me answer questions I have had about some facts and what was really going on. These books fit nicely with the video series because the DVDs are a good mix of both. It has some personal stories in it along with the facts. Much of what is said in the videos is reconfirmed in the Herring book so I am inclined to believe it is accurate information. However, I do believe that there is information that both the United States and Vietnam have kept secret and will continue to keep secret. I don't think we will ever get all of the facts.

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**Re: Determining the truth**by [Sheila Daughtry](#) - Friday, 15 October 2010, 02:37 PM

Good point, Raina. I agree we may never know all the details about the Vietnam/American War, which could make the history much worse than we possibly could have imagined.

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**Re: Determining the truth**by [Justin Powell](#) - Wednesday, 13 October 2010, 01:22 PM

To determine whether I am receiving accurate information, I will continue to do more research by various researchers to see if it is conflicting or agreeing, generally that is a good way to determine the validity of the answers you are looking for. My wife and I usually set around and "cuss and discuss" what we have learned and try to help each other out, also dinner conversation with the teenagers is an effective way of learning a few useful tools as well, they are generally more up to speed with the latest and greatest information.

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**Re: Determining the truth**by [Joe Maxwell](#) - Wednesday, 13 October 2010, 03:56 PM

With most of our information today coming to us through the internet it is extremely important for us to do extensive research. We are in the generation of anybody being able to put information out to the public, it is now up to us to figure out what is fact from opinion. To be naive and follow along with something due to hearing it in the public is the easiest way to become ignorant and misled. We hope to believe that our textbooks and class readings assigned are unbiased however this doesn't always seem to be the case. In this class though I feel our texts we are reading seem very fair and equally representing of both sides. I have thoroughly enjoyed the Appy book thus far, and feel it does a great job of showing both sides of the war. Along with the other book I have quickly learned very much about a war that I knew little about at the start of this class. These texts along with the video has made it very easy to start understanding why this war was so unjust and unnecessary. Seeing and reading interviews from both sides of the position allows us to see the equality given to both by the writers and documentarians.

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**Re: Determining the truth**by [Dustin Wilson](#) - Thursday, 14 October 2010, 08:23 AM

I agree with you on your post. There was a couple of times that when either reading or watching the videos I looked up certain people on Wikipedia. With the study of a person's life, you can more easily see why somebody says something or obtain the objective of their opinion.

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**Re: Determining the truth**by [Sheila Daughtry](#) - Friday, 15 October 2010, 02:43 PM

Dustin, I did the same thing. I found some of the people fascinating and wanted to know more, Tran Thi Gung, Henry Prunier, and Vo Nguyen Giap to name a few. Irony how fate throws you into a certain place at a certain time.

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**Re: Determining the truth**by [Tikoya Wiget](#) - Wednesday, 13 October 2010, 05:37 PM

The best thing to do when finding inaccuracies in history, for me, has always been checking many sources. I have found that when using this method the truth usually prevails through the fact that it is the most common thing you find when checking several sources. Also a good way is to look at history in different perspectives. I love the fact that I can easily do this with the two books and the DVD set used for this class. Each gives a unique look at the Vietnam War. But one must be careful in understanding that there is a difference between historical inaccuracies and perspectives of history. For example, we see the opposing views of the PBS television series and the video on Accuracies in Media- Part One. The people in Accuracies in Media essentially tear apart the TV. series pointing out everything it did wrong, all the things it left out about Ho Chi Minh. You can see that there is somewhat of a bias towards Diem. And a lot of times historical information has at least some bias. Yet if your purpose is to get down to the straight facts, then you need to push biases aside. And that is the best way to sort out inaccuracies and find the facts.

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Re: Determining the truth

by [Dustin Wilson](#) - Thursday, 14 October 2010, 08:06 AM

When it comes to the contradicting information, we should listen to all sides involved. It's kinda like two kids are fighting, you listen to both accounts of what happened and then you try to interpret what actually happened without bias. I look at our two textbooks differently. The Herring book, it seems, is more factual and history based. The author having been restrained to non fiction. The Appy book on the other hand could be fiction or non fiction. It is based on the individual story tellers and their highly edited accounts.

