



You are logged in as Joe Escobar (Logout)

Home ► My courses ► HST 195 F12 (Escobar 26516) ► October 14 - October 20 ► Forum 2 CLOSED ► Week 2 - Continuing the discussion



Search forums

Display replies in nested form

Move this discussion to ...

< Previous (Week 2 - Continuing th...)

**Week 2 - Continuing the discussion**

by Joe Escobar - Sunday, October 14, 2012, 03:21 PM

After reading the NYT article and watching the second half of the AIM program, discuss specific examples of conflicting information you have encountered in the provided class sources (from the Herring book, PBS series, and AIM program). More importantly, which source gets your "vote", **on that specific issue**, as having the more correct/accurate/truthful interpretation or reinterpretation?

Sum of ratings: -

Edit | Delete | Reply

**Re: Week 2 - Continuing the discussion**

by Timothy Haley - Monday, October 15, 2012, 10:12 PM

The outcomes and meanings of the Tet Offensive is an issue that these sources disagree on. Reed Irvine notes that it was, in fact, a military victory for the U.S., and PBS presented the battles as if they were a defeat. I notice, however, that PBS presented the events in the greater context of the U.S. agenda of nation-building. After so many years, dollars, and lives spent on this goal, the fact that the Tet Offensive even happened shows a certain amount of failure in this goal. It may have been a military victory as Irvine insists, but I'm inclined to believe PBS, that it was a defeat for the over-all agenda of achieving political consensus. In fact, I think this touches on one of the biggest questions of the war: how can one side win most of the battles, but not achieve an over-all victory? Irvine asserts the answer is because "the media" misrepresented the war, preventing public support for the war, which led to an incomplete national commitment. In short, political division within the U.S. is at fault for U.S. defeat in Vietnam. At the same time, political division in South Vietnam had nothing to do with the failed attempt at nation-building. Irvine's argument contradicts itself. Even though Mr. Irvine has passed, I ask this question: Why was the Tet Offensive not a sign of political defeat?

Sum of ratings:3 (1) 3

Show parent | Edit | Split | Delete | Reply

**Re: Week 2 - Continuing the discussion**

by Tanaya Fonseca - Wednesday, October 17, 2012, 05:52 PM

Timothy -

I too was at a loss when Irvine said that the media misrepresented the war. From reading Herring, I gathered that the only way the Americans even knew the goings on in the war was from the media. Johnson sure wasn't saying much about it, Kennedy was a talker but never fully addressed the issues of the war. I think the real division happened between the US and South Vietnam, communication fell through -- even after others rose to power. I think that the division within the US government caused some problems for the way the war was handled but I do not think that it was the sole cause of the defeat.

Sum of ratings:1 (1) 1

Show parent | Edit | Split | Delete | Reply

**Mislead through unsaid**

by Phillip Hubbard - Tuesday, October 16, 2012, 10:06 PM

It has come to light that both the AIM program and the PBS series are both expressing their own opinions of the war in Vietnam. Both use historical facts and data to back up their own claims of the war. The AIM program represents them in a way that contradicts the PBS series. AIM insists that the PBS series is filled with inaccurate historical facts, which among them are how Ho Chi Min came to power and the behavior of our soldiers while fighting in Vietnam. PBS stands behind their series and insists theirs is accurate.

It is my observation of both programs that it is their opinion that was represented more than the historical facts. PBS portrayed the war through an opinion timeline rather than a historical way. Did they leave out or misrepresent historical data? Absolutely.

Did the AIM program do the same? Absolutely. I feel both often simply gave their opinions of the war. For a piece of information to be completely accurate and trust worthy I feel it is necessary for them to give their audience all of the information available for it to be considered truthful and unbiased.

Democrat's and Republican's will argue and debate over the same issues even if their objectives are the same. Unemployment is to high say's the Democrat's. I agree stat's the Republican's. This is how we fix it, no this way, no this. It is petty squabbling that is preventing the issue from even being addressed properly. AIM and PBS are acting in the same manner. Neither is 100% accurate and neither is 100% right. They should have collaborated together to form a series or program to portray the Vietnam War more accurately.

