

HST 195: History of the Vietnam War Sp14 (Escobar Meta 42384)

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Week 1 - Determining the Truth

by Joe Escobar - Monday, April 14, 2014, 10:42 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.

To make your POSTS, click the reply link in this, MY post.

To reply to another student's post, be sure to click the reply link within in THEIR post.

IMPORTANT - SUBJECT LINES

BE SURE to use an informative subject line for your post. Do NOT simply leave it RE: Week 1 - Determining the Truth

Sum of ratings: -

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Conflicting Facts

by Eryne Grant - Wednesday, April 16, 2014, 10:47 AM

It is extremely important whilst learning about history to always consider that the facts given may not be correct. I thought a lot about this while learning about the Civil War, but the circumstances are much different in the Vietnam war era. There were (somewhat) modern electronics used that could be useful for keeping and finding information, but the most beneficial factor is that people who were alive in that era are still alive today. Therefore,

when we are presented with conflict information, I believe we should academically deal with it by searching outside sources for information. In this instance with the AIM and PBS videos, using books or reliable internet resources to find out what we are being misled is key. For example, in the AIM video, it is mentioned that in relation to the Catholics leaving North Vietnam to South Vietnam, the PBS video gave the wrong information. The PBS video claimed that the Catholics had collaborated with the French as a whole, which the AIM video explains that not all of them had, but some did. In this instance, it is easy to see that the AIM video has some points to be made with their re correcting of the PBS facts. The main reason for the Catholics leaving the north to the south was definitely not because they were all collaborating with the French.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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Re: Conflicting Facts



by Serina Stinson - Friday, April 18, 2014, 3:33 PM

I thought about using outside sources to double check facts, but honestly you never really know who is reliable. The material in our coursework really is the best we have but when checking outside resources, how do you know that it is truly reliable?

Sum of ratings: (1)

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Sorting through the conflict



by Bryan Sanders - Friday, April 18, 2014, 4:09 PM

Checking the source is one of the best ways to deal with conflicting information. If it's a book you're using, for example, check the author and their background. See where they got their data. If it's a website, be sure it's a reputable group or individual managing it rather than something like a blog. Websites with a .org or .edu generally are the best ones to use. Finally, be sure the source information applies to what you seek.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Re: Sorting through the conflict



by Kyle Poirier - Sunday, April 20, 2014, 3:17 PM

I agree. Good point bringing up the .Org .edu as good ones to trust more. Looking into the group or person that is behind the info is very important. A lot of times by doing a little of this research you can see what were the possible motivations for posting the info. Educational purposes is a good one. You will see that different places have different motives so read with caution when addressing those possible areas.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Re: Sorting through the conflict

by Juncheng Qian - Sunday, April 20, 2014, 9:31 PM

I think this idea is very useful, and it is good for the online searching resource that makes the information more reliable. The blog is really not good for the academic study that is too subjective to trust sometimes. And I found somebody online use to post something that almost base on their image instead of truth.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Re: Conflicting Facts

by Eryne Grant - Saturday, April 19, 2014, 1:27 PM

That's true, but it never hurts to look at outside sources to see if any other sources agree with the information in our texts. It never hurts to do some extra research in my book.

Sum of ratings: (1)

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Re: Conflicting Facts

by Debra Moran - Sunday, April 20, 2014, 8:25 PM

The trouble with history is the account that is true lies somewhere in the middle of all accounts unless there is valid documentation. I think the best way to study history is to use all that is offered remembering to keep an open mind and don't stop questioning.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Re: Conflicting Facts

by Lauren Grant - Saturday, April 19, 2014, 10:21 PM

I agree that outside sources are important in determining which source is correct when dealing with conflicting sources. With outside sources that are reliable we can narrow down which bits of information are true. While studying about the Civil War it was harder to figure out what information was inaccurate because no one that was involved in the war is alive today. However, it is different when learning about the Vietnam War because, like you said, there are people from that war that are alive today. Those people make sources like Appy's *Patriots* reliable resources since they are first hand experiences.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Re: Conflicting Facts

by Sheena Moore - Sunday, April 20, 2014, 11:01 AM

Using first hand experience as a reliable source is tricky. Whether they would admit it or not, the person may have emotions tied to their story that will influence the way they present information. The same event may be told in two completely different ways depending on which side of the conflict they were on. When you're looking at any information, regardless of the source, you should always be trying to extract perspective and focus on what the facts are and if those match with other accounts you've read.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Finding Accuracy

by John Moran - Wednesday, April 16, 2014, 1:23 PM

I'm very happy that a counter point of view (AIM Videos) to the PBS series is being offered. This series ran several times on PBS stations in the past. Each time, I was never able to watch the entire series, for one reason or another, my schedule and the shows schedule seem to clash, however, usually I found myself completely disagreeing with what was being shown.

