

Spring 2022
HIST 377/387: THE VIETNAM WAR
TR 3-4:15 on Zoom

DR. LAIR
Email: mlair@gmu.edu
Office Hours: TR after class & by appointment



COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will take a broad look at America's Vietnam War, including Vietnamese history and culture, French colonialism, American foreign policy in the Cold War, Chinese-Vietnamese relations, American and Vietnamese strategy, the antiwar movement, the fall of Saigon, and some of the war's legacies. The course will combine readings, lecture, and discussion.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will learn about the historical and cultural antecedents of the "American War" in South Vietnam; the origins of American intervention in Southeast Asia; the major strategies and events of the Vietnam War; and the conclusion of the Vietnam War. In doing so, they will develop understanding of global patterns and processes and their interaction with society; demonstrate understanding of the interconnectedness, difference, and diversity of a global society; and apply awareness of global issues to a consideration of individual or collective responsibilities within a global society. We will achieve these objectives by examining historical events and issues from a variety of perspectives. Skills developed in the course include formal and informal writing, textual analysis, public speaking, and critical thinking.

REQUIRED READINGS

- You will need to acquire a copy of Herring, *America's Longest War: The United States and Vietnam, 1950-1975* (the 4th, 5th or 6th edition). The first reading from this book is due February 24.
- PDFs of documents & articles will be posted on Blackboard under "Biweekly Class Sessions."

ACCESSING OUR ZOOM CLASS SESSIONS

In our Blackboard course page, look for "Zoom" in the left-hand menu, then click through for links to each class session. If a class session gets recorded, it will be found in the same place, under "Cloud Recordings." If you have difficulty logging into the session, check out "Zoom Troubleshooting." I have also provided information on my expectations under "Online Learning Etiquette & How-To's."

GRADING SCALE

Grades represent an assessment of your work, not a reward, sanction, or an evaluation of you as a person. A's are reserved for truly excellent work; B's are assigned to accomplished work; C's are assigned to average work; D's are assigned to below average work; and F's are reserved for work that suggests a lack of comprehension or care. Any distribution of final grades is possible; there will be no "curve" in this class.

Course grades will be assigned based on the following scale:

A+ 97-100	B+ 87-89	C+ 77-79	D 60-69
A 94-96	B 84-86	C 74-76	F <60
A- 90-93	B- 80-83	C- 70-73	

ASSESSMENT

This class is an online synchronous course, in which students are required to attend synchronous class sessions as they would an in-person course. Course sessions will not be recorded. The pace of this course will be brisk. Students should anticipate doing several hours of work for this class each week.

Course grades will be based on successful completion of the following:

Class participation (15% of course grade)

Students are required to attend every online class session, to come to class prepared, and to participate fully in the life of our class. Failure to attend class will negatively affect the participation grade. Zero participation will result in a participation grade of zero, which will make it very difficult to pass the class. Please read "Thoughts on Participation," below, for details on how to be an effective discussant.

Homework assignments & 1 required quiz (20% of course grade total)

There will be several homework writing assignments throughout the course. Students must complete 5 of these assignments plus 1 quiz that will count towards the homework average. For the weeks when students elect not to complete the homework assignment, they still must complete the course readings on which the homework assignment is based. Homework assignments will be found in Blackboard with the course readings.

Two Midterm Exams (20% of course grade each)

Where to access them: Exam materials will be located in the left-hand menu of Blackboard, under "Exams."

What they will cover: The first midterm exam will cover material from February 1 through the class session prior to the exam. The second midterm exam will cover material since the first midterm exam. Questions may be drawn from all course materials.

Exam format: The midterm exams will have 3 parts: fill-in-the-blanks, short-answer essays, and a long essay. The fill-in's and the short answer questions will be administered as timed tests in Blackboard. The long essay will not be timed.

Exam integrity: All parts of the midterm exams will be open-note & open-book. Students are not permitted to collaborate on the exam with one another, nor may they search the Internet for answers. Students are expected to behave honorably, because if they don't, I mean... what are we even doing here?

A Final Exam (25%)

The final exam will follow the same format and rules as the midterm exams. The final will cover material since the second midterm, but part of it will also be **cumulative**.

