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**Week 1 - Determining the truth**

by Joe Escobar - Monday, October 8, 2012, 08:57 AM

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 (such as is being presented in the PBS videos, web videos, and AIM video this week)? How can your two textbooks help you to approach this video information and be confident that you are learning accurate historical knowledge?

Be sure to use SPECIFIC examples from class materials to illustrate your point or to support your position.

Cite your sources in your posts and replies. Use parentheses.

Examples (PBS Episode 1), (AIM historian "Smith"), (Herring p.34), etc.

Change the subject line of your post to something more descriptive. DO NOT leave the subject line Re: Week 1 - Determining the truth

Sum of ratings: -

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**Forum 1**

by Richard Atwood - Wednesday, October 10, 2012, 08:16 PM

I have found that in my 30 years since high school that history can change, that is textbooks media and new research has changed what I've learned earlier in my life. When I was a child I was taught that North Vietnamese leader Ho chi min was a communist plain and simple. In watching the (OPB) video in class I learned Ho Chi Mi was a nationalist first. The accounts of many American soldiers in the (patriot book) suggest that many of them didn't even know why they where there except to fight the North Vietnam commixes grew up with a TV. In the house with only two channels. ABC & NBC, My families views on the war in Vietnam where never the same as my Aunt and Uncles family in Calif. Mianly because they watched CBS, This is why we need to view and read multiple sources from all sides and different points of view. Senator Wayne Morse said it well in the (DVD)(just because you're the minority doesn't mean that your wrong) It took that out of text but it has the same meaning for this and other things as well. In this day of Internet and the web, there are many sources to gather information, and thru the years people learn more and more about Vietnam as well as other historical facts, the more sources and facts that can be gathered can translate a story into a much clearer story.

Sum of ratings:3 (1) 3

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**The Validity of Politicization.**

by Justin Wease - Wednesday, October 10, 2012, 09:54 PM

The most important way to deal with the conflict presented within media is to obtain as many sources as possible regarding the issue and cross reference religiously. The Accuracy In Media production, by purporting to reveal truths kept hidden or aberrated within the PBS documentary, serves to disillusion one towards popular versions of recorded media.

"The PBS Vietnam series actually contributes to historical misunderstanding." (AIM Douglas Pike)

Such negative declarations pointed at a non-profit organization provoke questions about the legitimacy in historical broadcasting: Who gets to make the video? Political issues unrelated to the information presented would have to remain outside as to obtain a more objective understanding. It is not difficult, after doing a bit of side research, to discover that the Accuracy in Media company is a:

"Conservative watchdog group for fairness , balance and accuracy in news reporting." (www.aim.org/)

The mention of political standing within the AIM group's description tends to inform one about the nature of information that emits from it: It has a much greater chance of containing bias or being one sided. With the contemporary dislike of PBS by certain conservatives, I tend to think that maybe the AIM production has an ulterior motive driving the initial idea behind their Vietnam piece: Politicization. It remains tough to believe either film completely and many more sources should be considered to produce a much less subjective historical point of view.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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Re: Forum 1

by Dustin McCowen - Friday, October 12, 2012, 01:43 PM

I don't think there is any question on whether Ho was a communist, but rather if he had any ties to the Soviet Communist movement that the rest of the world, and especially the United States feared so much. He was after all the founder of the French Communist Party after the Paris Peace Conference rejected his petition for democratic reforms for Vietnam(Herring 5). I think that the nationalist and Ho's Vietminh were for the same goal in the early days; to unite against France for their independence. Ho was detrimental in giving the then divided groups of nationalist a united voice.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Re: Forum 1

by Justin Wease - Sunday, October 14, 2012, 10:46 AM

Your post reminded me of this quote:

"History is always written by the winners. When two cultures clash, the loser is obliterated, and the winner writes the history books-books which glorify their own cause and disparage the conquered foe. As Napoleon once said, 'What is history, but a fable agreed upon?'"