The AIM video on the other hand, which is narrated by Charlton Heston, a well-known U.S. supporter in what- ever endeavor that we, as country, undertook gives another point of view for us to consider. His is a more positive look at the U.S. and it's ally, South Vietnam.

We now use the Herring text to weigh the two views that are given by these video accounts, the truth will always be subjected to one's own bias, and try to determine which of the three accounts line up to make sense of this history. The APPY book will assist, by giving a point of reference from those that were there and the stories they convey.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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The better of two evils?

by Patricia Richards - Wednesday, April 16, 2014, 4:30 PM

It is interesting that you mentioned the more positive light that was shown unto the U.S. and South Vietnam in the AIM video in comparison to the PBS videos; I definitely picked up on that as well. It's intriguing to think that we humans have this undeniable urge to somehow figure out who is to blame. We need to know who is at fault. Perhaps it is easier to comprehend war atrocities, for example, when we can identify a clear villain/ hero. This concept is what makes the Vietnam crisis so interesting yet confusing; each side committed horrendous acts against each other and civilians, yet

we so desperately want to make the other side look terrible. This is one of the most significant differences between WWII and Vietnam.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Re: Finding Accuracy

by Danielle Medina - Sunday, April 20, 2014, 6:03 PM

I definitely agree with your statement that the AIM video has a more positive look at the U.S. and South Vietnam than the PBS video does. After reading your post I went back and watched both videos and could easily spot the differences between them and which side they seemed to be on or favor more. I also have to agree with Patricia, I think that humans really do have to have someone to blame when something goes wrong. What I enjoyed about the Appy book is that it includes people who are able to admit that they were wrong or made a mistake, take responsibility in their actions, and the outcomes of their decisions. In both videos it felt like they were so busy blaming the other side that they never really admitted to their own faults.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Innaccuracies and our academic approach

by Kristine Wallace - Wednesday, April 16, 2014, 2:18 PM

Last semester, I took a history class that dealt with a similar topic of inaccuracies in history textbooks/videos and how those of us who are researching or attempting to learn about the true history should approach them. Unfortunately, there is so much information out there especially on the internet that can be misleading. It is therefore our mission to dig out the truth and to find out, to the best of our knowledge, what is the most accurate of information.

The AIM video presented us with quite a few details of what the producers felt were inaccuracies or convenient details left out of the series. These being such things as the Communist assassination of many non-communist peoples who did not want to conform. Not only did these massacres take place in the mid-1940's but the late 1940's as well. A time span of almost ten years ended up in the slaughter of at least 10,000 non-conforming individuals.

The reasoning why Catholics fled from North Vietnam was another inaccuracy or oversight on PBS's part according to the AIM video. Reasoning for the movement was not for religious reasons or for collaboration with the French government specifically. According to the Herring book, the actual push for them to leave was the hopes by French and Americans that Catholics in South Vietnam was end up tipping the political scales and perhaps lead a win in the 1956 election. (Herring p.57)

I am assuming that throughout this course as through other historical courses, we are to see conflicting data. It is inevitable because writers and producers also have their own opinions which can cloud the information given out. It is up to us therefore to dig as deep as we can into ALL materials to find the truth. We can do this by reading BOTH textbooks (the Appy book gives first hand information) , by viewing documentaries on video and by searching the internet.

One good thing about the study of the Vietnam War is that it is still relatively close in memory to a number of individuals whom are still living, unlike with other wars. With all of the information at our disposal, it is our responsibility to weed out the wrong and find what is closest to the truth.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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Re: Innacuracies and our academic approach



by Serina Stinson - Friday, April 18, 2014, 3:45 PM

It is quite fortunate that you were able to take a previous class that helped you learn how to deal with inaccuracies. I personally don't think that we can use the individuals as solid proof of that is how it happened because they may have remembered it differently over the years and also they could have very bias opinions on what happened out there.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Re: Innacuracies and our academic approach



by Kye Ruddell - Sunday, April 20, 2014, 8:24 PM

To build on your comments, Serina, it is not just the amount of time which has gone by, but the emotional impact the events have had on the person, and how they have been able to deal with them- or not. PTSD can be thought of as almost a spectrum issue, having a lot of the same symptoms for many, and varied symptoms as well. One of the things that trauma can do is make our brains re-matrix the information- what we see and experience- in a way that makes sense to us. This is very helpful for our brains, but not as helpful when we want an accurate depiction of events from those who were there.

This isn't to say that many of those who were there aren't excellent resources, but we have to look at the person, their point of view, the emotional impact the events had on them, and other factors when looking at them to provide "truth."

