

History 4381: The Vietnam Wars
020, T/Th, 9:30-10:45, Room A227

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Office Hours: Tuesday, 11:00-12:00, Wednesday 10:00-12:00, and by appointment.

About the Course:

This course explores the interrelated wars in Vietnam and its region between 1940 and the present. The course will take an international approach, examining the wars from both local and national perspectives with a focus on the U.S. and Vietnam, but attention paid to the experiences and roles of the French, Cambodians, Laotians, Soviets, and Chinese. The course will bring together military, social, cultural, political, and diplomatic history to explore the complex dynamics and multiplicity of experiences surrounding the interconnected wars in the region. This course will involve completing a project in conjunction with the War Stories Project. Students will interview or study an individual veteran as part of this project.

Grades	Completed/Your Grade	
Participation	15%	
Reading Responses	10%	
Interview Assignment	10%	
Individual Investigation	5%	
Paper #1	15%	
Paper #2	15%	
Midterm Exam	15%	
Final Exam	15%	

Grade Scale:

A	90-100%
B	80-89%
C	70-79%
D	60-69%
F	0-59%

Required Book:

Lawrence, Mark, *The Vietnam War: A Concise International History*, Second Edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008)

Articles will be posted on Blackboard. It is your responsibility to make sure you get the correct readings from Blackboard. You need to access the reading in a timely matter in case of issues. Pay attention to the titles on blackboard, the syllabus, and emails/announcements to make sure you are reading the correct materials for each class.

This course uses Blackboard for both readings and assignments. Please check your email or blackboard postings regularly for announcements and additional class materials. You may also use the Blackboard site to post questions to your classmates or discussion questions you are interested in considering in class. For assistance with Blackboard, contact IT Support at (325) 942-2911.

Course Requirements:

Participation: Students are expected to come prepared to all class meetings. This includes arriving on-time and ready to participate (which means speaking and attentively listening during discussions). **Using a cell phone, sleeping, or talking during lectures will result in no credit for that day's participation credit.** If these behaviors become disruptive, you may be asked to leave and will be counted absent. The participation grade is closely tied to attendance of course and thus, if you are absent more than 4 classes, you will lose 25 participation points per additional class period missed (out of 100). Additionally, this class will include significant discussion. You **MUST** participate in those discussions to do well in the participation portion of the course.

Reading Responses: Over the course of the semester, I will occasionally ask you to write an in-class reading response. I will pose a question and you will write a paragraph or two answer using the assigned reading for that day. You cannot make up reading responses.

Interview Assignment: As part of this class, you will be participating in the National Endowment for the Humanities-supported project, "War Stories: West Texans and the Experience of War, World War I to the Present." The project seeks to collect, preserve, share, and analyze the experiences of West Texas veterans and their families. The project is interested in the perspectives of servicemen and women as well as loved ones on the home front. Items of interest include: letters, diaries, pictures, and oral interviews. For more information about the project, visit www.angelo.edu/warstories.

You will identify a veteran or family member/friend of a veteran connected to the Vietnam War to interview or from whom to collect written records (diaries, letters, etc.). You can also contact someone opposed to the war at the time if they were actively involved in the antiwar movement. If you are unable to identify someone on your own, please see me for assistance. You may use material from or conduct interviews with your own family members.

You will set up an interview, interview the person—using a set of questions provided for you in class—and complete a partial transcript of the interview. We will discuss how to go about completing each step in class. Your assessment is based on completing all aspects of the assignment in a timely, professional manner.

Individual Assignment: You will also be choosing an individual from Vietnam, Cambodia, or Laos to learn more about. There is a list of suggestions posted on blackboard. You can also propose an alternative if you prefer. For this assignment, you need to choose a person, read about them (in many cases—these individuals have written a book, which is sufficient—and then write a 1-1.5 page summary of your research. This person will be the basis for one of your papers below.

Paper Assignments: You will write two short (3-5 page) papers in this class. One will analyze the experience of an American veteran, antiwar activist, or family member. The other will analyze the experiences of a Vietnamese civilian, soldier, or policymaker. In both cases, you will use secondary sources to analyze primary material related to your individual. For the American experiences paper, you will use the person you interviewed as a subject and for the Vietnamese experiences, you will use the person from the Individual Assignment above. You may opt to write one longer (6-8 page) paper comparing and contrasting the two individuals, however, you are required to meet with the professor individually about your paper if you would like to take this option.