-Dan Brown

The interesting thing to consider about this quote, with regards to Viet nam, is that the entire affair seems very much like a proxy war. I believe this is why there are such conflicting viewpoints and opinions about Viet nam. The cultures that are clashing are both located in America and technically there is no "loser" and therefore no cause is indeed obliterated. It makes sense why there should be such varied accounts regarding the War. The fable is not agreed upon by all.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Re: Forum 1

by Richard Atwood - Sunday, October 14, 2012, 04:16 PM

I tend to dissagree with your post, Yes you do have a valid point, But now with the power of the internet and other research we are finding out alot about the losers. Yes the winners do glorify history, But the stories of the losers are being found and printed.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Re: Forum 1

by Michelle Srstka - Sunday, October 14, 2012, 07:20 PM

I would agree with Justin's post. The Vietnam War divided the country; there are many different opinions and viewpoints regarding the war. I think that is why we are having this discussion this week; sources regarding the Vietnam War can be conflicting.

The internet is only as good as the information posted on it. It is not responsible for new historical information; the internet is just another way of accessing and disseminating it. The stories told are the same.

Often, there are instances where the 'stories of the losers' do not survive. Historians often have to use other sources about their culture combined with the story of the 'winners' to try to piece together a more complete picture.

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Sum of ratings:2 (1) **Re: Forum 1**

by Mario Scalisi - Sunday, October 14, 2012, 11:54 PM

Time made a difference of what may have been taught in middle and high schools. All the background on Uncle Ho (Nguyen Ai Quoc days and the revolution of 1945 from Herring) is new information to me. I wish I'd have seen the PBS video back then. We didn't learn about Vietnam in regards to French imperialism back then. Just that we were there to stop the spread of communism through the "Domino Effect". I remember that specifically. In the late 80's the bad side in most war movies was communists and the Soviet Union specifically. All my friends' dads were either gung-ho about it, messed-up from it or protested it. No real middle-ground.

I may be a grumpy old guy at times who gets frustrated at technology, but I do love all the sources it allows me to cross-reference and look up stuff. I need multiple sources to compare and contrast before I feel I have the truth. I can reference books, newspapers, and media of all kinds. Now I found libraries of scholarly journals and peer reviewed articles. Great stuff. Makes me feel like it's easier to fill in blanks from my early introductions.

Sum of ratings:3 (1) [Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)**Conflicts: Ways to Discern.**

by Evelyn Deutscher - Wednesday, October 10, 2012, 09:23 PM

Conflicts: Ways to Discern.

When dealing with conflicting information there are several ways I would take to discern what information I chose to believe. I would look to see if the information came from a valid source, if the language being used is biased and if the resource gained its information from other sources.

The first way of discerning information is fairly obvious. If you read your information say from Wikipedia versus a scholarly based website and the information was conflicting between these two sources I would choose the scholarly based website because it is written by a person who is knowledgeable in the field. As it pertains to our class I would most likely choose to believe a textbook versus a video. In general I think textbooks are more likely to be a reliable and unbiased source of information, which in turn would present historically accurate information for all sides. This same method of deciding information even can be applied to the Accuracy In Media video's presented this week versus the PBS video's. Accuracy in Media have stated that they are a "conservative watchdog group for fairness, balance and accuracy in news reporting," (Accuracy In Media). While PBS does not appear to have an active claim, but instead built their Vietnam series on president letter and publicly released statements ("Primary Sources"). While the AIM group seems to be purely based on opinion with harder to find sources. In addition since AIM define themselves by an objective which will typically present biased information because they are trying to sway listeners to seeing things their way. Based on source material I would choose to side with PBS because it has information based on fact, with an identifiable source and the only source AIM seemed to have was themselves.

The use of language and tone are also key indicators of whether I would chose to believe any information presented to me. Returning to the previous argument of PBS versus AIM I would again choose PBS based on its tone they use when presenting facts about the Vietnam War. PBS videos in general use a fairly neutral tone and rely on the information to tell the story. In contrast the AIM video used language as a tool to attack the PBS videos. Granted that was the topic of their video, but such biased language is only useful if you are trying to present your case in an argumentative form, but when trying to learn the facts of a whole situation, unbiased is more likely to give accurate information for all sides. The same argument language can be seen in Christian Appy's book. In his book he presented the story of Tran Thi Gung. In her memoir you find that she was very pro-Viet Mh and while her story true and there is certainly historical facts, her personal views color the information (Appy 15-19). Therefore if you were looking at her to provide information about what american's were trying to do that was good for her nation, she would not be a reliable source because her views would skew the information. When learning history it is best to look for unbiased information at least when you are learning the basics.

