

HIST 5351: The Vietnam War

Tuesday, 6:00-8:45pm, CAS 210
University of Texas at Tyler
Fall 2024

Instructor: Prof. Matt Stith
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Office: CAS 127
Office Hours: Tuesday: 12:30-1:30; 3:30-4:30; Thursday: 12:30-1:30; Or by appointment

Course Description:

We will explore—through intensive readings, discussion, and research—the complex political, military, diplomatic, economic, and ideological undercurrents that led to and perpetuated the Vietnam War. In so doing, we will carefully evaluate Vietnamese history, French imperialism, communist ideology, and the causes, course, and consequences of the Cold War. A majority of the course will focus on America's involvement in Vietnam and how such involvement impacted domestic, cultural, and political issues within the United States.

Course Learning Objectives:

Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:

1. Demonstrate a mastery of the causes, course, and consequences of the Vietnam War.
2. Think critically and objectively about the United States and its role in influencing, and being influenced by, global diplomacy, economics, politics, and ideology.
3. Develop analytical skills through thinking, speaking, and writing about modern American history generally and the Vietnam War specifically.

Important Note:

I encourage you to meet with me regularly to discuss or clarify lecture, discussion, or reading—or to talk about history in general. My job (and satisfaction) is as much to work with students on an individual basis as it is to lecture and facilitate discussion. Please keep this in mind throughout the semester.



Required Reading (in order):

- Fredrik Logevall, "Structure, Contingency, and the War in Vietnam," *Diplomatic History* 39 (January 2015)
 - o Full Text on Canvas
- Fredrik Logevall, *Embers of War: The Fall of an Empire and the Making of America's Vietnam* (New York: Random House, 2012)
 - o <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/uttyler/detail.action?docID=5336983>
- Heather Marie Stur, *Beyond Combat: Women and Gender in the Vietnam War Era* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011)
 - o <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/uttyler/detail.action?docID=803199>
- Doug Bradley and Craig Werner, *We Gotta Get Out of This Place: The Soundtrack of the Vietnam War* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2015)
 - o <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/uttyler/detail.action?docID=4533239>
- Christian G. Appy, *American Reckoning: The Vietnam War and Our National Identity* (New York: Penguin, 2015)
 - o <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/uttyler/detail.action?docID=6057359>
- Viet Thanh Nguyen, *Nothing Ever Dies: Vietnam and the Memory of War* (New York: Harvard University Press, 2016)
 - o <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/uttyler/detail.action?docID=4502460>
- Tim O'Brien, *If I Die in a Combat Zone Box Me Up and Ship Me Home* (1975; 1999)
 - o <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/uttyler/detail.action?docID=6080384>
- Dang Thuy Tram, *Last Night I Dreamed of Peace: The Diary of Dang Thuy Tram*, transl. Andrew X. Pham (New York: Three Rivers Press, 2007)
 - o <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/uttyler/detail.action?docID=6105144>
- Philip Caputo, *A Rumor of War* (1977; New York: Henry Holt, 1996)
 - o On two-hour course reserve at the library circulation desk.

Recommended Reading:Secondary Sources

- Max Hastings, *Vietnam: An Epic Tragedy, 1945-1975* (New York: Harper Collins, 2018)
- Randall Bennett Woods, *Quest for Identity: America Since 1945* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005)
- Gregory Daddis, *Westmoreland's War: Reassessing American Strategy in Vietnam* (Oxford University Press, 2014)
- George C. Herring, *America's Longest War: The United States and Vietnam, 1950-1975*, 5th Ed. (McGraw Hill, 2013)
- Ron Milam, *Not a Gentleman's War: An Inside View of Junior Officers in the Vietnam War* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2009)
- Mark Atwood Lawrence, *The Vietnam War: A Concise International History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008)
- Robert D. Schulzinger, *A Time for War: The United States and Vietnam* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997)
- Stanley Karnow, *Vietnam: A History* (1984; New York: Penguin, 1997)
- Lien-Hang T. Nguyen, *Hanoi's War: An International History of the War for Peace in Vietnam* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012)

Primary Sources

- Christian G. Appy, *Patriots: The Vietnam War Remembered from All Sides* (2003)
- Troung Nhu Tang, *A Vietcong Memoir: An Inside Account of the Vietnam War and Its Aftermath* (New York: Vintage Books, 1986)
- Le Ly Hayslip, *When Heaven and Earth Changed Places: A Vietnamese Woman's Journey from War to Peace* (New York: Penguin, 1990)
- Robert S. McNamara and Brian VanDeMark, *In Retrospect: The Tragedy and Lessons of Vietnam* (1995)
- Marilyn B. Young, et al., eds., *The Vietnam War: A History in Documents* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002)

Websites

- *The Vietnam Collection*, WGBH Open Vault, at <http://openvault.wgbh.org/collections/vietnam-the-vietnam-collection#Interviews>
- *The Vietnam Center and Archive*, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas, at <http://www.vietnam.ttu.edu>
- S. Mintz and S. McNeil, "Explorations: The Vietnam War as History," *Digital History* from http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/active_learning/explorations/vietnam/vietnam_menu.cfm
- Edwin E. Moise, "Vietnam War Bibliography," at <https://edmoise.sites.clemson.edu/bibliography.html>

Documentary Films

- *The Vietnam War*, Ken Burns and Lynn Novick, dirs., PBS, 2017

- *Vietnam: A Television History*, WGBH, 1983.
- *Vietnam in HD*, The History Channel, 2011.