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Re: Innacuracies and our academic approach



by Lauren Grant - Saturday, April 19, 2014, 10:24 PM

I agree that it is our responsibility to research and discover what is right and wrong when it comes to conflicting information. In any period of time that is being researched, different authors and producers will have different points of view or biases that can lead to the information being conflicting. By finding different sources we can discover what is correct, the same way that reading both textbooks can help determine what information in the videos is correct.

Sum of ratings: (1)

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Re: Innacuracies and our academic approach



by Chen Ling - Sunday, April 20, 2014, 9:11 PM

I saw you have a very interesting statement, one good thing about the study of the Vietnam War is that it is still relatively close in memory to a number of individuals whom are still living, unlike with other wars. When a war has live witness, the story of his or hers will be more believable than others who did not experienced the war.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Critical skepticism



by Patricia Richards - Wednesday, April 16, 2014, 4:11 PM

The fact of the matter is, no matter the source, there will always be the potential for human error. Whether it's an innocent skewed memory or intentional bias, we, as the "consumers of the news" (AIM video narrator "Heston"), must always question everything. We never really know if the information given to us by our government, the media, or eye witness accounts are totally accurate and the assumption that it is or isn't is where we risk making the wrong decision. A good example of assuming one way or another, is in the PBS video (Episode 3-LBJ Goes To War) when they spoke of the Gulf of Tonkin incident. One side had their truth and the other theirs. The reality is that whether or not the North Vietnamese really attacked our destroyers, we retaliated, thus escalating and progressing the acts of war. Sometimes decisions have to be made without every piece of vital information, such as was explained in this episode regarding Johnson's reaction to the alleged torpedo attacks.

In order to get to the most accurate truth possible, it is imperative to learn from as many different perspectives as possible. The combination of the PBS series, the Appy book, and the Herring book is an example of how we might find different truths and through time, piece together the most accurate history of the Vietnam experience; a mixture of academia and human experience. Understanding the "why's", whether it be politically or a personally, is the best way to grasp what the era in and of itself was all about. Like Charleston Heston mentioned in the AIM video, we are condemned to repeat the history we do not learn. Learning occurs when we question, resolve, and question some more.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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Re: Critical skepticism



by Serina Stinson - Friday, April 18, 2014, 3:54 PM

I completely agree with you, my post was basically saying the same, that you can't

really know what the truth is or not. You said it so much better than I did. I honestly don't trust the words of the people who were there because they could be bias or remembered incorrectly. You just have to use all the information to try and determine what really happened.

Sum of ratings: (1)

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Re: Critical skepticism



by Lauren Grant - Saturday, April 19, 2014, 10:22 PM

Your comment about how we never know whether the information that we are given is accurate or not and how making assumptions makes us risk making the wrong decision was very interesting to me. I didn't think about how making assumptions that something is right or wrong can be just as dangerous as believing that every bit of information given to us, no matter the source, is accurate. I definitely agree that learning from as many sources as possible is the closest that we can get to determining the truth, especially with conflicting information.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Re: Critical skepticism



by Kyle Poirier - Sunday, April 20, 2014, 9:16 PM

Yea I like how you brought up learning from the past and how it can't be done unless you question and find out what really happened. Because history is a great way to learn from your mistakes. Just people's personal pasts can be helpful to learn from. Others pasts, like the Vietnam war, is helpful to learn from. Especially if we are getting accurate information

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

Show parent | Edit | Split | Delete | Reply



Re: Critical skepticism



by Chen Ling - Sunday, April 20, 2014, 9:35 PM

I strongly agree with you. People always have bias on what they want to talk about. Most people, in this case, in PBS and AIM will add some biased information for some commercial purpose.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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History's Subjectivity



by Kye Ruddell - Wednesday, April 16, 2014, 8:17 PM

Having multiple sources to draw information from is helpful in learning about an event which you were not there for. Because Vietnam was such a subjective experience for so many of

the people who were there, it's really impossible to assume that there is one definite truth about the war. What really happened in history could be told to us by two different people at the same point in history and the stories could be as different as night and day. The best way to get to the most accurate depictions of the war is to use every resource available to us. The Herring and Appy book both come at the subject from very different styles, and these can be used to complement each other, especially when you are reading about the experiences of the Viet Minh in the Herring book while reading a first-hand account from General Hiep in the Appy book (p.9). These different styles and accounts of events help those of us who are trying to get a view of what it was like to be a part of this point in time, but painting the picture with broader strokes than would just one literary style or point of view. Having these complementary textbooks increases my confidence that we are learning something that is as close to the reality of the time as it could be, for each side of the conflict, which I appreciate.