THOUGHTS ON PARTICIPATION

How to participate in the life of our class:

- Ask/answer a question or make a comment in class, orally or in the chat.
 - Oral participation is preferable to the chat, because students need to practice this valuable skill. However, some students may not have an audio connection that facilitates oral participation. Also, I would rather have shy students participate via the chat feature than not at all. But I urge everyone to push themselves to get comfortable speaking in front of others and to become more effective with the Zoom medium.
- Meet with me in office hours or email me to discuss course material.
- Post and/or comment thoughtfully on threads that I or other students create on the course discussion board.

What is productive participation?

- **Use your words.** Discussion board posts provide a great opportunity to practice rendering complete thoughts in writing.
- **Be informed.** Spend time with the course readings.
- **Make connections** between lectures & readings and/or between our course materials & what you have learned or observed elsewhere.
- **Support your ideas with evidence.** Be concise but specific. Explain unfamiliar terms. Quote or cite your sources (but try to put ideas into your own words).
- **Stay on topic.** If you're going to share, you should have a relevant point to make about course topics or materials. If you're responding to a question, you should answer the question being asked.
- **Practice being thorough but succinct.** ("Brevity is the soul of wit!")
- **Innovate, don't replicate.** This is especially relevant for the discussion board. Don't just say, "I agree with so-and-so." Offer your own opinion in your own words, even if it challenges what someone else says or writes. We want to hear what *you* think!

COURSE & UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Please read these course policies and make sure you understand them. If you have questions, ask! You are expected to know these policies and to plan your schedule accordingly. That being said, I understand that we are all facing a lot of uncertainty in our health, our loved ones' health, employment, and housing. Please keep in touch with me about your circumstances.

Academic Integrity

Mason students are bound by an Honor Code (<http://oai.gmu.edu/mason-honor-code/full-honor-code-document/>), which states, "Student members of the George Mason University community pledge not to cheat, plagiarize, steal, or lie in matters related to academic work." The principle of academic integrity is taken very seriously, and violations are treated gravely. In this course, academic integrity means that:

- When you are responsible for a task, you will perform that task.
- When you rely on someone else's work in any aspect of the performance of that task, you will give full credit in the proper, accepted form.
- All aspects of the class will be conducted with civility and respect for differing ideas, perspectives, and traditions.
- You will tell the truth about the status of your work.

For a discussion of plagiarism, go here: <http://oai.gmu.edu/mason-honor-code/what-is-plagiarism/>

Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. I will report students suspected of dishonesty to the University's Honor Board for disciplinary action, including failure of the course and even expulsion.

Attendance & Punctuality

Our class is synchronous online, and I expect you to attend. If you take ill, have technical problems, or have other emergent circumstances that cause you to miss class or a deadline, please notify me by email at your earliest convenience.

Communication

I will be using Blackboard to email the class via the Announcements feature. Emails sent through Blackboard may be found under "Announcements" on the course welcome page for the duration of the semester. Please use your GMU account to write to me, and please check your GMU email regularly or forward your GMU email. **Please preface the subject of your emails to me with "HIST 377" or "HIST 387."**

Decorum

I expect you to be physically and intellectually present in our online class, to behave in a professional way, and to be respectful of others. If you wouldn't do it in an in-person class, you probably shouldn't be doing it in our online class sessions. Please review "Online Etiquette & How-To's" for specifics on etiquette in our synchronous classroom and during office hours.

Disabilities

If you are a student with a disability and need academic accommodations, please see me privately and contact Disability Services (<https://ds.gmu.edu/>). All academic accommodations are codified by that office, but implementing them will fall to me. Accommodations begin only once I am notified about them in writing. Accommodations cannot be retroactive.

Diversity

George Mason University strives to maintain a quality environment for work, study and personal growth. Diversity is broadly defined to include such characteristics as, but not limited to, race, ethnicity, gender, religion, age, disability, and sexual orientation. Diversity also entails different viewpoints, philosophies, and perspectives. Attention to these aspects of diversity will help promote a culture of inclusion and belonging, and an environment where diverse opinions, backgrounds and practices have the opportunity to be voiced, heard and respected. Please strive to keep your politics out of the classroom and your work. **If you feel uncomfortable or unwelcome in class for any reason, please come and talk to me.**

IT Policy

I would like you to be physically and intellectually present in our online class, and it is my responsibility to forge a productive classroom culture that encourages best-practices for learning. Studies have shown that students retain more information when they take notes by hand, though this is admittedly problematic for saving notes and making them searchable. Further, computers and cell phones provide intense temptation to multitask, dividing the user's attention.