The last point of judging information based on if the source had other sources that it gained its information from. This is important because without other definitive sources a person could be making up anything they are writing, but with references you can verify that this person is presenting historically accurate facts. Using Wikipedia as an example again, anybody can write on there, but if they have legitimate sources it is more likely to be truthful information. As another example I would more likely trust George C. Herring's book because it isn't just him spouting information, he cites other works on the subject matter in almost every page. Such as when Herring finishes his introduction of the Vietnam War in the years 1965-1967, he lists his source as "3 George C. Herring, LBJ and Vietnam: A Different Kind of War (Austin, Tex., 1994), pp. 26-62" (Herring 173). Sure Herring is the one who compiles, writes and edits the information into a cohesive chapter, but with reference source his facts are probably accurate and even more important verifiable, which makes his information more credible.

Each of these methods work together to make an accurate way to judge whether information is either valid or invalid. Each one can work alone to help filter out information, but when used together, it will almost guarantee truthful information.

Citation:

Accuracy In Media. Accuracy In Media. Web. 10 Oct. 2012.

Appy, Christian. Patriots, The Vietnam War Remembered From All Sides. New York: Penguin Books, 2003. Print.

Herring, George. America's Longest War, The United States And Vietnam, 1950-1975. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2002. Print.

"Primary Sources." PBS.org. WGBH. n.d. Web. 10 Oct. 2012.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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Consider the source

by Dustin McCowen - Wednesday, October 10, 2012, 09:35 PM

As soon as the AIM video started and I noticed that Charleston Hesston was the narrator, I immediately thought that the video may have some sort of right wing agenda. I don't think that any video that is trying to be historically accurate would use a celebrity spokesman that made no secret of his political views. It seemed to be targeted toward a certain audience.

Throughout the Aim video the accuracy of, Vietnam: A Television History was attacked, saying that the producers sought to make Ho Chi Minh a hero and the South Vietnam government along with the United States the villains. I did not get this impression at all watching the first three episodes. One of the claims that was made in the AIM video was that the PBS series did not mention that after the Geneva Convention the United States did not support the 1956 elections in Vietnam, and therefor making the insinuation that there would have been no reason to fight because Ho was the rightful leader of the country(AIM, Lobes). The PBS video did in fact mention that the United States didn't sign off on the agreements, but agree to support them. I think that the PBS series was a much fairer interpretation of the facts considering all the reading that has had a lot of the same information.

When considering the information in these videos or any media source in an academic manner we really have to consider the sources as well as use any other sources that we have, such as text books, to confirm the information that we are being given. Both the Appy and the Herring book give us a different perspective than the information in the video, but they seem to correlate well so far.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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Re: Consider the source

by Evelyn Deutscher - Friday, October 12, 2012, 08:11 PM

I liked that you pointed out that the narrator Charleston Hesston was possibly a key indicator of a right wing agenda, because firstly I didn't know this fact, but also I think its important to be familiar with things so you can judge if there is a bias to the information being presented, right from the beginning. That way it helps you judge the information throughout the time you are hearing/seeing the information, rather than judging afterwards. On another note I think celebrity spokesman shouldn't be involved because once someone of a high caliber is in the program it can become biased because there is possible power play behind the scenes about what is being produced which can shape take the information from being well rounded, accurate and neutral to biased or construed to serve other peoples purpose. In addition I agree that AIM video was attacking the PBS videos and seemed to present information that didn't take place within the PBS videos. I had one example where AIM said "that people knew that Ho Chi Minh was a communist first and a nationalist second," however I remember reading from somewhere in our Herring textbook that contradicted it saying that Ho Chi Minh "was a nationalist first, and a communist second," but I could not find the page to directly quote it, but it does display the massive difference in viewpoints between what Accuracy In Media was presenting and what else we had been learning (AIM video). So while this example may not be directly contradictory to our PBS videos it is contradictory to our book which I think is a more reliable source.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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Re: Consider the source