The PBS video series has so far served to complement much of the information found in the textbooks, and make me think more about the things that it is not necessarily as accurate about. The addition of the AIM video is interesting, as it shows a different side of several aspects of the conflict and appears to have some validity in many of its claims. It is of note, however, that their experts include the chairman of the AIM- the company producing the video. This seems to take away from his credibility as an objective expert. They also use very subjective wording throughout the video, which also serves to lessen their objectivity with respect to the information they are giving us about the war. However, this just furthers to support the idea that there is a lot of subjectivity in any historical event, especially one which was fueled by ideals, opinions, and agendas, whatever they may be.

Ultimately, there are several concrete facts about the war, from dates and battles to information on those who fought on either side, but as with most historical events, there are several stories, several sides, and many truths to be told. This is evident by the information being shown in the PBS videos vs. the AIM video, and in the Appy book, which is itself a grouping of stories with multiple sides and truths, as well as the Herring book.

The more diverse forms of information there are for me to read and watch and study in this case, the more interesting I find the subject and the more engaged I find myself getting. One thing is for certain with regard to the validity of any of the information we are getting from these sources- it is all serving to make me think about this event in history more than I would if it was all just thrown together in one place and spoon fed to me as the objective "truth."

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

3

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Re: History's Subjectivity



by Seth Heffron - Sunday, April 20, 2014, 6:06 PM

Well said, Kyle. You bring up a great point about the issue of credibility with the AIM video, in that their evidence is supported by the chairman of their company. When establishing credibility with your audience (in this case, us) it is important to have valid experience in the field you are arguing for, and/or have extensive knowledge about the subject. With something as complex as the Vietnam War, there is definitely a lot of subjectivity involved, which makes it difficult to argue for the facts, especially if you weren't there. Like you said, however, there are several facts which we can all agree

upon with the utmost precision.

I think as far as everything that isn't fact goes, it is a matter of digging through many accounts and published information to discover on your own what *might* have, or *most likely* happened, until the day you can prove it as an absolute fact. Much like the Scientific Method works.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Re: History's Subjectivity

by Kye Ruddell - Sunday, April 20, 2014, 8:27 PM

Seth- that's interesting that you brought up the Scientific Method. That isn't something I would have ever thought to bring into a conversation about a social topic like this, but it makes perfect sense. To get to the "truth", when there are so many different truths professed, using a more scientific approach would be useful.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Re: History's Subjectivity

by Debra Moran - Sunday, April 20, 2014, 10:34 PM

I like having more than one resource to learn from. I have always been one to try to find out the whys and wherefores. I have never liked being as you called it "spoon fed" the truth. I also think the personal note and the emotions of the Appy book enhance all the other sources of materials in the class.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Inaccuracy of historical information

by Chen Ling - Wednesday, April 16, 2014, 9:31 PM

It is always great if we find out some different point of view in different places about same event. AIM videos are good at giving audiences their thoughts about incorrect or inaccurate information. There is information about communists in 1940's. PBS video provided that Catholics were with French government and that was the reason of why Catholics ran away from North Vietnam to South Vietnam. Our books refuted about it, and it shows that the reason of Catholics' running away is because of the political changes in South by France and United States. For this kind of examples shows that some of historical information is not accurate in some resources, just like PBS video series about Vietnam. PBS video series had much information from some people who were researching this event, and inevitably they will bias that information with their own thoughts, more or less. However, PBS, as a public producer, they have to research more and make their video more believable instead of getting some information then tell them to everyone via TV and internet. When I saw this conflict information, I was thinking that I would like to trust what a person who had really experienced in Vietnam at that moment instead of a third person

trustless video with some accomplishments and non-clear goal.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Re: Inaccuracy of historical information



by Lauren Grant - Saturday, April 19, 2014, 10:20 PM

I would have to agree with you that I would also like to trust a first person experience about Vietnam rather than a third person video. When we hear someone's own story than it is easier for us to relate to them emotionally and be able to trust what they are saying is true. Since they were apart of the war and experienced it then we can for the most part assume that what they are saying is correct. It is harder sometimes to believe what a third person party is telling us since we can not always be certain where their information is coming from.