- **Phones:** Please silence your phone and put it away during our synchronous online class.
- **Computers:** If you use your computer to take notes during our synchronous online class, **please refrain from multitasking.**

Please join me in creating an online space for learning and discussion, in which we are all focused on the course topics, our learning and improvement, and each other!

Late Assignments

Assignments will be accepted late, but a grade penalty may attach. Please notify me at your earliest convenience if your circumstances require an extension on an assignment.

Office Hours: after class & by appointment

I encourage you to meet with me online to discuss any facet of the course. I will remain in our course meeting room after class ends. If you cannot remain after class, or there are other students in the "room" and you want privacy, please reach out about setting up a private time to meet on Zoom.

Submitting Your Work

- Submit written work as Word documents (**not PDFs**) via Blackboard.
- Please save your files as follows:
 - **Your_Last_Name.HIST377[or 387].Name_of_Assignment.SP22.doc(x).**

University Enrollment Policy

Students are responsible for verifying their enrollment in this class. Schedule adjustments should be made by the deadlines published in the Schedule of Classes. (Deadlines each semester are available on the Registrar's website: <https://registrar.gmu.edu/calendars/>.) Major Registrar deadlines may be found in the schedule below.

Zoom

Please visit "Online Learning Etiquette & How-To's" under "Zoom" in the left-hand menu of our Blackboard course page to learn more about my expectations.

USEFUL CAMPUS RESOURCES

Live links for these resources as well as others related to mental health and stress management may be found on Blackboard under "Supplemental Information." There are additional resources related to stress management and intimate partner violence there as well.

Academic Advising for CHSS students: <https://academicaffairs.chss.gmu.edu/undergraduate-students>

Advising for History majors & minors. <https://historyarthistory.gmu.edu/undergraduate/welcome>

Career Services: For networking, mentors, and assistance applying for jobs. SUB 1 Room 3400, 703-993-2370, careers@gmu.edu, <https://careers.gmu.edu/>

Chosen Name & Pronoun Policy: For information on how to update your chosen name and pronouns. <https://registrar.gmu.edu/updating-chosen-name-pronouns/>

Counseling and Psychological Services: For free counseling. SUB I Room 3129, 703-993-2380, <http://caps.gmu.edu>

COVID-19 Safe Return to Campus: <https://www2.gmu.edu/coronavirus>

Disability Services: <http://ods.gmu.edu>

Financial Well-Being: Assistance understanding your finances and financial aid. <https://ssac.gmu.edu/fwb/>

Learning Services: Free coaching & academic skills workshops. <https://learningservices.gmu.edu/>

LGBTQ Resources: <http://lgbtq.gmu.edu>

Library Info Guides: <http://infoguides.gmu.edu/>

Mason Alerts: Sign up at <https://ready.gmu.edu/masonaler/> for alerts related to emergencies and closings.

Office of Academic Integrity: <https://oai.gmu.edu/>

Patriot Pantry: For free food assistance or to make donations. <https://ssac.gmu.edu/patriot-pantry/> or email pantry@gmu.edu o make a private appointment to use the pantry.

Patriot Web: For registration, transcripts, and degree evaluations. <https://patriotweb.gmu.edu/>

Stay Mason Emergency Assistance Fund: For degree-seeking students in acute financial distress who are at risk of dropping out. NOTE: The application process takes a while, and funds are limited. But, it's worth a try! <https://ulife.gmu.edu/forms/stay-mason-student-support-fund-application/>

Student Support & Advocacy Center: For health, well-being, and support. SUB I Suite 3200, 703-993-3686, <https://ssac.gmu.edu/>

University Policies: All members of the Mason community are responsible for knowing and following established policies.