by Justin Wease - Sunday, October 14, 2012, 10:32 AM

I agree, listening to Charelton Hesston narrate the AIM production really poked holes into the reality of the documentary. I do not feel, given the nature of the information that A.I.M is attempting to present, that they are doing themselves justice by hiring a well known celebrity for the narration. I believe the documentary was a bit over-produced. However, I do believe that

the film is EXTREMELY important because it illustrates the fact that there are groups of people who felt that the information in the large PBS video was inaccurate deemed it necessary to "tell the truth". By providing us, the viewer, with contrasts and comparisons we can make a more informed descion aout who we think is telling the most correct version.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Re: Consider the source

by Mario Scalisi - Sunday, October 14, 2012, 11:57 PM

Charlton Heston narrating may definately have been counterproductive. The first thing I thought of is his political ties and NRA mouthpiece. Definately had an effect on my opinion and made me think of agendas and motivations.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Forum 1, Conflicting Information

by Matthew Menigoz - Wednesday, October 10, 2012, 09:56 PM

Well first of all i think we need to not just rely on one source for our information, especially history. History is told from so many different angles becuase it involves different kind of peoples. Your opinion on something is different becuase were all different. I also think media has a huge role on what we see and believe. Sometimes its hard to tell whos really telling the truth about what happene. But by keeping your sources widespread you can take different angles and views on subjects and piece together what the truth is. Like in the Patriot book Vo Giap talks about how after the war he was friends and still kept in touch with an American officer, (patriot pg 43). That story reflected back on the war positively and touched on how we should have never went to war. Then when you watch something like PBS you see how their isnt much positive and you see the negative limelight of something like protesting after the war instead of what they are doing to rebuild or how they can remain in peace(PBS). Our books have a lot of information in them and we can use this to relate to the same information in different media. Compare and contrast things by taking similar or the same information in our book and look it up online and see if its the same. Something as simple as that can be a easy way of doing a double check on history so that we are learning the accurate information.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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Re: Forum 1, Conflicting Information

by Evelyn Deutscher - Friday, October 12, 2012, 08:12 PM

I liked that you summed up your thoughts to one idea that just by double checking you can see if a piece of information is historically accurate or not. I do think there is a flaw in that though. You said yourself that there is so many different angles that people can view the events that happened in history, that just looking up some "fact" may not be enough. Say you looked a piece of information and managed to find someone viewpoint that was radically different from the piece of information you are researching, it could lead to an error. Granted a person could just continue researching and see if the average answer to the fact you are researching agree with your fact, but some people might take that first instance at face value and end up not having the right information. I think its still a good technique, just needs some double checking to make sure that you aren't being misled.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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What is the truth?

by Michelle Srstka - Wednesday, October 10, 2012, 09:58 PM

In history, there is always conflicting information. The truth can never be gained from just one source. One might argue that the best source is the primary source; that is to say something original from the time. It could be a diary, or correspondence between two people at the time. However, even with primary sources there is an issue. Primary sources are always a product of their time. Like anything else, you cannot take everything contained in them as fact. Primary sources are also a product of the person who wrote them. They include opinions, feelings, and personal judgments. That can also be the problem with other sources. Just because a book is written as a history text does not mean it is entirely accurate. The authors' theories and biases can come through in their written work. The only way that someone can hope to get to the truth is to compile information from as many sources as possible and compare them. When there is conflicting information, that method may make it clear which version is correct. If it is not that simple, you have to look at motivations. What did the person who wrote this letter or told this story have to gain from presenting it the way they chose to, or what did they have to lose if it was presented differently? Another point to consider is the tone. Does the work seem emotional? Are there statements of personal opinion or judgment? Hopefully, all of these can be combined and you will find the truth- something that can be backed up with other sources, without motivations or opinions.