A note on paper formatting: All papers should be double-spaced, Times New Roman or Garamond 12-point font, with 1 inch margins and a single-spaced header. You need a title. A 3-5 page paper means you have a minimum of 3 FULL pages. Finally, you must have citations in the proper places and use both

primary and secondary sources. If you have questions about any of these requirements, see the professor BEFORE turning in a paper.

Midterm and Final Exam: Exams will consist of a combination of matching and short answer questions. The midterm will be completed in class on **March 1** and the final is on **May 12** at 8am.

Op-Ed: The one opportunity for extra credit in this class is to write an Op-Ed, due May 5. We will discuss the details in class. Turn in via TurnItIn.

Policies:

Attendance: As regular attendance is necessary to achieve student learning outcomes it is the policy of the History Department that missing more than 20 percent of the course (6 absences in a 75 minute TTR course, 9 absences in a 50-minute MWF course) will result in a reduction of one full letter grade when calculating the final course grade. You are responsible for making sure you are properly signed in.

Academic Integrity: Plagiarism of any sort will not be tolerated. Plagiarism includes both copying other person or sources work word for word without proper citation AND using the ideas of another person or source without proper citation. (This includes internet sources). All plagiarized papers will receive a zero and be reported to the administration. For clarification, please see the professor.

Cheating on exams will not be tolerated either. This includes (but is not limited to) the use of cell phones. The use of a cell phone during an exam will result in automatically failing the exam. I will assume you are using the phone to cheat if you are using it in any matter during the exam. Turn your phone off, leave it at home, or leave it at the front of the room to avoid suspicion.

Signing in for someone else or having one sign in for you qualifies as cheating. It will result in a zero for your participation grade in the course.

The ASU *Student Handbook* contains important information about campus services, programs, policies, and procedures, including such areas as the campus disciplinary rules and the Academic Honor Code. All students are expected to be familiar with this publication and to comply with the policies contained therein, among them maintaining complete honesty and integrity in their academic pursuits according to the Academic Honor Code. The ASU *Student Handbook* is available via the ASU website at www.angelo.edu (“Current Students:/University Publications.”) Large print versions are available in the Student Life Office, Room 112 University Center.

The Classroom Environment: Please be respectful of your classmates and professor. This includes arriving on time, not disrupting the class if you are late or must leave during class, **turning off cell phones and other electronic devices**, and using laptops for note taking purposes only. Violation of the laptop policy may result in your no longer being allowed to use a laptop in class. Additionally, please be respectful of your classmates’ opinions and views during class discussion. Disagreement should be voiced with respect in all cases.

Make-Up Exam Policy: Students must have a documented reason to miss an examination and should contact the professor before the scheduled examination. The make-up examination will differ from the classroom examination. Make-up examinations will be administered in the professor’s office. If you miss an exam without prior permission, you must contact me within 48 hours of the exam to discuss the reason for your absence and possibility of making up the exam. After 48 hours, you will receive a zero.

Persons with disabilities: Persons with disabilities who require certain accommodations must contact the Student Life Office located in room 112. You are encouraged to make this request as early as possible during the semester so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

Religious Holidays: Students may miss a class with no penalty in order to observe a religious holiday in accordance with ASU OP 10.19. Please inform the instructor if you are unable to attend for religious reasons *in advance*.

Questions? Please feel free to email me or come by my office at any time with questions, concerns, or other thoughts about the class.

Student Learning Objectives for History 4381:

- Students will be able to analyze the motivations of various national and individual actors in Southeast Asia since WWII.
- Students will be able to construct essays which synthesize assigned readings and lectures into a coherent, fact-based analytical narrative that demonstrates critical thinking skills.
- Students will have a more sophisticated understanding of the evolution of international relationships surrounding Southeast Asia since 1945.
- Students will be able to analyze the causes and consequences of the Vietnam Wars Since 1940.
- Students will develop communication skills and knowledge to interact with individuals of different backgrounds through oral history with community members of various backgrounds.

Outline (Subject to revision)

Week 1—Introduction and Overview

1/19—Introductions/syllabus

1/21—What were the Vietnam Wars?