- The Catalog, <http://catalog.gmu.edu>
- University Policies <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/>
- CHSS Policies <https://academicaffairs.chss.gmu.edu/ugradpolicies>

Writing Center: Multiple locations, 703-993-1200, <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu>

BIWEEKLY TOPICS AND READING ASSIGNMENTS

- Use this schedule as an overview for readings. It is subject to change at my discretion.
- Complete readings prior to coming to class. Homework due dates may be found in Bb >> Biweekly Class Sessions.
- Page numbers for Herring, *America's Longest War*, refer to the 5th edition.

HIST 377/387 Schedule Part I

WK	DATE	TOPIC	READING/PREPARATION FOR CLASS
1.	Jan. 25	Course Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course Syllabus • Discussion board prompt
	Jan. 27	Why study the Vietnam War?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>America's Longest War</i>, Ch. 8, pp. 354-380 • Read the contents of at least 1 folder on legacies.
	January 31: Last day to add.		
2.	Feb. 1	Introduction to Vietnam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nguyen Khac Vien, "Confucianism and Marxism"
	Feb. 3	Early Modern Vietnam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ngo Vinh Long, "Vietnam's Revolutionary Tradition" • Excerpt from Asselin, "From Dai Viet to the August Revolution"
3.	Feb. 8	February 7: Last day to drop with 100% tuition refund.	
		Colonial Vietnam: French Rule	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jules Ferry, "On French Colonial Expansion" • Excerpt from Asselin, "From Dai Viet to the August Revolution"
	Feb. 10	Colonial Vietnam: The Vietnamese Response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vietnamese Declaration of Independence, 1945 • Excerpt from Asselin, "From Dai Viet to the August Revolution"
4.	February 14: Last day to drop with 50% tuition refund.		
	Feb. 15	The Communists' Rise to Power in Vietnam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excerpt from Halberstam's <i>Ho</i>, pp. 12-61 ◦ Mao, "The Three Stages of Protracted War, 1938"
	February 15: Unrestricted withdrawal period begins (0% tuition refund).		
	Feb. 17	Vietnam in WWII/WWII in Vietnam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Atlantic Charter, 1941 • Excerpt from Asselin, "From Dai Viet to the August Revolution"
5.	Feb. 22	Vietnam in WWII/WWII in Vietnam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TBD
	Feb. 24	The Franco-Vietminh War, 1946-54	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>America's Longest War</i>, Ch. 1
6.	Mar. 1	The Franco-Vietminh War, 1946-54	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ho Chi Minh's Letter to President Truman, 1946 • "The State Department Recommends Aid to France, 1950" ◦ Giap, selection from <i>People's War, People's Army</i> • "Final Declaration of the Geneva Conference, 1954"
	March 1: Unrestricted withdrawal period ends (0% tuition refund).		
	March 2: Restricted withdrawal period begins (0% tuition refund).		
	Mar. 3	The US Steps In, 1950-61 (or '75)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>America's Longest War</i>, Ch. 2 • Excerpt from NSC-68, 1950 • "President Eisenhower on the 'Domino Theory,' 1954" • Cooper, "Boy, You Speak Just Like an American" • Khrushchev, "The Vietnamese Had Their Own Ideas"
March 4-7		Midterm Exam I (online)	