I found the Accuracy in Media video interesting. At the beginning, Douglas Pike talks about the proposal that PBS had to put forward to receive funding. Pike says that several items were listed under the purpose of making the series. They include creating a historical record, contributing to the healing of national esteem, and being an antidote to the misuses of history. Pike says that PBS did not live up to any of these promises. In regards to contributing to the healing of national esteem, Pike says that PBS did not put forth anything that Americans could be proud of. (AIM historian Pike) I would argue that the purposes for making the series are contradictory. If one goal is to heal national esteem, then there is motivation to present the story in a way that makes American involvement seem positive. If there is motivation to present a story in a certain light, then you cannot have another goal of creating a historical record. If your goal is to create a historical record, then you can only be concerned with the truth- not with how different groups of people are presented.

Our textbooks can be used to compare and contrast information. The Herring book is meant to be an objective source, and the Appy book is meant to relate personal experiences and stories. I think that both of them have to be used together to compare to the videos. If all three sources agree about something, I think that you can be confident that the information is accurate. When they do not agree, I think it is an opportunity to look a little deeper with further research.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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Compare and Contrast

by Breanna Ross - Wednesday, October 10, 2012, 10:27 PM

The way I handle conflicting information in the books, DVDs, and the videos is by researching it more, taking the information and then either re-reading it or re-watching with that information in mind and comparing. History is one subject that is hard to learn the truth and absolute facts from. It's compiled from stories, the analyses and interpretations from people of the past. Biased or not the 'facts' are printed or made into a video and we're left wondering what is and is not right.

In this class, I am leaning more towards the books as a believable source of information. Especially Christian Appy's book. I like how there are interviews from both sides and from different points of view. Everything from Rodger Donlon's position as a commander on the United States side to Tran Thi Gung and how she was pro-Viet Minh. With the videos, AIM seems to attack PBS almost as soon as the video starts. The PBS video has fact based information and works cited and the Accuracy in Media Video seemed to have only themselves for their information. The videos don't seem to coincide with one another. With them I have to watch one, then the other, and then and re watch them with the information from the other in mind.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Re: Compare and Contrast

by Evelyn Deutscher - Friday, October 12, 2012, 08:09 PM

I liked that you talked about researching historical facts more to handle conflicting information because its not the first thing that I would consider, but eventually you would be able to find some commonalities. However as I think I stated in another one of my responses I think it could lead to some more conflicting information for a while, because everyone has a different viewpoint and you may stumble across a different viewpoint when you are first searching and it could be more confusing. Like you I also lean more towards the books because they seem to present a more neutral view of things especially since you said Appy does have both sides of the war shown. Lastly I liked you point that AIM only seemed to have themselves as source material, because when I tried to find source information for my post I couldn't. I think it may also stem from them being a group and will only trust people inside the group or at least with the same viewpoints.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Re: Compare and Contrast

by Matthew Menigoz - Saturday, October 13, 2012, 01:57 PM

Appy's book is a good source to read when were trying to learn about the vietname war. I think the intervies are really important and makes the book wide open. The book doesn't restrict readers from reading just one side of the war. It also doesn't portray only good story's about one side and only bad about the other. You can read Appy's book and really get a great sense of how it was over their and what really happened. It's hard to really find the right information when you try and view it on television becuase of how many different ways it comes in. I feel like alot of the right information is in something like a book becuase of the reallistic thought it has. By that i mean the media is going to give us what they want us to see right now, while reading a book you can take away so much from something that was written months or years ago and its something that someone put actualy thought and time into. I dont think many people would want to tell their story if it was completely inaccurate.

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Sum of ratings:1 (1) **Re: Compare and Contrast**

by Breanna Ross - Sunday, October 14, 2012, 09:52 AM

That's why I really enjoy reading Appy's book. There are stories from all sides and Appy has stories from all sides; Soilders, Guerilla, doctors, pilots. But Appy did say that everyone's memory is partial, selective, and faulty. However, reading the stories that are in that book make me think. Yeah, they can be a bit one sided or some what not factual, but like you said, "I dont think many people would want to tell their story if it was completely inaccurate."

