

**WOH 3241
THE VIETNAM WAR
FALL 2020**

Professor: Matthew Jacobs

Email: Beginning this semester, faculty are required to communicate with students via the course CANVAS email tool, but I may also be reached at mjacobs@ufl.edu

Office Hours (virtual): Mondays 10:30-11:30, Thursdays 2:30-3:30, and by appointment

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Welcome to the fall 2020 semester, and to **WOH 3241: The Vietnam War**. As we all know, this semester will be unlike any that any of us have ever experienced. The success of the course will be equally dependent on all of us being committed, flexible, patient, persistent, and understanding. This course will be offered synchronously, meaning at the scheduled time listed in the Schedule of Courses, but fully remotely. Lectures will be Tuesdays, 5th and 6th period (11:45-1:40). Typically, instead of taking a break during lecture we will end by 1:15. Thursday discussion sessions will take place at either 11:45 or 12:50, depending on the section in which you are registered. These, too, will take place remotely. On occasion, I may post short videos that cover basic chronologies or other information for you to watch prior to class so that we can spend more of our time together engaging with each other. Lecture power points will be linked to the title for each class in the schedule below. I will generally post these the morning of lecture, and they will remain active for the remainder of the semester. Readings, with the exception of those from the Hunt reader and the memoir, will be direct linked either to pdf files stored on CANVAS or to an external site.

Please note: It is my preference that everyone have their video on during class, as it makes for a much more engaging experience if we can see each other. I do realize, however, that there may be cases where that is not possible. And while I would prefer not to record our classes, it is important for you to be aware that our class sessions may be audio-visually recorded for students in the class to refer back and for enrolled students who are unable to attend live. Students who participate with their camera engaged or utilize a profile image are agreeing

to have their video or image recorded. If you are unwilling to consent to have your profile or video image recorded, be sure to keep your camera off and do not use a profile image. Likewise, students who un-mute during class and participate orally are agreeing to have their voice recorded. If you are not willing to consent to have your voice recorded during class, you will need to keep your mute button activated and communicate exclusively using the "chat" feature, which allows students to type questions and comments live. The chat will not be recorded or shared. As in all courses, unauthorized recording and unauthorized sharing of recorded materials by students or any other party is prohibited.

Course Description and Objectives

Nearly half a century after the conclusion of its U.S. phase, the Vietnam War remains one of the most contested and debated moments in modern American history. It also remains an immensely popular subject of study for scholars, students, documentary filmmakers and others. If that is the case for Americans, the conflict holds even greater significance for those who are Vietnamese, as its consequences were felt even more deeply in Vietnam than they were in the United States. I therefore have designed this class to allow us to explore the Vietnam War from a multitude of perspectives, American and Vietnamese. By the end of the semester you should:

- Develop a clear knowledge and understanding of conflict in Vietnam from the late nineteenth century through the late twentieth century, with a particular focus on the U.S. phase of that conflict;
- Critically analyze the cultural, economic, political, and social implications of conflict within Vietnam, the United States, and elsewhere;
- Consider a variety of legacies of conflict in Vietnam; and
- Use our analysis of Vietnam to provide an analytical foundation for considering the two wars—Afghanistan and Iraq—that have superseded Vietnam as the longest conflicts in U.S. history and have dominated international politics and U.S. political culture during your lifetime.

Organization and Assignments

To accomplish the above objectives, I have organized the class around a mixture of lecture, readings, discussion sessions, other in-class activities, and a variety of written assignments. The Thursday sessions offer the opportunity to engage in conversation with your peers in a smaller setting, though we will also regularly engage in discussion in the Tuesday lectures as well. You should therefore come to every class prepared to participate, and participation will in fact count for 20% of your overall grade. You will also write four short papers (4-5 pages each, and each worth 20% of your grade), due on 29 September, 20 October, 10 November, and 16 December. Each paper will focus on the following topics: the coming of war (paper one), the ending of war (paper two), debating and experiencing war (paper three), and the legacies and memories of war (paper four). I will provide more details for each assignment as they draw near. Finally, you will also complete one small group presentation project, which will be factored into your participation grade for the course.

Grading

The assignments listed above will carry the following weights in the final, overall grade:

Assignment	Percent of Grade
Participation	20%
Paper One	20%
Paper Two	20%
Paper Three	20%
Paper Four	20%

Letter grades on papers will be based on three major, closely related criteria:

- Evidence--how good is your command and deployment of the relevant course material, and are you student employing the best evidence available to make his/her points;
- Interpretation—have you developed an argument or point of view that is pertinent to the issue at hand, and that has breadth, coherence, and insight; and
- Expression (style)--is the prose (writing) clear, concise, and engaging?