HIST 377/387 Schedule Part II

WK	DATE	TOPIC	READING/PREPARATION FOR CLASS
7.	Mar. 8	Vietnam's Civil War	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o "Ho Chi Minh's Appeal After the Geneva Agreements, 1954" • Manifesto of the National Liberation Front, 1960 o "Truong Nhu Tang on the Origins of the National Liberation Front (1957-1959), 1985" • "A Viet Cong Recruit Explains Why He Joined the Revolution (1961), 1986" • "South Vietnamese Peasant Girl Becomes a Vietcong Supporter (c. 1961), 1989" • Tran Thi Gung, "I Was Stuck in a Tunnel for Seven Days" • Truong My Hoa, "They Tried to Make Us Say, 'Down With President Ho!'" • Chuy, "We Came Home Hairless with Ghostly White Eyes"
	Mar. 10	Crisis in Indochina, 1961-63	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>America's Longest War</i>, Ch. 3 • "President Kennedy on the 'Domino Theory,' 1963" • NSAM 273, 1963
8.	March 14-18: Spring Break: No Class!		
	Quiz over handout ("The Political Landscape of Vietnam, 1960-75") due by March 18		
9.	Mar. 22	LBJ's Decision for War, 1963-65	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>America's Longest War</i>, Ch. 4 • "Reassessment of U.S. Objectives in SVN, 1964" • "The Tonkin Gulf Resolution, 1964" o "McNamara Recommends Escalation, 1965" • "George Ball Dissents, 1965" • "Lyndon Johnson Explains Why Americans Fight in Vietnam, 1965" o "LBJ Recalls His Decision to Commit Troops (1965), 1971"
	Mar. 24	The American War: Air War	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>America's Longest War</i>, Ch. 5 o LBJ Orders Pants (Video) • Smith, "I Was Thanking God <i>They</i> Didn't Have Air Support"
10.	Mar. 29	The American War: Ground War in South Vietnam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excerpt from Edelman, ed., <i>Dear America</i> • Excerpt from Whalon, <i>The Saigon Zoo</i>
	Mar. 31		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stephen Klein, "Intimations of Mortality" • Watkins, "The Sand Was Probably the Only Thing That Saved Me"
11.	Apr. 5	The American War: Pacification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Le Cao Dai, "Sometimes I Operated All Night..." • Phan Xuan Sinh, "All My Ancestors Are Buried Here" • Ta Quang Thinh, "They Carried Me the Whole Way Back to the North"
	Apr. 7	The Tet Offensive, 1968: Vietnam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>America's Longest War</i>, Ch. 6 • Gabriel, "We Buried Our Own Men Right There"
April 8-11		Midterm Exam II (online)	

HIST 377/387 Schedule Part III

WK	DATE	TOPIC	READING/PREPARATION FOR CLASS
12.	April 11: Selective withdrawal period ends (0% tuition refund).		
	Apr. 12	The Tet Offensive, 1968: The US	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The Tet Offensive in Editorial Cartoons, 1968
	Apr. 14	The Draft	<ul style="list-style-type: none">“Proclamation of the Antidraft Resistance, 1967”Lafferty, “No Draft Board Ever Failed to Meet Its Quotas”“James Fallows Reflects on the Draft’s Inequities (1969)”
13.	Apr. 19	The Antiwar Movement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">“America’s Longest War, pp. 113-17, 160-67, 210-31, 248-52, 267-68 (review)Todd Gitlin Recalls the New Left’s Revolutionary Romanticism, 1987”“Martin Luther King Jr. Declares His Opposition to the War, 1967”“A Vietnam Veteran Opposes the War, 1971”Sherlock, “Steve Sherlock, Bronze Star with a ‘V’”
	Apr. 21	Backlash Against the Antiwar Movement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">“A Veteran Remembers His Bitter Homecoming, 1981”“Conservative Tom Anderson Arraigns Student Radicals, 1969”“Vice President Agnew’s Perspective on Protest, 1969”
14.	Apr. 26	Vietnamization, 1968-73	<ul style="list-style-type: none">America’s Longest War, Ch. 7Halyburton, “I Don’t See How You’ve Got a Worse Place Than This
	Apr. 28	Vietnamization, 1968-73	<ul style="list-style-type: none">“Davidson, “I Wouldn’t Buy a Used Car From That Man”“Richard M. Nixon Reassures Nguyen Van Thieu, 1973”“US Promise of Postwar Reconstruction: Letter to DRV Prime Minister Pham Van Dong (1973)”
15.	May 3	The Third Indochina War, 1973-75	<ul style="list-style-type: none">America’s Longest War, Ch. 8, pp. 333-354Appy, excerpt from Patriots on “Collapse”“A South Vietnamese Pilot Reflects on His Country’s Defeat (1975), 1990”“A South Vietnamese Civilian Remembers His Last Days in Saigon (1975), 1990”o “Van Tien Celebrates the Great Spring Victory (1975), 1977”
	May 5	Legacies of the Vietnam War	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Review readings from January 27.Wolff, “After the Crusade,” Time, April 24, 1995
16.	May 12	Final exam due by 10PM!	
<p style="text-align: center;">Congratulations, graduates!</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Everyone: Have a wonderful summer!</p> <p style="text-align: center;">For your summer viewing pleasure, check out the Vietnam War film guide I posted on Blackboard!</p>			