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Re: Determining the truth

by [Raina Kelley](#) - Saturday, 16 October 2010, 11:17 AM

I agree that you should listen to all the sides involved, but it will come to a point where you will just have to make up your own mind because each side tells the story differently. I'm just curious, do you believe that the stories in the Appy book are not true? Or do you just feel that the author has edited their stories a lot? Do you really feel that the stories in that book are untrue?

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Re: Determining the truth

by [Jennifer Wilson](#) - Thursday, 14 October 2010, 09:42 AM

I believe that the information is accurate there are a few points that might have been left out by the PBS series that makes us lean from one side of the issue were we right or were we wrong for being there. The way the new accurate media clip sounds is that we were completely right for being there. I really liked how they put the Vietnamese picketing all over the world when the PBS video was release. I think this conflict of whose truth is right has been going on since the war began and our men started dying. Who is right and who is wrong is a major question because so many men died for what?



I believe the more knowledge we have on the subject the better we are to make and educated decision for ourselves so I think it is a good idea to stay bias for as long as you can and get as much information as you can.

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Re: Determining the truth

by [Shellea Montgomery](#) - Thursday, 14 October 2010, 11:01 AM

They way that I deal with conflicting information is usually to go to the source if it is available. But in this situation, I have been doing my own research on sites that are reliable, when I am looking at these sites I try to check who if anyone is sponsoring them because if there is a sponsor they usually slant there information to there liking. I also research who the people delivering the news are. I then take the information and try to make my own educated opinion. History is so hard to actually make an opinion because like I usually would I can't just go to the source. The Appy book I think dose a great job relaying diverse opinions and recollections of the war. I like how you get stories from both sides of the war and you also get stories from people of different political backgrounds. The text books have been really great to read and compare with the videos, it all kind of ties the bigger picture together with all the different puzzle pieces, I think it is a good diverse mix of accurate accounts from this era.

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Re: Determining the truth

by [Raina Kelley](#) - Friday, 15 October 2010, 09:21 AM

I agree knowing what facts are real can be difficult. Even the news has been accused of being bias. But like you I have found the Appy book to be a very interesting read. I also enjoy reading from both sides, this is where I have seen some of my own bias that I didn't even know I had. It have been interesting, I hope these stories aren't edited too much because I find a lot of value on the fist person experience that book offers us.

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Re: Determining the truth

by [Jennifer Wilson](#) - Saturday, 16 October 2010, 02:14 PM

This is so true. There are so many sides to this war it makes it so hard to know how to believe and who is right and who is wrong. I defiantly have a better understand of why our government was there and why the people thought we shouldn't be there. And I am sure the story goes the same for the Vietnamese. I am looking forward to getting in deeper to the reasons for this war. I actually heard someone say that this was a war that was never declared a war I just thought that was an interesting fact and I will be looking into this.

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**Re: Determining the truth**by [David Reagan](#) - Thursday, 14 October 2010, 07:57 PM

I haven't watched the Accuracy in Media clip yet, but I have been analyzing how trustworthy our resources are.

The videos have a clear, 'we should not have been involved in Vietnam' bias. As does the Herring book. Both sources emphasize how badly the French treated Vietnam, and the nationalism of the Communists, and how America seemed to stab Vietnam in the back when we sided with the French. The Appy book seems neutral so far.

Episode 2 mentioned the atrocities committed by Ngo Dinh Diem, but it did not connect them very strongly to his ultimate downfall. It seemed focused on the politics played by the US, and the Buddhist protests being the main cause. In fact, the episode seemed to paint Diem as the main character in a tragedy, and as someone we should sympathize with, even though he was a rather nasty dictator. This to me, seems like the series is painting the USA as the villain.

One thing missing in all of them so far is a primer on Vietnamese culture. They make it clear that the major source of the West's problems in Vietnam was the West's lack of understanding Vietnam's culture. So the lack of information on the culture seems odd to me.

As for their reliability. I believe they all have all, or most, of their facts right. PBS is a reputable broadcaster, Herring has tons of references, and Appy is solely telling personal stories. It is how the facts are presented that we need to watch.