Sum of ratings: (1)

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Re: Inaccuracy of historical information



by Bryan Sanders - Sunday, April 20, 2014, 10:04 PM

It is tempting to trust a first hand source right away. Since they lived at that time and may have even participated directly, they do carry some weight with them on the Vietnam War. However, many individuals from that era have been changed personally since then by the experiences. Soldiers like Bernard Trainor from the Appy textbook are the first that come to mind. He relays events that happened, and his bias on whether Vietnam was worth it or not doesn't surprise me either. He's been shaken up by his experiences. I wouldn't look to him as an expert on whether the war was worth it, but he is good to turn to in order to see how the war impacted soldiers. Taking into account the interviews of people part of the government back then, the antiwar movement, historians in the present who have researched the event, and other individuals and groups helps in deciphering historical truth.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Re: Inaccuracy of historical information



by Kyle Poirier - Sunday, April 20, 2014, 3:11 PM

I agree with you, and it is frustrating that bias can affect what we read, watch, or hear. It was interesting to see how the pbs and aim video can state such different accounts of history (like you said with the French). I tend to trust the personal accounts from the Appy book also but I wonder if they are not susceptible to bias'? Can't they have an opinion or motive that causes them to distort the truth?

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Re: Inaccuracy of historical information

by Juncheng Qian - Sunday, April 20, 2014, 9:38 PM

This looks a great idea of seeking out book resource for the history, I agree this idea. Also I think found the person who had the real experience is better than just study from the book or media resource.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Historical Accuracy

by Lauren Grant - Wednesday, April 16, 2014, 10:05 PM

I think that the way to deal with conflicting information, especially with the PBS videos and the AIM video, is to search for more information regarding the conflicting information. The Herring book is a good example of outside information that can be used to help distinguish which facts are true. Of course the more legitimate sources found the more certain we can be that what we are reading or watching is historically accurate. Just like each story in the Appy book, we can not assume that each book or video is completely historically accurate. With so much information available about the Vietnam War, it is difficult to distinguish what is true. Comparing sources can help but it is difficult to be sure. In regards to the PBS videos, it was interesting to learn new contrasting information from the AIM video. In the Civil War class that I took last semester, we discussed how you can't take a single video or book as the absolute truth. However, even though I knew this I still found myself believing that everything that the PBS videos said was historically accurate. The AIM video was a good wake up call that helped me remember that not everything I read or watch is true.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Re: Historical Accuracy

by Eryne Grant - Sunday, April 20, 2014, 5:43 PM

I definitely agree with you on the fact that it can be difficult to compare sources. You can never be 100% positive if some facts are correct or not, despite the time era. You make a really good point when you said that it can be hard to make sure information is true because of the amount of information accessible from that time period. This idea really makes me question reliability in relations to present and past wars.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Truth be told

by Debra Moran - Wednesday, April 16, 2014, 10:05 PM

The historical truth is hard to find without accurate documentation, even witnesses tend to change something, somewhere, whether it is with the passage of time, the desire to be seen in a different light or just an error. By combining all the materials of the class (AIM video, PBS DVDs, and the Appy and the Herring texts) helps us to weed out the

nonsensical and the inaccurate. I found the AIM video resourceful as it forces you to question what was viewed in the PBS videos. Americas Longest War by Herring seems the more factual of the accounts, Appys book which is the one I enjoy the most due to its more personal interviews lends the emotions to the more conflicting information.

All history must be questioned for accuracy, or at least provide a natural curiosity that leads to more research. I have always questioned what I read or watch on TV and the AIM video really pointed out some inaccuracy that now I will have to go back to the PBS original and check it out again.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Re: Truth be told

by Lauren Grant - Saturday, April 19, 2014, 10:23 PM

I would have to agree with you that witnesses are not always accurate. Although eyewitnesses are often some of the best sources, they can often be skewed over time or as you said, with human error. Errors can occur in any type of source so it is hard for us to determine which bits of information are accurate and which have been tampered with, whether on purpose or not. Biases are something that can also create different retellings of certain events, for example how the PBS videos lean towards the U.S. and South Vietnam being the bad guys and Ho Chi Minh being the hero.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Re: Truth be told

by Kyle Poirier - Sunday, April 20, 2014, 2:59 PM

I completely agree with you. It is helpful to hear history from all sides so you can combine all view points to gather the most accurate one possibly. It's like if you were doing an investigation, you wouldn't just pull from one source, but would get insights from as much witnesses as possible.

Sum of ratings: (1)

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Re: Truth be told

by Kye Ruddell - Sunday, April 20, 2014, 8:33 PM

Debra- I give the Appy book a bit less weight also, but it's because I am unclear as to the reliability of the points of view. I actually like the "conflicting information", since I see that as just showing more than one side of the same events. This is a class which has really made me look at the information I am being given for it's reliability, and I'm not sure I have been this critical about the information in any class before this.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Heroes and Villains

by Danielle Medina - Wednesday, April 16, 2014, 10:43 PM

One way I deal academically with conflicting information is remembering where the information is coming from. Both videos have their own hero and villain and they both have their own way of subliminally portraying their point of views of who the heroes and villains are. One example of this is how the Gulf of Tonkin incidents were portrayed. In the PBS video there seems to be a mockery of the explanation that the Navy provided about what happened with each incident and then they provide the "what really happened" explanation with actual witnesses and facts. After reading the Herring Book (Tonkin Gulf pg. 141), however, I would come to the conclusion that the information that was provided in the PBS video is accurate because it is a similar explanation with the same witnesses. The way this information is displayed in the PBS video, however, could cause one to see the Navy as liars and to distrust the information they provide.

