

Viet Nam Wars: A Vietnamese Story

Syllabus

(subject to change)

Fall 2021

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Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays 2:00pm to 3:30pm &
Wednesdays 1:00pm to 3:00pm

Introduction:

Most American students and citizens learn about the Viet Nam War through the U.S. perspective but this class will do the opposite. Though the class will discuss the American goals and home front, the focus will be on what North Viet Nam and South Viet Nam wanted and how each sought to achieve their objectives. You will learn about how the war impacted the lives of millions of Vietnamese, both combatant and civilian. The names and cities will be foreign – will not be different from how Americans thought in the 1960s, but with a little time and effort, you will learn about a war that divided the United States and changed how the military fought wars. More importantly, this course might challenge your views on the Viet Nam War and what you learned from the internet, the media, politicians, and family members.

Objectives:

1. This is not your traditional Viet Nam War class. You will learn the war from the perspective of the “other,” the Vietnamese, both north and south.
2. Learn to read 3 memoirs and 1 academic book and analyze their arguments and perspectives.
3. Learn to take readings and formulate an argumentative essay.
4. Learn to listen and take notes.
5. Learn to work in groups through war scenario game.

Books/Readings:

1. Truong Nhu Tang, *A Vietcong Memoir, An Inside Account of the Vietnam War and Its Aftermath*, New York: Vintage Books, 1986

2. Le Ly Hayslip, *When Heaven and Earth Changed Places, A Vietnamese Woman's Journey from War to Peace*, New York et al.: Plume, 1990
3. Lam Quang Thi, *The Twenty-Five Year Century. A South Vietnamese General Remembers the Indochina War to the Fall of Saigon*, Denton: Univ. of North Texas, 2001
4. Sandra C. Taylor, *Vietnamese Women at War: Fighting for Ho Chi Minh and the Revolution*, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 1999
5. Primary and secondary sources will be posted in D2L

Assignments: (free response questions)

1. **Tests – (40%)**: (½ from **lectures** and ½ from **readings**)
 - a. Midterm and Final
 - b. Free response questions, no IDs and **no** multiple choice
2. **Two papers (30%)** 4-5 pages - *** Look at template/instructions document in D2L for more details
 - a. First:
 - i. Using Truong Nhu Tang and Lam Quang Thi books
 - ii. Questions:
 1. Compare and contrast each person's belief in their "sides" cause for war
 - a. Which person's cause is more "legitimate" or are both "equally" so?
 - b. Second:
 - i. Using Le Ly Hayslip and Sandra C. Taylor books
 - ii. Questions:
 1. What was more dangerous for a Vietnamese woman during the war, being a civilian peasant or soldier? Or both?
 - a. Make sure you compare a woman civilian peasant and woman soldier in your essay
3. **Board Game (25%)** (Battle of Dien Bien Phu)
 - a. Play the game in groups
 - b. Write a 2-page paper comparing **actual** battle with **your** battle

4. Participation (5%):

- a. Option of emailing your comments (due by 5pm on the same day of the lecture) if you do not want to speak up in lecture

Schedule:

Date	Topics	Readings and Assignments
August 24, Tuesday	Introduction, Early History	- Read <i>Twenty-Five Year Century</i>
August 26, Thursday	Early History – China, Dai Viet, Champa	- Read <i>Twenty-Five Year Century</i>
August 31, Tuesday	French Colonialism	- Read <i>Twenty-Five Year Century</i>
September 2, Thursday	Early Viet Revolutionaries	- Read <i>Twenty-Five Year Century</i>
September 7, Tuesday	WWI and WWII Period	- Read <i>Twenty-Five Year Century</i>
September 9, Thursday	Post-WWII Interlude	- Read <i>Twenty-Five Year Century</i>
September 14, Tuesday	French-Viet Minh War	- Read <i>Twenty-Five Year Century</i>
September 16, Thursday	Dien Bien Phu Game	- Play Dien Bien Phu Game - Read Viet Cong Memoir
September 21, Tuesday	Dien Bien Phu Game	- Play Dien Bien Phu Game - Read Viet Cong Memoir
September 23, Thursday	Dien Bien Phu Game	- Play Dien Bien Phu Game - Read Viet Cong Memoir
September 28, Tuesday	Building Socialism in North Viet Nam; The National Liberation Front	- Paper on Dien Bien Phu Due by 5pm via email

	(Viet Cong) and North Viet Nam's Southern Strategy	- Read <i>Viet Cong Memoir</i>
September 30, Thursday	France, Ngo Dinh Diem, US, and Nation Building	- Read <i>Viet Cong Memoir</i>
October 5, Tuesday	"The Hmong and the Secret War" Movie	- Read <i>Viet Cong Memoir</i>
October 7, Thursday	TBD	- Read <i>Viet Cong Memoir</i>
October 12, Tuesday	TBD	- First Paper Due 5pm via email
October 14, Thursday	Midterm Review	Midterm Review
October 19, Tuesday	Midterm	Midterm
October 21, Thursday	US "Invasion"	- Read <i>When Heaven and Earth Changed Places</i>
October 26, Tuesday	International Scene (China & Soviet Union) and Sideshows (Laos, Thailand, & Cambodia)	- Read <i>When Heaven and Earth Changed Places</i>
October 28, Thursday	Impact of U.S. on Vietnamese Society	- Read <i>When Heaven and Earth Changed Places</i>
November 2, Tuesday	Women and the Homefront (both sides)	- Read <i>When Heaven and Earth Changed Places</i>
November 4, Thursday	General Uprising, General Offensive (Tet Offensive) and Results	- Read <i>When Heaven and Earth Changed Places</i>
November 9, Tuesday	U.S. Home Front	- Read <i>When Heaven and Earth Changed Places</i>
November 11, Thursday	Fighting while Talking; Peace Accords and Final Offensive	- Read <i>Vietnamese Women at War</i>
November 16, Tuesday	Peace and Reconciliation??? New Nation	- Read <i>Vietnamese Women at War</i>

November 18, Thursday	Third Indochina War: Khmer Rouge	- Read <i>Vietnamese Women at War</i>
November 23, Tuesday	NO CLASS	NO CLASS - Read <i>Vietnamese Women at War</i>
November 25, Thursday THANKSGIVING	THANKSGIVING	THANKSGIVING - Read <i>Vietnamese Women at War</i>
November 30, Tuesday	Lasting Legacies	- Read <i>Vietnamese Women at War</i>
December 2, Thursday	Review	- Second Paper Due 5pm via email
December 8, Wednesday Final Exam	December 8, Wednesday Final Exam	December 8, Wednesday Final Exam