Sum of ratings:1 (1) [Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)**Re: Compare and Contrast**

by Justin Wease - Sunday, October 14, 2012, 10:56 AM

The Appy book is very important to History. Yes, the stories might not all be completely factual, but I do believe that by reading all of them with an open mind, one can paint a more broad image of the war in its entirety. Concepts such as Communism and chain of command are much more understandable with such varied accounts. The little biographies prior to each story are very helpful and the I like how the chapters are organized with quotations and related titles. These simple, yet effective "diaries" of the war would have proved very useful in either documentary and should be more recognized then they are currently.

Sum of ratings:2 (1) [Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)**Re: Compare and Contrast**

by Breanna Ross - Sunday, October 14, 2012, 07:52 PM

That exactly how history, especially this history class should be interpreted, with an open mind. With this assignment one must have an open mind. You're getting information from everywhere. AIM, the televised episodes, 2 books, and internet videos. If all of the information is not added together and/or looked into more, it's likely that information that is not entirely accurate will be given to you.

Sum of ratings:1 (1) [Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)**Re: Compare and Contrast**

by Richard Atwood - Sunday, October 14, 2012, 06:47 PM

I agree with your post completly.I believe as well that books are a great source.One thing to understand about,videos and documenterys is that they may be bias due to the fact of where is there money coming from?I book on the other hand is not subjected to that for the most part

Sum of ratings:1 (1) [Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)**Re: Compare and Contrast**

by Dustin McCowen - Sunday, October 14, 2012, 08:09 PM

I have also really enjoyed the Appy book and find it much easier to read than the Herring book. I like the personal feeling that it brings, since we are hearing stories from different people and their take on the war. I also think that historically the Herring book is definitely going to be the more factual of the two just because it isn't based on only stories, although they seem to match up fairly well.

Sum of ratings:1 (1) [Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)**Re: Compare and Contrast**

by Natasha Haynes - Sunday, October 14, 2012, 08:28 PM

I completely agree with you when it comes to the difficulty in discovering the real facts of history. I also agree with you when

it comes to using Appy's book as a believable source of information because the story's are coming from the people directly. I am not so sure however, if i would look to Appy's book to determine the hard facts of the Vietnam War because of all of the viewpoints in it. The material is so all over the place, and i do not think that we could get a clear idea of all that went on because of it. Although dry facts and dates can be super boring and hard to account for, they are easier to find and investigate.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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What to Believe?

by Natasha Haynes - Wednesday, October 10, 2012, 11:04 PM

First of all let me begin by saying that I believe when confronting and delivering material of this importance, it is important to focus on firstly what you believe is true, rather than targeting your opposition at first chance. I found that the AIM video was extremely distasteful within the first three minutes of watching it. We are first introduced to a Douglas Pike, who is the "Director of the Indochina Archive" at Berkley. He goes on to list what he says PBS had promised to deliver, one of them being that "the series will provide an antidote to the misuses of history" (AIM historian Pike). I am not quite sure that this promise can even be possible. There are so many different opinions and viewpoints, and in turn that only leads to different ways to interpret history. PBS might not have interpreted history like the government would have liked them to, so as Douglas Pike says they, " 'rather laughable', actually contributed to historical misunderstanding". However, that merely depends on viewpoints. I immediately distrusted the government's video because of how defensive they were. PBS not only listed faults that South Vietnam had, but also listed faults that North Vietnam had. They were not directly targeting the government, like the AIM video targeted them. I also found that along with their defensive tactics, their information was not only opposing the PBS video, it also did not correspond with some of Herring's facts in his book. Bruce Loebs, who is supposedly in the Department of Speech Communication at Idaho State (how he is even evident in this issue is above me), says that "no elections were promised at the Geneva Accords" (AIM historian Loebs). However, not only in the PBS video do we hear otherwise, but it is written in Herring's book. "The Geneva Accords of 1954 reflected these influences.....The country was to be reunified by elections scheduled for the summer of 1956 and supervised by an international commission" (Herring 49).