Read: Lawrence, Introduction

Assignment: Choose your person for Vietnamese Experiences

Determine 1-2 possible people to interview about American Experiences and/or Contact the Professor About Options

Week 2—Pre-War and WWII Vietnamese History

1/26—Imperialism and the Rise of Vietnamese Nationalism

Read: Lawrence, Chapter 1

1/28 –WWII in Southeast Asia and discuss Oral History Project

Read: Mark Bradley, “Trusteeship and the American Vision of Postcolonial Vietnam” *Imagining Vietnam and America: The Making of Postcolonial Vietnam, 1919-1950*

Week 3— The First Indochina War

2/2—Foreign Affairs Program Speaker—James Purcell

Meet in University Center

Assignment: Prepare questions

2/4—Doing Oral History

Read: Excerpt from Donald Ritchie, *Doing Oral History* and Oral History Sample Packet

Week 4— The First Indochina War

2/9— Anticolonial War between Vietnam and France
Read: Lawrence, Chapter 2

2/11— Understanding Cold War Geopolitics
Assignment: Work on projects. Minimum progress required:
Have contacted person to interview and set up date for American Experiences
Have acquired source(s) and started reading for Vietnam Experiences

Week 5—The Diem Years

2/16—The Final Battle, Settlement, and Rise of the Saigon Regime
Read: Lawrence, Chapter 3
Primary Source Packet

2/18—Trouble in Saigon
Read: Lawrence, Chapter 4

Week 6— Escalation

2/23— The Era of Advisors Ends
Read: Fredrik Logevall, “‘There Ain’t No Daylight’: Lyndon Johnson and the Politics of Escalation” in Mark Bradley and Marilyn Young, *Making Sense of the Vietnam Wars: Local, National, and Transnational Perspectives*

2/25— Escalation
Lawrence, Chapter 5

Week 7— Vietnamese Experiences

3/1— **Midterm Exam**

3/3—War aims and politics in Vietnam
Read: Mark Bradley, “Experiencing War” *Vietnam At War*

Week 8— From Vietnamese Experiences to American Experiences

3/8—Experiencing War in Vietnam
Read: Primary Source Packet
Turn in: 1-1.5 page summary of your Individual Assignment (Vietnamese Experiences)

3/10—A War of Destruction
Read: Nick Turse, *Kill Anything that Moves* excerpt

3/14-3/18—Spring Break

Week 9— Americans in Vietnam

3/22—The Draft
Read: Primary Source Packet
Turn in: your 1 page reflection and partial transcript from your American Experiences Interview

3/24—American Soldiers and Popular Culture
Read: Excerpt from: Doug Bradley and Craig Werner, *We Gotta Get Out of This Place: The Soundtrack of the Vietnam War*

Week 10— The War At Home

3/29—The Rise of the Antiwar Movement

Watch: John Kerry Testimony on Blackboard

Read: Heather Stur, “Liberating Men and Women: Antiwar GIs Speak Out Against the Warrior Myth.”

Beyond Combat: Women and Gender in the Vietnam War Era

3/31 —The Broadening and Globalization of the Antiwar Movement

Paper #1 Due

Week 11— 1968

4/5—In Country

Read: Lawrence, Chapter 6

4/7—At Home

Read: "Tet on TV: U.S. Nightly News Reporting and Presidential Policy Making," in *1968: The World Transformed*

Week 12—Vietnamization and Withdrawal

4/12—Richard Nixon and the Vietnam War

Read: Lawrence, Chapter 7

4/14— My Lai Massacre

Read: Packet, See Blackboard

Week 13—“ Sideshow”: Regional Destabilization

4/19—Nixon’s Secret War

Read: William Shawcross, “Bombing Cambodia: A Critique” and Henry Kissinger, “Bombing Cambodia: A Defense” in Andrew Rotter, *Light at the End of the Tunnel: A Vietnam War Anthology*

4/21— Withdrawal and the Fall of South Vietnam

Read: Lawrence, Chapter 8 pages 161-172 only

Paper #2 Due

Week 14—The Wars after the War

4/26— The Khmer Rouge and Cambodia after the War

Read: David Chandler, “Revolution in Cambodia” *A History of Cambodia*

4/28—The “War” on Vietnam

Read: Bruce Franklin “Missing in Action in the Twenty-First Century”

Read: Thomas A. Bass “Amerasians: A People in Between” In Andrew Rotter, *Light at the End of the Tunnel: A Vietnam War Anthology*

Week 15—Legacies and Memories

5/3—Legacies and Popular Memory

Read: Lawrence, Chapter 8, Pages 173-End

Watch: Vietnam Film (of your choice, see blackboard for options)

5/5—Where do we go from here?

Op-Ed Extra Credit Due

Thursday, May 12, 8a.m.—Final Exam