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**Re: Determining the truth**by [Shellea Montgomery](#) - Saturday, 16 October 2010, 10:22 AM

I totally agree with you on the lack of culture, this makes up such a HUGE part of the war for the Vietnamese people. In essence this is what they are fighting to preserve, a way of life that has been nurtured over many generations all steaming from a common culture. It is a huge piece to this puzzle. When you think about it maybe Communism would have been what was best for their people. A way of life IS NOT ONE SIZE FITS ALL!! Just like politics in the USA, it is so much more than a Republican, or a Democrat.

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**Re: Determining the truth**by [Jason Carlstrom](#) - Friday, 15 October 2010, 12:49 PM

We have more media choices at our finger tips than ever before. Theirs television, papers, Internet, radio, magazines, and books. With so many different voices your guaranteed to have challenging information that you disagree with. When you already have a set view on a situation its hard to stay open minded to others and what their opinions are and usually winds up in defending arguments. Academically I like to keep an open mind when I come across new information because you can never have too much. Patriots is a great read because of all the personal voices. Some had a understanding of the conflict, some had no idea, and some didn't even know of the country Vietnam. Its a well rounded all sided book that can bring you right to their personal moment and thats why I enjoy it.

I'm glad Accuracy In The Media set the record strait about what PBS was putting out/hiding. I'm sure when it was aired it had a lot of viewers that took the information as the entire truth. The Herring book is a great source of further information on some of the stories and videos I'm finding.



How the Media can manipulate our viewpoint

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Re: Determining the truth

by [Shellea Montgomery](#) - Friday, 15 October 2010, 07:57 PM

I really agree with you, I think the media is so manipulative. They slant stories to show what they want. Just like these pictures we only see what they want us to see. Politics sum up most of the media and they definitely only report what it is they are trying to get across being good for themselves or bad for others.

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Re: Determining the truth

by [Raina Kelley](#) - Saturday, 16 October 2010, 11:13 AM

You say it well, once you have a certain viewpoint, even if you don't know you have it, it can be very hard to keep an open mind. Some are more easily influenced than others, but it can be challenging not to be influenced by others. I really like the photo you included, it says a lot... Definitely makes you stop and think.

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Re: Determining the truth

by [Shellea Montgomery](#) - Friday, 15 October 2010, 08:36 PM

After watching the AIM clip, I looked them up on Wikipedia (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Accuracy_in_Media) just out of curiosity to see what their political affiliation is. This is what I found; "Despite AIM's claim of political neutrality^[1], it is frequently described by the mainstream media and other media watchdog groups as a conservative organization" I wasn't very surprised I hardly am when it comes to the media. I personally just want the truth without all the politics.

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Re: Determining the truth

by [Marla Davis](#) - Saturday, 16 October 2010, 09:15 AM

Shellea:

I found that when I was watching AIM, I was more skeptical about the information they were presenting than I was with any other source we've used so far. I'm still trying to figure out why their information should be more readily accepted and given more credibility than any of the other information we've received. Just because the series is called Accuracy In Media doesn't mean it's any more factual than our other sources.

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Re: Determining the truth

by [Dustin Wilson](#) - Saturday, 16 October 2010, 11:01 AM

With Vietnam being the first televised war, people were led to believe that what they saw live was fact in stone. Even though media tried to steer viewers to a pro-war and support the troops attitude, stories spread of injustice toward the Vietenemese and turned opinions to the flavor of dissident. Even going back to Randolph Hearst, the mass media has had the power to out right fabricate stories to turn public opinion to their favor. We are forced to view multiple media outlets to get the clearest picture of the truth.

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Re: Determining the truth

by [Raina Kelley](#) - Saturday, 16 October 2010, 11:20 AM

Shellea,
I agree with you I just want the truth, but is it realistic to say you want the truth without all of the politics? War is all about politics so how could we possibly take them out? Perhaps maybe it would be better to say that you want the truth without all the bias? I'm just curious, I understand your frustration at trying to find the truth.

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Re: Determining the truth

by [Shellea Montgomery](#) - Saturday, 16 October 2010, 02:40 PM

What I am trying to say is that this war happened long ago, and now we are getting one sided opinions; you are right I want the truth without a slant whatever it may be political, cultural, personal etc..

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