Music

- Doug Bradley, "I Served in Vietnam. Here's My Soundtrack," *New York Times*, March 13, 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/13/opinion/vietnam-war-rock-music.html>
- Anne Meisenzahl and Roger Peace, "Protest Music of the Vietnam War," United States Foreign Policy History and Resource Guide website, 2017, updated March 2019, <http://peacehistory-usfp.org/protest-music-vietnam-war>.

Book Reviews:

Please write a single-spaced, 600-word review for Logevall, Stur, Bradley/Werner, Appy, and Nguyen. Please also write a 1,200-word essay on the three primary-source books (O'Brien, Caputo, and Tram). Due dates below.

Research Paper & Presentation: Please prepare a 3,000-4,000-word (exclusive of footnotes) research paper based on primary sources and contextualized by relevant secondary sources. This paper will form the basis for your individualized MA comprehensive exam should you choose to take exams in the modern America field. It is worth 100 points and due when you present to the class. You will present this research to the class toward the end of the semester as you would a conference paper.

Attendance and Participation:

Active and informed participation in addition to assigned presentations is mandatory. Poor, hostile, or no discussion will result in the loss of a letter grade. More than two unexcused absences will also result in the loss of a letter grade (see below).

Make-up Policy:

I will work with you on an individual basis with regard to any missed exams or deadlines.

Academic Honesty:

Cheating of any kind, including plagiarism or the use of AI, will result in immediate failure of the class and possibly further sanctions from the University of Texas at Tyler. Plagiarism, put simply, is using another's work as your own without proper citation or usage. This includes everything from copying and pasting from the Internet to failing to cite an idea from another source that you put in your own words. I strongly recommend reviewing the university policy for cheating and academic dishonesty at the following website: <http://www.uttyler.edu/judicialaffairs/scholasticdishonesty.php>

AI is not permitted in this course. All work students submit for this course should be their own. For this course, I expressly forbid using ChatGPT or any other artificial intelligence (AI) tools for any stages of the work process. Deviations from these guidelines will be considered a violation of UT Tyler's Honor Code and academic honesty values.

Point Breakdown:

Book Reviews:	5 x 10= 50
Primary Source Essay:	50
Participation:	50
Research Paper + Presentation:	100
Total:	250

Grade Scale:

A = 225-250
B = 200-224
C = 175-199
D = 150-174
F = 0-149

Reading List and Schedule:

- **Week 1 (8/27)**
 - o Introduction the Course and to the Field of History.
- **Week 2 (9/3)**
 - o Discuss Logevall, "Structure, Contingency, and the War in Vietnam," and Logevall, *Embers of War*, chaps. 1-13
- **Week 3 (9/10)**
 - o Discuss Logevall, *Embers of War*, chaps. 14-27; Review due 6:00pm on Canvas
- **Week 4 (9/17)**
 - o Discuss Stur, *Beyond Combat* (all); Review Due 6:00pm on Canvas
- **Week 5: (9/24)**
 - o Discuss Bradley and Werner, *We Gotta Get Out of This Place* (all); Review Due 6:00pm on Canvas

- **Week 6: (10/1)**
 - o Discuss Appy, *American Reckoning* (all); Review Due 6:00pm on Canvas
- **Week 7 (10/8)**
 - o Discuss Nguyen, *Nothing Ever Dies* (all); Review Due 6:00pm on Canvas
 - o Start O'Brien, *If I Die*; Caputo, *A Rumor of War*; Tram, *Last Night I Dreamed of Peace*
- **Week 8 (10/15)**
 - o Discuss O'Brien and the nature of war.
- **Week 9 (10/22)**
 - o Discuss Caputo, Tram, and writing the war.
- **Week 10 (10/29):**
 - o Research/Writing Workshop; Individual Meetings
 - o O'Brien-Caputo-Tram Essay Due 11:59pm on Canvas
- **Week 11 (11/5)**
 - o Research/Write
- **Week 12 (11/12)**
 - o Research/Writing Workshop; Individual Meetings
- **Week 13 (11/19)**
 - o Presentations
- **Week 14 (11/26): Thanksgiving**
- **Week 15 (12/3)**
 - o Presentations
- **Week 16 (12/10)**
 - o Presentations (if needed)