With that I will say that AIM would receive my "vote" as being more correct with their information. I find both program's to be tremendous resources of information about Vietnam but AIM provided information contrary to PBS for topics that I am more personally interested in and more knowledgeable such as Ho's rise to power and public protest's in America during the Vietnam war. I also viewed the PBS series as more opinion based than factual and for this I side with AIM.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

Show parent | Edit | Split | Delete | Reply



Re: Mislead through unsaid



by Timothy Haley - Wednesday, October 17, 2012, 02:20 AM

I like to look at over-all arguments. Reed Irvine, founder of A.I.M., appeared in this video, and defended it's credibility in other media events. I don't know if Charlton Heston wrote his narration, but he asserted that in the PBS series "there is no hint that two ways of life -one based on freedom, the other based on Communism- were struggling for the future of Indochina." Because Reed Irvine was so involved in the video I assume this is part of his over-all argument. This seems like a serious over-simplification to me. The U.S. may have been fighting for "freedom" (whatever that means), but evidence provided by PBS and Herring suggest that Diem's agenda was to gain tightly held control. Whatever may be true about Ho Chi Minh that PBS didn't cover, A.I.M. covered nothing of Ngo Dinh Diem and Ngo Dinh Nhu. Nor did it mention any political upheaval in the South other than Viet Cong. PBS and Herring paint a more complicated picture. Herring notes that in 1950, in order to crush political dissent "Diem abolished traditional local elections" and appointed local officials. "Some. . . province chiefs were known to have arrested wealthy villagers on trumped up charges and then forced them to pay bribes for their release" (Herring, p.78). Newspapers were shut down. "Nhu's Vietnam Bureau of Investigation rooted out suspected subversives. . . the government herded into 'reeducation centers' thousands of Vietnamese -Communists and non-Communists alike- who were alleged to be threats to public order" (p.78).

Is this the "freedom" the U.S. was fighting to protect against "Communism"?

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

Show parent | Edit | Split | Delete | Reply



Re: Mislead through unsaid



by Emerald Jones - Wednesday, October 17, 2012, 03:55 PM

It is an excellent point that there seems to be more of a concern with who is right(AIM or PBS) Than what is right. The AIM video does spend a lot of time pointing out all that is incorrect in the PBS video. I think that a collaboration would have been a good idea. It also could have ensured more accarcy because there would have been different viewpoints involved. This just underlines the fact that we of course, have to be careful to give all information and viewpoints thoughtful and careful consideration before we jump to conclusions or form opinions that are not based on a solid foundation of provable facts.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

Show parent | Edit | Split | Delete | Reply



Re: Mislead through unsaid



by Barbara Bolt - Saturday, October 20, 2012, 12:25 PM

You made a great observation about the PBS and AIM video basing their arguments on opinion rather than fact. I have noticed this while watching AIM. I cast my vote for AIM over PBS because of their personal experiences with veterans of the Vietnam War.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

Show parent | Edit | Split | Delete | Reply



Re: Mislead through unsaid



by Dylan Curran - Sunday, October 21, 2012, 06:56 PM

Phillip,

I absolutely agree that neither source is "100% accurate and neither is 100% right," and would extend that to any historical program. But is a collaboration between the two really better? If we had only been presented with the point of view from PBS or AIM, we'd be left with a single, incomplete picture of the war, which is exactly what we'd get from a collaboration between the two. At least with two sources giving conflicting opinions, we can develop a more accurate story of the war through contrasting information.

Dylan Curran

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

Show parent | Edit | Split | Delete | Reply



History is Being Reinterpreted

by Sierra Lavoie - Wednesday, October 17, 2012, 09:42 AM

There were so many conflicting views presented in the PBS series and the AIM program. The portrayal of our soldiers by the PBS series upset me the most. Dan Cragg from the AIM program says, "The PBS series portrays the American soldier as a drug addict, racial bigot, and a man who murdered his superiors at will...terrible misrepresentation of their bravery and sacrifice on the battlefield." The PBS series was an awful misrepresentation of the American soldiers. Throughout the PBS series, it was hard not to notice that they were sympathizing with the Vietnamese. The series was quick to mention the faults our soldiers had. There was some scenes in the PBS series where the soldiers are smoking pot and a soldier talks about how easy it is to buy opium in Vietnam. In the AIM video part 1 one of the first things they mentioned was the goals the PBS series was hoping to accomplish by making this televised history of the Vietnam War. Goal # 3 was that the series would contribute to healing and to national esteem in the post-war era. In other words, their goal was to instill a pride in American. The PBS series seemed more anti America and pro Vietnam than anything else. This is a shame, because the soldiers that fought in the war deserve recognition and respect for their bravery. Respect was not something the PBS series treated our soldiers with.