In regards to the AIM video, they have their own way of using subliminal messaging to portray their point of views of who is a hero and who is a villain. They include clips and information in regards to protests against the video about Vietnam that was released by PBS and this can cause people to discredit the PBS video and it's information. They also use multiple videos of Ho Chi Minh, at different communist events, with dark classical music in the background which has a subliminal message that he is the real villain and that the PBS video is incorrect for portraying him as a hero.

When dealing with these types of documentaries it is best to use books and articles as resources to decide if the information that is being displayed is accurate. It is also best to be able to spot subliminal messages and learn to ignore them so that you can view the information that is being provided without prejudice.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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Seeking the truth

by Seth Heffron - Wednesday, April 16, 2014, 11:29 PM

When discussing such a highly complex topic such as the Vietnam War, it is difficult to pinpoint every detail with absolute accuracy and conviction. It might be that some information was intentionally distorted, or it might be that the information simply wasn't being recorded correctly due to misunderstandings or confusion. For whatever reason it might be, we have to compare what information we do have and attempt to discover the truth as accurately as possible.

As far as the issue of why the Catholics fled from North Vietnam to the South goes, I think the AIM video probably takes the cake for accuracy. The best way to find out the truth is to compare as many accounts as you can and see what the majority says is true. I'm guessing the PBS video didn't dig as far they could have with historical accounts. After reading the Herring and Appy books, it seems like the reasoning for the push of Catholicism to South Vietnam was for political advantage in gaining independence. It helps to have these textbooks in order to cross-reference information in hopes of finding out the truth.

Personally, I think it's difficult to find out what really happened with 100% accuracy due to the total convolution of the situation. My hopes are that we look at the war as a sore in history that we can learn from in order to better our future, and hopefully prevent from

happening again.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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Re: Seeking the truth

by Serina Stinson - Friday, April 18, 2014, 3:58 PM

The only issue that I have with looking for as many accounts of it as you can, is what if they are all just copying each other and spreading the misinformation. I have noticed that on a lot of websites, not specifically on the Vietnam war but on other subjects. They see one person said one thing and all of a sudden, everyone wants to say the same thing.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Re: Seeking the truth

by Bryan Sanders - Saturday, April 19, 2014, 8:48 PM

One of the best ways to figure out the truth is reading books on the subject. For example, our textbooks are good resources for the Vietnam war, but there are others too. Both Herring and Appy wrote books on the Vietnam war, like *LBJ and Vietnam: A Different Kind of War* by Herring and *Working-Class War: American Combat Soldiers and Vietnam* by Appy. Both were written in the early '90s, but the information can still help determine what happened. Also, look into other authors as well.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Re: Seeking the truth

by Danielle Medina - Sunday, April 20, 2014, 6:51 PM

I have also seen false information being spread around with other subjects as well. I think that if you are seeing a lot of the same information being displayed from multiple sources you should definitely check to see where the information is coming from to help decipher if it is reliable or not. Also I have learned that websites definitely need to be scrutinized the most for accuracy because it is so easy for anyone to post false information and convince people that it's the truth by making the web page look credible when it's not. I definitely stay away from sites like Wikipedia that allow anyone to add any information that they want, however, they are good places to find resources on the subject that are credible and offer reliable information. You definitely have to pay attention to the authors of the sources as well so that you can understand where the information is coming from.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Re: Seeking the truth

by Kyle Poirier - Sunday, April 20, 2014, 9:05 PM

That's a good point. I guess we need to look where people are citing the info, if they are, and only count each source rather than how many people just restate that information. By focusing on different sources we can get a broad outlook of history

Sum of ratings: (1)

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Re: Seeking the truth

by Chen Ling - Sunday, April 20, 2014, 9:05 PM

I think you are correct. We cannot find 100% accuracy information for history, we can just think that if we find three different story for the same event, which one should we trust?

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Conflicting Perceptions

by Kyle Poirier - Wednesday, April 16, 2014, 11:39 PM

The textbook's can help us get a broader view on history. When we are learning through individuals accounts of history in these it makes it nice to get many different view points. You have view points included from each side, which can help us see history from both sides. It is always important to see who is writing/publishing the content to see if they have hidden agenda's. And if you really want to be careful you can do research on them to see what they are affiliated with and what else they have posted. You will find dependencies through our sources such as why the Catholics fled to South Vietnam, the differences between PBS and aim are shown here.