We will weight these criteria equally, and will factor them into letter grades as follows:

- A—Excellent: Your work is outstanding in all three areas. It offers an integrated, insightful argument based on ample, sound evidence and is written in clear and engaging prose.
- B—Good: Your work is strong in all three areas or is outstanding in one area while having significant weaknesses in another.
- C—Average: Your performance is adequate in one or more areas, but also has significant weaknesses in others, leaving the presentation fragmented, murky, or narrow.
- D—Poor: Your work demonstrates notable weaknesses in all three areas. Remedial work may be needed to improve substantive understanding or basic communication skills.
- E—Unacceptable: Your work has serious flaws in all areas or, more likely, demonstrates limited engagement in the assignment.

Participation grades will rest on discussions of the relevant materials and engagement in class activities. Adequate participation will indicate that you completed the readings and actively engaged in discussion. If you have questions about how participation is being evaluated, or if you feel uncomfortable speaking in front of others, you should contact me as early in the semester as possible.

We will assign letter grades for papers and for final course grades according to the following numerical scales:

Letter Grade	Numerical Equivalent (Paper and Final Grades)	GPA Equivalent (Final Grades)
A	93 and above	4.0
A-	90-92	3.67
B+	87-89	3.33
B	83-86	3.0
B-	80-82	2.67
C+	77-79	2.33
C	73-76	2.0
C-	70-72	1.67
D+	67-69	1.33
D	63-66	1.0
D-	60-62	0.67
E	Below 60	0.0
E1	Stopped attending or participating prior to the end of class	0.0
I	Incomplete (Note: I rarely agree to these)	0.0

Policies and Expectations

History classes are most rewarding when students interact with the materials, each other, and the professor and teaching assistants on a sustained and regular basis. While lectures and readings provide the raw material for the class, much learning will take place in both formal and informal discussions. Effective class participation (see above) is therefore essential and is even more critical given the circumstances in which we all find ourselves this semester. You can expect an atmosphere in which opinions are expressed, and received, in a thoughtful and respectful manner. It also is important to note that many of you may hold very strong opinions about the issues we

will be discussing this term. Disagreement and lively debate are encouraged as long as everyone remains respectful of one another. I also encourage all of us to be willing to challenge our own preconceptions as well.

You are expected to attend all class sessions and to be respectful of yourselves, your peers, the graduate assistants, and me at all times. In the virtual world we will inhabit this semester, this may mean a variety of things. First and foremost, it will mean understanding that any one of us may at any time become ill, need to care for a loved one, have intermittent or weak internet service, or feel distant or removed at some point during the semester. Please know that the teaching assistants and I will do our best to make any reasonable accommodation appropriate to the circumstances. Please do not hesitate to reach out to me if you find yourself struggling for whatever reason. On the more mundane level of our day-to-day class interactions, please keep your microphone muted when others are speaking so as to minimize background noise. Please also utilize the “raise hand” function in Zoom, and feel free to add appropriate comments in the chat section as well. Requirements for class attendance and make-up assignments in this course are consistent with university policies, which you can review at <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/>.

You will submit all written assignments electronically through the CANVAS class portal. If you encounter technical problems while submitting assignments, please email the paper to me and your teaching assistant by the appropriate due date and time. We will handle requests for extensions on a case-by-case basis. We will accept unexcused late papers up to one week after the due date, but we will apply a late penalty (typically 1/3 of a letter grade per day late) unless there are extenuating circumstances.

We will handle concerns about grades on specific assignments in the following manner. We will release grades for all students simultaneously for each assignment and will observe a "twenty-four-hour rule" at that point. In short, this means that we are happy to entertain questions about grades and comments on papers, but students must wait twenty-four hours after receiving their grade to contact us. This rule allows the TA's, me and you to get some distance, while also allowing potentially disappointed or upset students time to calm down. If you have concerns about how your paper has been graded, speak first with the individual who graded that assignment (usually your TA). If you still have questions following that conversation, feel free to contact me, but please email me a clean version of the paper. After speaking with you I will read the clean copy first and then read the TA's comments and evaluation of the original paper. You should not worry that you will be penalized for engaging in this process, as I will not reduce a grade that has been appealed (though I may or may not raise it). You must initiate the grade appeal process by contacting the original grader of the assignment within one week of when the assignment is returned.

Cheating in any form undermines the integrity and mutual trust essential to a community of learning and places at a comparative disadvantage those of you who respect and work by the rules of that community. It is understood that any work you submit is indeed your own. Plagiarism—that is, lifting without giving credit from something someone else has written such as a published book, article, or even a student paper—is forbidden and is, in most cases, fairly easily detected.

There are other, more obvious forms of academic dishonesty, such as turning in work completed by someone else, bringing inappropriate notes into an exam, and offering or receiving whispered, signaled, or other forms of assistance during an exam. Working with your fellow students in study groups or having someone else read a draft of your paper is not only acceptable but also encouraged, as long as you are refining ideas that are essentially your own. Included within this definition of academic integrity is the assumption that all documents and excuses provided as explanations for late or missed assignments have not been falsified. Please review the University's policies regarding [student conduct and conflict resolution](#), available through the [Dean of Students Office website](#).