The most impacting point the NYT article written by John Corry made was when it suggests that Vietnam history will not be so much rewritten as it will be reinterpreted. This is happening right before our eyes. It is plain to see there are many things that the PBS series and the AIM videos disagree about. It's hard to believe that people can be so controversial about history. The PBS series omitted important information and there was some very misleading information, portrayals, and images in their series. The AIM videos came after the PBS series aggressively. They made some important points about where the PBS series was inaccurate, this was awfully important. If the AIM videos hadn't done this many people would have trusted the PBS series and would have a wrong perspective on the war. The article we read, the PBS series, and the AIM videos are reminders that the media is not entirely accurate. History is in fact being rewritten. The most truthful interpretation came from the Herring book. It listed the facts about what happened and was not based on opinion. The second most accurate source would have to be the AIM videos they had many experienced men like John McCain that had served in the Vietnam War come and discuss the realities of the war.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

Show parent | Edit | Split | Delete | Reply



Re: History is Being Reinterpreted

by Timothy Haley - Wednesday, October 17, 2012, 01:48 PM

If evidence of certain events puts U.S. troops and military policy in a negative light, does that mean those events didn't happen? I saw PBS interviewing more soldiers who were on the ground, doing the fighting, letting them speak their stories, than A.I.M. The map on page 34 of Herring shows Dien Bien Phu conspicuously close to one end of a line labeled 'Opium Road'. I'm inclined to believe there is some truth to the claims of cheap and accessible opium that some U.S. troops partook of. I don't understand why we must consider all our troops to be flawless humans that never react violently to being put in rough/desperate situations, or withdraw into drug abuse. I think that's simply one of many human reactions. I'm not saying this means all U.S. soldiers did these things, I just don't understand the conclusion that none of it happened. Just because we don't like information, does not mean we can discard it. In episode 4, PBS covered a specific event from the perspectives of both U.S. troops who were there, and Vietnamese villagers who were there. Both sides tell very different stories. The PBS narrator did not draw any conclusions from the presented conflict in testimonies. How is this biased? That they let the Vietnamese villagers tell their stories in the first place?

On the issue of troop brutality, PBS interviewed troops who were there. On the issue of U.S. officials torturing prisoners, A.I.M. interviewed John McCain, a fighter pilot who was a prisoner himself. I fail to see how that means McCain new the U.S. did not inflict torture on prisoners as well.

In the New York times, John Corry praised PBS for searching out and presenting much more information than most Americans were aware of at the time, and including different perspectives while doing it. He accused PBS of later being unresponsive to A.I.M.'s retort. I notice that PBS offered exponentially more information than A.I.M did, from multiple sources.

Why is A.I.M. more credible than PBS?

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

Show parent | Edit | Split | Delete | Reply



Re: History is Being Reinterpreted

by Tanaya Fonseca - Wednesday, October 17, 2012, 05:31 PM

I agree wholeheartedly with your post Timothy!

It is preposterous to think that American soldiers had no accountability in Vietnam for horrible acts of violence. My friends Dad was in Vietnam, he could tell you some horror stories from the American side of watching American soldiers go completely insane in times of war. That is not to say that all soldiers were drug addicts and horribly corrupt people. That is simply just giving a side that most do not want to hear. Do we want to hear that our military tortured, murdered and raped villagers? Of course we don't, but we cannot exclude them from those acts simply because they are part of our country's military.

I thought PBS gave a very blunt representation of Vietnam, whether it is inherently truthful or not, it was unlike any Vietnam documentary that I have seen. I have always seen Pro-American documentaries on any war and it quite honestly sickens me. I do agree that the generalizations were wrong about the soldiers but, generalizations that are that broad happen to include honest people. AIM interviewing John McCain, I had a hearty laugh at that. I disagree with his politics, however, your politics can only cover up so much of your existing personality. McCain knew that the U.S also tortured their POW's, and I'm of the opinion he only said as much in AIM to help further his political career among the Republican party.