Aim: the Real Story is upset by the way they felt PBS distorted the truth in the North Vietnamese favor. As of now I trust the books the most but with all things it is important to get multiple views.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Compare and Chew

by Juncheng Qian - Wednesday, April 16, 2014, 11:49 PM

To deal with conflicting information it is better to think about carefully their different status and figure out what they what kind of information they are trying to spread out like the AIM video has pointed out that PBS series are follow some rules in older to get their fund. That is one thing we should be think about. So we need to be investigate about the publisher company information before we believer what they talking about. On the other hand the AIM video has mentioned that PBS series created Ho Chi Minh as their hero this we also

need be care about because if the source trying to heroize one man we should care about their way of enhancement. Two textbooks is better way to give more information that I can compare with and the text story are more easier keep the skepticism of learning accurate historical knowledge.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Getting the facts



by Bryan Sanders - Thursday, April 17, 2014, 2:15 AM

When you have conflicting information, it's always good to consider the source. In this case, you have PBS and Accuracy in Media, Inc. PBS generally holds a left-leaning approach, while AIM holds a conservative ideology. With that in mind, it's not surprising these two groups take different paths in depicting Ho Chi Minh and the war.

It helps to have access to both sources to see different views on the subject and see if one source lacks information the other covers. Our textbooks, *America's Longest War* and *Patriots*, come in handy to see if what the documentaries are saying is true. *Patriots* is especially helpful because it chronicles the accounts of actual participants in those events. This is not to diminish the importance of the other sources. All help paint a picture for us observe, and we find its meaning by doing as much research as possible into the subject so we can determine what truly happened.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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How do you know?



by Serina Stinson - Thursday, April 17, 2014, 10:53 AM

If you read the textbooks and both textbooks agree with the same material, then you can feel confident going into the videos that it is correct information. But if both text books seem to be conflicting then I would prefer to trust the information in the Herring book since the Appy book is just stories from what people remember from the war. A lot of soldiers were messed up pretty bad from the war and also they could possibly remember something incorrectly. My grandpa still has mental issues from fighting in the war. He is not allowed to have a gun because he frequently thinks he is back in Vietnam. Other soldiers may not have had it as bad but you never really know where their heads are at. That's why I would use the information from the Herring book rather than the Appy book. We don't know if there is truly "right" or "wrong" facts about the war since we were not actually there, we are just trusting what other people have told us about it.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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It's possible to know



by Bryan Sanders - Thursday, April 17, 2014, 7:42 PM

At the end you said we don't know whether there's a 'right' or 'wrong' about the war. It's true there exists a lot of grey areas where some can't easily tell who was right back

then. These textbooks can help shed light on what happened and who may have been right or wrong, but we also have to remember that people often have a bias. It's not just a matter of what people remember and who remembers, but also what their personal views and agendas are. Vo Nguyen Giap for example comes out saying the 'American' war can be described as "The most atrocious conflict in human history." He places blame on America for what happened in Vietnam. Then there's Sergei Khrushchev, who says the Vietnamese didn't take orders from China or Russia. Even our textbook indicates Ho Chi Minh acted on his own and not on orders from outsiders.

Then we view the AIM video, which contradicts the points made by these individuals. The video says Ho had worked in concert with Communists abroad. Even one of the primary textbooks and the documentary mention tidbits about Ho such as his status as a co-founder of the French Communist Party. A lot of these facts can paint a picture of Ho as an international communist instead of an ardent Nationalist.

All of the information can lead people to numerous conclusions, but it is possible for people to discover at least some of the truth (the rights and wrongs).

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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Re: It's possible to know

by Debra Moran - Sunday, April 20, 2014, 10:51 PM

The rights and wrongs of war are usually told by the winner, and there is always a bias no matter what side is doing the talking. But if we have enough information we at least catch glimpses as we go.