I believe that it is extremely important when studying history to always keep an open mind, as well as always trying to find several different points of view that cover the matter. By using two textbooks and videos we are able to compare dates and bits of information. When several things match up, it is a lot easier for them to be believed and absorbed. However, we are also seeing that when things don't match up, having multiple sources makes it easier to determine the plausible answer.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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Communist=Destructive?

by Trent Jones - Wednesday, October 10, 2012, 11:20 PM

I found that in the AIM video the main intent was to discredit the PBS series in any way possible. They used what seemed to be a credible source in Douglas Pike who brought discounts the main four goals that the series was supposed to fulfill. The people from the AIM production seemed so against communist still that it was clouding their own recollection of Vietnam. I also think that in an effort to put the viewer in more realistic shoes the PBS series didn't give as much hindsight on purpose. It is hard enough to get yourself thinking as though you were living in the same times with the same knowledge as the people struggling through Vietnam, so why give us even more information to start with than we need? The AIM clip even recognizes that the PBS series comes to the same conclusion in the end so I don't get why they are so up in arms about it. It sounds to me like the producers of the AIM clip are all still stuck in a Cold War mental state that cannot allow communism to be viewed in any sort of positive light.

Personally, I got on Wikipedia to try and find out what has been most widely accepted as true and the PBS videos seem to hold up pretty well.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Re: Communist=Destructive?

by Matthew Menigoz - Saturday, October 13, 2012, 02:19 PM

The video did seem a bit harsh towards PBS. Douglas pike very much helped their idea to talk about how PBS showed their information about the war. It's a good idea to really look at a source that is discrediting another source to see why they are doing so. It seems to me AIM is another version of PBS and is almost in a way trying to keep them out of the way. I've asked friends, families, and co-workers and none have said they would discredit or not believe what PBS has to show. That's their opinions and other peoples can be different but I don't think AIM is any better than the rest. I can see your confusion why both programs and different companies have the same idea of its end, which is the U.S. being victorious and vietnam still having struggles. Can we look at either of them and say that's exactly what happened?

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by Mario Scalisi - Wednesday, October 10, 2012, 11:53 PM

It never ceases to amaze me how something so factual based as an event that was participated in by so many, or witnessed by so many, can be interpreted or recorded in so many different ways. Now I mean history in general, but I'm talking about Vietnam also. We all know that history is written by the victors and I know by experience that history changes with the times. The history they're teaching my kids is different from the history that I learned. Granted, some may be new info, but a lot is just a different point of views ("political correctness" too, possibly). For an example I give you black history of the 60's. When I went to school there was a lot they taught about MLK, but next to nothing on Malcolm X. Same time, same movement, different tactics. We were taught all about the non-violent movement. It was non-threatening. Now we got only a paragraph or so on Malcolm and his "by any means necessary" philosophy. Too threatening I suppose. The books now give more equal attention and go deeper.

With this said, I think that academically I need to use as many sources as possible to gather information. Those sources have to be reputable for me. They need citations or some other way to back up the information presented. I was taught at a young age to question everything and always look at the source. What is it trying to say? Why are they telling me this? What is the motivation?

PBS produced a lengthy series and has done a good job with what I've seen so far. I think the Vietnam conflict could have a 20 DVD documentary made about it and it would still be far from inclusive and still attract critics. It's a polarizing event that will still divide people. I know that right from the start of the series as it was talking about the time frame after WW2 (PBS episode 1), the information given matches good with what I read in the beginning of Herring's book (Chapter 1) and even the Appy book in the sections of backstory before the personal recollections (ex. "Deliver Us From Evil" pps44-47, talking about Premier Diem) shares factual info that correlates with our other sources (PBS; Herring "NgoDinH Diem p58).

I understand what the Accuracy in Media video want to convey, but it reminded me of election time TV ads in it seemed like a nitpicky attack on PBS. They seemed to have a motive that was to discredit and in my opinion didn't even do that well.

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by Dustin McCowen - Sunday, October 14, 2012, 07:44 PM

I remember learning about both MLK and Malcolm X fairly equally in grade school. I guess that can be explained by what texts that school districts and even different instructors here at Lane chose to base their curriculum on.

I agree with you that the AIM video really didn't convey any valid points that were supported by other reputable source, or the books assigned for the course. I think the PBS series does a pretty good job at giving us a fairly unbiased view of the war.

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