I did not think that PBS was pro-Vietnamese, after all the Vietnamese went through I wouldn't hold it against them if they were. I felt very sorry for the Vietnamese that only wanted to see their country thrive as best it could, no country should be forced to confine to Communism or Capitalism. No country should force another country to abide by its own standards of government. There is a reason why we have separate countries and borders; different country – different laws.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

Show parent | Edit | Split | Delete | Reply



Re: History is Being Reinterpreted

by Sierra Lavoie - Friday, October 19, 2012, 08:54 AM

Timothy,

I don't think we can just exclude facts and leave them out of history. My conclusion wasn't that none of that happened. I am sure it did happen and under the stress of war drug abuse can be somewhat expected. It seemed to me in the PBS series the troops were not put in a very good light. I am sure some soldiers committed crimes and used drugs you are right nobody is flawless. But the Vietnamese soldier aren't flawless either. The PBS series didn't do much to broadcast the negative things the Vietnam soldiers did. What I found troubling about the PBS series was that one of its purposes was to heal the wounds of the war and be pro American. This is according to the AIM video part 1. The PBS series didn't fill me with pride for my country and I felt like it did portray the soldiers in a somewhat negative light.

The NYT article is coming down on PBS I don't think it is pro PBS. The article said that the PBS series was reinterpreting history. There were some good, important points in both the AIM video and the PBS series. Personally I felt like AIM was more credible they aren't funded by the government like PBS is. I am sure the government and other parties influenced PBS. AIM may not be completely accurate on every issue but they did give us a good balance. It's important not to believe everything we see and hear. AIM questioned many points of the PBS series. Which gives us as students a chance to research these topics more and find out the truth.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

Show parent | Edit | Split | Delete | Reply



Re: History is Being Reinterpreted

by Timothy Haley - Friday, October 19, 2012, 04:52 PM

Sierra,

I see your point, that the PBS series presented an incomplete picture. However, the narrative pushed by several

Presidencies that Ho Chi Minh was a spear-heading member of the global communist agenda was equally incomplete to the opposite extreme. PBS was one of the first media outlets to question this position, and they did it by interviewing Americans who new and worked with him. They talked about him as a communist, but they gave their opinions that he was first a nationalist. PBS broadcasted this show not even a decade after the U.S. left Vietnam. I'm sure the country was plenty aware that Ho Chi Minh was a communist. But was the country aware that before he identified as a communist, he tried to speak at the Versailles conferences to peacefully request independence? Or that he offered the U.S. exclusive exporting rights if they helped Vietnam gain independence (from France and China and the Soviet Union)? This information raises serious questions about whether or not Ho was a member of International Communism. The same goes for U.S. prisoners being tortured. How many other media outlets had covered Vietnamese brutality already? On the other hand, at the time of broadcast, were Americans aware of U.S. brutality? At the time, PBS was providing information that had previously received little to no consideration. John Corry's criticisms of PBS seemed to be over their unwillingness to discuss additional information, and refusal to admit that they had presented a perspective, while refusing to budge from that opinion. I agree with Corry that PBS should have discussed Vietnamese brutality, the role of the ARVN, and many other things. It also seems to me that there is abundant information that upsets people on all sides of this issue.

Yes, PBS receives federal subsidies, and they were granted access to government records. I fail to see why PBS must portray American military conduct in a positive light simply because it receives federal subsidies. I actually think it is a good thing that a publicly funded institution can be critical of government policies. And I don't think it is unpatriotic to do so. If a media outlet that received federal subsidies only had nice things to say about government policies, and never criticized them, then I would agree that that news source is not credible. But I am proud to live a country where we can have an open discussion about such controversial subjects. The existence of both the PBS and AIM documentaries is part of that. I think whether or not the PBS series contributes to patriotism is a matter pure opinion.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

Show parent | Edit | Split | Delete | Reply



Re: History is Being Reinterpreted

by Michael Sitterley - Sunday, October 21, 2012, 08:33 PM

Sierra,

You mention the AIM video having a good balance in their information. The AIM video was just another video created by the people on the other side of the aisle, politically that is. Just look at the person who hosted the videos, there was a reason they used Charlton Heston, who at one point was the president of the NRA. Both videos had their target audience that they were preaching too and the New York Times just made a point to go after the PBS series.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

Show parent | Edit | Split | Delete | Reply



Re: History is Being Reinterpreted

by Barbara Bolt - Sunday, October 21, 2012, 01:08 PM

I was also very upset by the way PBS had portrayed our Vietnam Veterans. They deserve to be recognized for their bravery and for fulfilling their duty to their country. AIM showed great honor to our veterans by coming after PBS and exposing the incorrect ways they portrayed them.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