Sum of ratings: (1)

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Conflicting Information

by Lauren Grant - Thursday, April 17, 2014, 9:46 PM

I think that the two textbooks help balance out the conflicting information that both the PBS videos and the AIM video give. The Appy book consists of personal stories that have varying degrees of accuracy themselves with multiple sides of different issues being addressed and remembered by many individuals. This allows for the conflicting information in both videos to be given a perspective of someone that could have insight into whether that information was true or not. However, depending on the speaker in the story the reliability of what is being said can be questioned. The Herring book, being more factual, can help clear up any conflicting information. If both books have similar information that corresponds to the information given in a video then there is a higher chance that the information is reliable. However, you can never be one hundred percent sure that what you are reading or watching is correct since we ourselves were not actually there. Researching even more about conflicting information is helpful to be more certain. By having two textbooks with different styles of presenting information about the war, it is easier to determine that what you are reading is historically accurate.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Re: Conflicting Information



by Juncheng Qian - Sunday, April 20, 2014, 9:51 PM

Two textbooks is good for compare the conflicting information, this is a good idea. and we can check the publishing company think about their status.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Text Sources



by Eryne Grant - Saturday, April 19, 2014, 1:35 PM

Our two textbooks can help us approach the video information by allowing us to read many different viewpoints of the information at hand. In the Appy textbook, we are presented information through the viewpoints of people directly involved with the war. This information can be invaluable while studying and trying to decide whether or not certain facts are true or not. But, as with all personal stories from anyone recalling information, the sources in the book may not be purely accurate. Recalling facts and stories can be altered in the mind from trying to remember details. I find this important to remember while reading the stories in the book. The Herring book is more factual and seems more neutral in terms of facts as opposed to the videos we have watched. These texts are very useful to help us come to a conclusion from the biased videos presented. By consulting the texts after watching the videos, it is much easier to figure out what information is historically accurate.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Re: Text Sources



by Sheena Moore - Sunday, April 20, 2014, 1:05 PM

All of the information we were presented with had first hand accounts. In our Herring textbook it sites actual correspondence between departments of government and individuals. For example on page 56 the disgruntled attitude towards the crumbling French structured government headed by Diem was sited as being from "Robert McClintock to State Department, May 20, 1953." Also, each of the videos had multiple people who were directly involved in the war or campaigns leading up to the war. Whether it was a campaign to help train rebel forced to fight the Japanese or relocation campaigns there were people speaking about it from their personal experience.

I do agree with you that first hand accounts may not always be the most reliable. Memories fade or emotions may influence their story. They can be interesting and may support some facts, but I would never use them as my sole source of information.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Re: Text Sources

by Eryne Grant - Sunday, April 20, 2014, 5:46 PM

I agree with you, I would never use first-hand experiences as my only source of information. The way I see it, most information is tampered with somehow from the past to the present time. Sometimes we just have to try to filter out what we think is true and false and do some side research to figure out what to trust.

Sum of ratings: 1 (1)

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Re: Text Sources

by Debra Moran - Sunday, April 20, 2014, 10:56 PM

The textbooks for this class compliment each other well one with the more emotional (Appy) and then there is the one that is more factual (Herring) all this combined with the DVD series and other viewings make for a well rounded approach to the facts.

Sum of ratings: (1)

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Perspective in History

by Sheena Moore - Sunday, April 20, 2014, 1:15 PM

The best way to handle conflicting information is to get more information and remove any bias. The wider net you cast the better understanding you will have. We were presented with two videos, AIM and Vietnam: A Television History, that had conflicting accounts of several issues. One that stood out to me was the migration of Catholics from North to South Vietnam. The AIM video claims that the Catholics fled from the North because the communists were assassinating anyone who's view conflicted with theirs (AIM historian Morris). The PBS special claims that the Catholics fled the North because Diem was Catholic and they thought he would favor them and because of a relocation program from the US to encourage the people of North Vietnam to move now since there would be a "period when free movement wouldn't be permitted" (Cornel Lansdale PBS historian). Also, the PBS special says this takes place in 1954 and the AIM video says it was in 1945. 1945 was the year of Uncle Ho's famous independence speech, not of the mass migration.

In order to determine what really happened I looked to my text books. In America's Longest War (pg. 62) they said that the Catholics fled to the South because they feared what would happen to them if they stayed in the communist north. So, perhaps there was an assassination campaign in the North and that's why they were so scared. The US did however supply the means for the Catholics in the North to move to the South in what was called the "Passage to Freedom". They provided boats, food, clothing and medical care. Since the US was so involved in the relocation of the refugees it is quite possible there was a campaign to encourage relocation. Also, Diem was a Catholic and *did* sympathize with them.

In conclusion, the best way to look at and present historical information is by being

completely emotionally removed. Personally, I loath Charlton Heston on many levels, but in order to be a good historian I had to set aside my feelings and listen critically to the message of the video. The information presented in the AIM video seemed like a propaganda film. The information was given spin to portray the US as having no choice but to move into Vietnam since Ho Chi Minh was a violent, take no prisoners, international communist. There were however points in the video where legitimate facts were presented, but those moments are hard to pick out when there is such a clear bias. Determining history is hard, but not impossible as long as you can weed out opinion and focus on fact.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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