If you require classroom accommodations, you must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to you, which you must then provide to me when requesting accommodation. For more information regarding University policies on this issue, please visit the [Disability Resource Center's website](#).

You are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>. You will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email you receive from GatorEvals, in your Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

Please do not hesitate to contact me or the TA's at any point during the semester with any individual concerns or issues you may need to discuss. It is best for all parties if this happens as early in the semester as possible. Problems are much easier for us to address if we know about them sooner rather than later and can be particularly difficult to handle if left until exam week or after final grades have been submitted.

Required Readings

There are two books required for this course, one of which is listed below. The second will be a memoir of your own choosing. There will also be a few additional readings assigned electronically, either as direct web links or as files posted to the E-Learning site.

- Michael H. Hunt, *A Vietnam War Reader: A Documentary History from American and Vietnamese Perspectives* (University of North Carolina Press).

Course Schedule

You should generally complete the readings listed below prior to the Tuesday lectures, during which I may reference them or provide a bit more context for them. They will then be the primary point of emphasis for the Thursday discussion sessions.

Date	Topics and Readings	Assignment
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1 Sept.	Course Introduction and Setting the Stage	
3 Sept.	Discussion Session 1: Setting the Stage Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hunt, i-xxviii 	
8 Sept.	PART I: THE COMING OF WAR Setting the Stage, WWII, and War with the French, to 1954 Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hunt, 1-27 • Additional documents--read documents 1.2, 1.5, 2.1, and 2.2 • Harry S Truman, "The Truman Doctrine" 	
10 Sept.	Discussion Session 2	
15 Sept.	Geneva, Two Vietnams, and the Growing "Crisis," 1954-1963 Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hunt, 29-56 • Le Duan, "The Path of Revolution in the South" and other documents (read docs 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, and 3.6) • TBA (possible guest lecturer) 	
17 Sept.	Discussion Session 3	
22 Sept.	Committing to War, 1963-1965 Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hunt, 57-84 • TBA (possible guest lecturer) 	
24 Sept.	Discussion Session 4	

29 Sept.	<p>Part II: Fighting and Ending a Stalemate</p> <p>Escalation to Stalemate, 1965-1969</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hunt, 85-106 	Paper One on the Coming of War Due
1 Oct.	Discussion Session 5	
6 Oct.	<p>Expanding War and Ending War, 1969-1975</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hunt, 106-121 • Lien-Hang T. Nguyen, "Cold War Contradictions: Toward an International History of the Second Indochina War, 1969-1973" • TBA, (possible guest lecturer) 	
8 Oct.	Discussion Session 6	
13 Oct.	<p>Ending the Wars, Southeast Asia after 1975, and Catch Up</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hunt, 185-192 • TBA, (possible guest lecturer) 	
15 Oct.	Discussion Session 7	
20 Oct.	<p>Part III: Experiencing War</p> <p>Framing the Issues</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hunt, 123-159 • Lisa Munday, "The Combatants Experiences" 	Paper Two on the End of the War Due
22 Oct.	Discussion Session 8	

27 Oct.	<p>The War Comes Home</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hunt, 161-184 	
29 Oct.	Discussion Session 9	
3 Nov.	<p>Memories of War</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Memoir of your choosing (see here for a list of common choices) 	
5 Nov.	Discussion Session 10	
10 Nov.	<p>Part IV: Legacies of War</p> <p>Framing the Issues and Memorials and their Meanings</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hunt, 192-208 Scruggs, "America Needs a Global War on Terror Memorial" 	Paper Three on Experiencing War Due
12 Nov.	Discussion Session 11	
17 Nov.	<p>War and Popular Culture</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Andrew C. McKeivitt, "'Watching the War Made Us Immune': The Popular Culture of the Wars" Excerpt from Andrew Bacevich, <i>The New American Militarism</i> Excerpt from either Huntemann and Payne, eds., <i>Joystick Soldiers</i> or Payne, <i>Playing War</i> 	
19 Nov.	Discussion Session 12	Memorial Group Presentations

24 Nov.	<p>The War Movie</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marilyn B. Young, "Now Playing: Vietnam," • Laurel Westrup, "Toward a New Canon: The Vietnam Conflict through Vietnamese Lenses" 	Complete the readings and watch a Vietnam War film of your choosing (don't forget to consider Vietnamese films). We will spend the class discussing films.
26 Nov.	No Class--Holiday	
1 Dec.	<p>Policy Legacies of War</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Michael Hunt, "Panetta on Tour in an Asia without History" • Robert McMahon on Vietnam in post-Vietnam US policy making • TBA 	
3 Dec.	Discussion Session 13	
8 Dec.	Course Conclusion	
16 Dec.	Scheduled Final Exam Day-- Paper Four Due no later than 12:30 p.m. today but may be submitted any time after 9 December at noon.	Paper Four on the Legacies of War due no later than today