Show parent | Edit | Split | Delete | Reply



Re: History is Being Reinterpreted

by Timothy Haley - Sunday, October 21, 2012, 05:27 PM

What, exactly, is "incorrect" about the accounts given by U.S. veterans in the PBS series? If you mean that PBS did not include other stories that were more positive, then I think 'incomplete' would be a better word to use. I agree, that the bravery of our troops should be acknowledged. But I also think we do them a great disservice by simply commending their service and bravery without analyzing the horrors we put them through, and revisiting the need for their service. How many veterans never made it to, or didn't qualify for the Vietnam Veterans Leadership Program? Why are their stories not worthy of telling? The documentary Winter Soldier, produced by Milliarium Zero in association with Vietnam Veterans Against the War, shows 125 Vietnam veterans representing every major combat unit in the war gathered in Detroit on January 31 1971. This gathering was a press conference where each of the 125 combat veterans offered sworn testimony of the brutal violence they committed against civilians, and torture of combat prisoners, in the presence of officers. These were combat veterans who needed media attention to tell their stories. They wanted the American public to know. Many of these soldiers were incapable of being members of society when they came home. Did these

veterans dishonor themselves, and others, by offering testimony of their experiences? I think PBS did a great service to our country, military, and war veterans by drawing attention to the continuing social repercussions of war.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

Show parent | Edit | Split | Delete | Reply



Conservative Watchdog Group - Really?

by Tanaya Fonseca - Wednesday, October 17, 2012, 05:12 PM

Vietnam is up for interpretation, according to John Corry of the NYT. To an extent I agree with him. There has been so much deceit and withholding of information with Vietnam that it is impossible to see the truth from the fiction. Was America still keeping with the "rebuild Vietnam" guise? Were we really concerned with that country and how it established itself outside of the threat of Communism? Or were we really just using Vietnam as a threat to other countries, that we did not back down from a war? The Accuracy In The Media video, tries to paint the picture that the government kept trying to force. We were rebuilding a nation, they were being taken over and threatened by a Communist group. In bits and pieces of historical context I can see that as truth. Not from a government stand point, but from a soldiers stand point. Most of the soldiers really believed in helping and aiding the Vietnamese. They believed that their mission in Vietnam was to help that country and its people establish itself among the free nations.

As time went on Vietnam got out of hand, confusion was high as to who the enemy really was. Was there an enemy to America, or an enemy to America and Vietnam? So far, I cannot give an accurate answer. The Accuracy In The Media organization is a Conservative watchdog group, who employed a staunchly Republican narrator. For me, history has proven that not a lot of accuracy happens among some conservative republicans -- especially ones in the media. It would be like watching Fox News for accurate representations of Obama policy; just doesn't quite fit. While I do believe in their assumption that the broad brush of generalization among the soldiers (drug addicts, bigots, etc..) is unfair; it does not negate the fact that there were a tremendous amount of corrupt soldiers in Vietnam. I also, do not consider any media such as the PBS documentary that depicts Americans in a harsh light as "more accurate" than ones that paint Americans as holier than thou. However, that is not to say that both AIM and PBS are right or wrong, they are just simply discussing two different sides of the same coin.

There were decent American and Vietnamese soldiers in Vietnam; most of them we read about in our Appy book. We also read in our Herring book of the lies and deceit that the Johnson administration put forth during Vietnam. Johnson was so desperate for citizen approval of the war that he took to lying about it. PBS and Herring are in accordance that Vietnam was a lost cause, nothing we could have done combat-wise would have secured a win. AIM on the other hand, tries to paint Vietnam as a victory, as the soldiers and productive and leading members of society. Some might be, but 47% of homeless veterans served during the Vietnam Era*. Heston argues on AIM that "popular support of our troops were never as newsworthy as that of those opposed to it." The AIM show itself goes on to show people marching with signs that say "Victory!", before I had seen that I was also off put by the fact that the media didn't show support for the troops. You can support the troops but not the war, however those demonstrations were clearly in support of the war. In a country where the vast majority of people are opposed to the war, why would you want to show marches supporting it? It's always fair to show both sides to an argument, but when one side is clearly one built on false evidence of "victory" – it is hardly a story worth reporting.

AIM did nothing but back up what Johnson tried to portray during his administration, America was doing well in Vietnam, it had to be there. PBS shows that Vietnam was a war torn country, and despite actions to help, it was a lost cause. AIM just furthers the problem that all countries face; admitting when they are wrong in times of war. It tries to pat Americans on the back and assure them that the governments reasoning for continuing involvement in Vietnam was right.

*va.gov

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

Show parent | Edit | Split | Delete | Reply



Re: Conservative Watchdog Group - Really?

by Phillip Hubbard - Sunday, October 21, 2012, 10:49 PM

I think that the deceit you feel and the withholding of information that you claim is probably because you do not agree with the war. The government while under President Johnson was very concerned with public opinion. But isn't every publically appointed official? Obama leaking photo's of himself and other cabinet members including Hillary Clinton watching the attack on Osama Bin Laden is him carrying about public opinion. It's not new or bad that Johnson was concerned about this. A politician has to care what the public think's about his actions. Does he or she need to base their policy completely around it? No, and they shouldn't. But they do.

It is easy for a civilian to look negatively at a war. Often times they do not see the larger picture behind it. In the case of Vietnam we were there to help the South and protect them against the north and their communist way's because

communism goes against our views and opinions. Did we also become involved in the war to show our superiority and demonstrate are military power? Absolutely. Remember North Korea? China? Germany? Do you think they are happy about the outcome of the war's we fought against those countries? Why do you think 25,000 Marines are stationed on Okinawa? Because of the beautiful beaches and coral reefs? No, it's to let those countries know that if they decide to attack America or any of our allies that they will have those Marines at their door in 36 hours. It's a chess match.

The duty of our soldiers is not to believe in a war they are asked to fight in. Their duty is to just fight. They have to understand what their purpose is and that it is no longer about them but about the greater good for America. Not all of them agree with this however. Just as in any industry not everyone agrees with what the boss has to say. A soldier is not to ask who or why but just to do or die.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

Show parent | Edit | Split | Delete | Reply



Re: Week 2 - Continuing the discussion



by Barbara Bolt - Wednesday, October 17, 2012, 07:10 PM

After, I had watched the AIM video on the views of both PBS, and the views of the Vietnam War veterans that they had on the video; I had become very disappointed with the way PBS had portrayed the Vietnam War Veterans. William Jayne stated that the Veterans image was portrayed in the PBS video as a stereotype loser and victim. However, his experiences with the Vietnam Veterans is that the majority are well-adjusted and productive members of society, and most of their success is because of their experiences from the war not in spite of it. The Vietnam War Veteran William Jayne from the AIM video is the most credible resource on this issue. He bases his information off of personal experience, and the experiences of the many Veterans he meets in his job at the Vietnam Veterans Leadership Program as opposed to the medias outlook on the war.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

Show parent | Edit | Split | Delete | Reply



Re: Week 2 - Continuing the discussion



by Andrea Porter - Wednesday, October 17, 2012, 11:35 PM

Personal experiences is the best way to get information. William Jaynes accounts of the war are more believable then any other on AIM video. I agree that PBS portrayed the Vietnam Veterans badly, but that isnt anything new to these honorable vets. Americans during the Vietnam War showed very little support for them while they were across the ocean fighting for our country and their lives. Even when they came home these soliders were treated badley by their own country.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

Show parent | Edit | Split | Delete | Reply



every one has an opinion



by Michael Sitterley - Wednesday, October 17, 2012, 07:51 PM

The truth of what really happened during the Vietnam War has been clearly distorted by politics and peoples personal interest. There appears to be two clear sides to what actually happened and the PBS series Vietnam: A Television History and the AIM video seem to be very apart. It boils down to who supported the war and who was against it, and how these points of views interpreted the information. In the article in The New York Times by John Corry, he notes that the AIM video rebuttal was unsuccessful because it was "Polemic, interested mostly in its own point of view", emphasizing the clear divide between the left and the right. Watching these videos compete with each other, one cannot keep from comparing the controversies of the Vietnam War and the videos we have seen to the current state of affairs with politics and our media. The one thing that people did not have to deal with when the Vietnam: A Television History and the AIM videos where created was the internet and the social medias that surround it. In the end, can we truly know if the information we are receiving is accurate, or is it heavily indoctrinated with someones' point of view?

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

Show parent | Edit | Split | Delete | Reply



Re: every one has an opinion



by Andrea Porter - Wednesday, October 17, 2012, 11:30 PM

It definetly bolis down to who supported the war and who was against the war. These rebuttals are basically Mr. Irvine, AIM, and PBS expressing their own opinion on political views. History has always appeared to be stories or events told by people that lived in that time, but what i see happening or have experienced would be totally different then what you would have experienced. So how do we tell what is right or wrong?

Sum of ratings:1 (1) [Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)**Re: every one has an opinion**

by Sierra Lavoie - Friday, October 19, 2012, 09:08 AM

Michael,

I think you make a very accurate statement, the truth about the war has been really distorted by politics and personal interest. I don't believe we will ever know the complete truth about the Vietnam war there are just to many different people who are giving biased information . The PBS series and the AIM video are very different. But I think its a welcome difference. The Aim video gives us a chance to question many of the things in the PBS series. In my mind this a good thing it allows us the opportunity to question what we have been hearing. To often we just take the things we hear as the truth. I think the PBS series and the AIM videos should be watched together. It provides a valuable lesson about the accurarcy of media or lack thereof. Both the AIM video and the PBS series omitted information so that there take on the war would be better.

Sum of ratings:2 (1) [Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)**Re: every one has an opinion**

by Barbara Bolt - Sunday, October 21, 2012, 09:44 PM

I definitely agree that the truth about the Vietnam War has been distorted. Everyone is sharing their own opinion that they merit as factual, and they don't even have any real evidence. However, the internet provides so much flow of information that we can come to a better understanding by looking up different points of references.

Sum of ratings:1 (1) [Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)**Re: Week 2 - Continuing the discussion**

by Dylan Curran - Wednesday, October 17, 2012, 11:11 PM

One of media's most powerful tools is omission. This is also an extremely dishonest form of journalism; leaving out part of a story can completely change it's significance.

I would like to address the statement in the AIM video made by John McCain,

"The PBS series established, I think, a very unfortunate juxtaposition between the treatment of the American POWs in North Vietnam and the treatment by the Vietnamese and/or the Americans of Viet Cong or North Vietnamese prisoners, and I think there (was) a dramatic difference. Indeed, there were tragic situations of brutality inflicted by both the South Vietnamese and American soldiers on prisoners. That is a tragedy of every war that's ever taken place in history But they were isolated, unfortunate incidents that took place in the field. There is not one single documented case of mistreatment of a Viet Cong or North Vietnamese prisoner once they were in the prison compound."

(Cptn. John McCain, 1984)

While this information may be correct, it is also incomplete. Although McCain may be correct in his claim that the Viet Cong or North Vietnamese were not mistreated once imprisoned, he ignores the outstanding issue of the South Vietnamese government's abuse of its political prisoners. In his book, "Patriots", Christian G. Appy states that "the South Vietnamese government had locked up tens of thousands of political prisoners and subjected many of them to torture and brutality..." (Appy 470). The same book includes an interview by a former prisoner, who describes the horrific conditions in the South Vietnamese prisons (Appy 228).

The fact that McCain portrays the South Vietnamese treatment of POWs as admirable while failing to mention its abuse of political prisoners undermines his credibility. His omission is dishonest, and makes him and AIM less reliable sources.

Sum of ratings:3 (1) [Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)

**Re: Week 2 -Opinions**

by Andrea Porter - Wednesday, October 17, 2012, 11:23 PM

"The Real Story is not the program itself; its the controversy surrounding it"(NYT article) Wasnt the war Vietnam vs America? Yet what appears to be getting all the attention is the war of the television shows PBS and Aim. This T.V. series rebuttal war is taking the focus of what really happened in Vietnam and to American soldiers. One program claims that Ho Chi Minh is a naturalist, while the others claim he was a communist. One program minimizes the brutal beatings and treatment the American POW received in Vietnam. Mr. Irvine/AIM/PBS are all expressing their own opinions on political views and questions. I believe in personal tellings of history. In the Patriots by Appy there are personal accounts of actual events in history. Yes I am sure there are opinions in some of these stories but these authors of history saw things and lived things first hand. Was HO chi Minh a communist or naturalist is a personal opinion. After reading the Patriot by Appy I would say he was a communist. Even the workers who tell their story of building Ho Chi Minh trail went malnourished, had to worry about being attacked and diseases. The media in America during the Vietnam War kept everything that was going on in Vietnam very quiet. They tried to keep the death and brutality that was happening to both sides a secret. It appears that continues to still happen when watching these videos. Appy and the people that tell their stories are what history is all about and is straight to the point. My "vote" goes to Appy.

Sum of ratings: 1 (1) [Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)**Re: Week 2 -Opinions**

by Tanaya Fonseca - Thursday, October 18, 2012, 04:47 PM

Andrea -

I think Appy and Herring make a great pair to read. We get the political run down of what went on behind the scenes in Vietnam, and we get the personal in depth accounts of what happened on the frontlines. Comparing AIM/PBS to me, seems fairly pointless. As I said in my post, they are the opposite sides of the same coin. With the personal accounts of Vietnam within Appy, you can get a sense of how the political drama really effected the soldiers. From both sides of the war even; that is what I like most about Appy is that he has Vietnamese stories as well. The emotional background information gathered by the soldiers stories are excellent contributions to the AIM/PBS/Herring view point. It creates a nice cohesive balance between them all.

While I do agree with you about the oral tradition being what really gives a sense of depth to history; I have to disagree that that is what history is all about. History needs to be expressed as objectively as possible (although nothing can completely be objective), and presented with the least bit of bias. We have seen how confusing history can be; with as much bias and subjectivity as the Vietnam War has shown. If we try and strive for accurate and objective reporting we could save lots of time exhausting "rebuttals" and TV series clamoring to have the "right" view point. I think everyone involved has a right to share their opinions on any given subject, but it should always be clarified as an opinion and not strictly as fact.

Great post Andrea. 😊

Sum of ratings: 2 (1) [Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)**Re-read the NYTimes article please**

by Joe Escobar - Thursday, October 18, 2012, 09:33 AM

Hello students,

While I am enjoying the deeper analysis of the issues that you are discussing this week, I'm afraid that many of you have not addressed or comprehended the New York Times article well enough. The main point of the article involved some "brutal" criticisms of the PBS series and its producers. A number of you have ONLY noticed the sentences that the AIM series was a "biased polemic" or that the PBS series was "a landmark in television history". That is definitely a case of only picking a sentence that you like out of a source, but failing to address the actual point of the article. Please take another look. The New York Times is highly critical of PBS (a position I'm guessing many of you would not have guessed).

Sum of ratings: -

[Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)**National, or International?**

by Timothy Haley - Sunday, October 21, 2012, 01:34 PM

AIM and PBS also disagree about Ho Chi Minh's over-all intentions. PBS interviewed americans who had worked with Ho, and presented credible evidence that questioned his involvement in the long accepted narrative of the global International Communist Agenda. AIM interviewed Steven Morris, professor of Indochina studies at U.C. Berkley. While showing footage of some 'International Communist' summit, and playing ominous music, Morris states that because Ho studied in Moscow and China, he

was a puppet of the Soviet Union, and cared nothing for his country, who didn't know who he was, because he was in jail in China when he changed his name. What he was imprisoned for, we are never told. I would like to know why he was imprisoned by a regime he was supposedly a puppet of, and how he got out. Morris continues to accuse the American O.S.S. officers who knew and worked with Ho of being seduced and manipulated by Ho's masterful PR skills. This is quite an accusation, and I wonder how Archimedes feels about that.

Herring questions Ho's involvement in 'International Communism' when he mentions the limited support that Ho received from the Soviet Union; "U.S. diplomats in Vietnam could find no evidence of direct Soviet contact with the Vietnminh. . . Stalin was preoccupied with Europe at the time, and ideological conflicts with Ho dating to the 1920's influenced his aloofness toward the Vietminh revolution" (p. 13). Later, Herring notes a relaxing of the threat of 'International Communism' in 1962 in the after-math of the Cuban missile crisis, and open hostilities between China and the Soviet Union (p. 121). These things don't seem to matter to AIM.

At the time, PBS was presenting a much needed scrutiny of the official narratives of the Vietnam War. I think their down-fall comes from their refusal to amend the series when called out on certain omissions(such as brutality committed by the North), or even acknowledge they presented a contrary perspective. But I still have great respect for the academically questioning response to the political divisiveness that the official U.S. narrative caused. I have little respect for AIM. They commit many of the very same fallacies they accuse PBS of making; such the "kaleidoscope of images -images of the genocide in Cambodia without an explanation of Pol Pot's connection to 'International Communism'. Douglas Pike insists the PBS series "is many things, but it is certainly not history telling." There is no explanation of what "history telling" is, or should be. AIM is full of accusations, and presents very little information.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

[Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)

[< Previous \(Week 2 - Continuing th...\)](#)

You are logged in as Joe Escobar (Logout)

 Moodle Docs for this page

