

## Course Syllabus

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### Course Information

HIST 3370. The American Experience in Vietnam.  
Fall 2012.

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### Professor Contact Information

Stephen G. Rabe

[rabe@utdallas.edu](mailto:rabe@utdallas.edu)

972-883-2009.

Website: [http://www.utdallas.edu/ah/people/faculty\\_detail.php?faculty\\_id=891](http://www.utdallas.edu/ah/people/faculty_detail.php?faculty_id=891)

Office: JO 5.614.

Hours: MW: 11:15-12 noon; M: 5:30-6:30 p.m.

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### Course Pre-requisites, Co-requisites, and/or Other Restrictions

None.

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### Course Description

This course will analyze the American experience in Vietnam, 1950-1975. We will examine why the United States devoted enormous amounts of blood and treasure to its lengthy, unsuccessful venture to create an independent, non-Communist South Vietnam. In analyzing the American experience in Vietnam, we will also want to give proper attention to the nature and character of Vietnamese society and consider the Vietnamese perspective on all issues.

The course will take a multidisciplinary approach to these issues. We will read the views of political and military officials and historians and political scientists. We will further want to analyze how novelists, filmmakers, dramatists, poets, philosophers, musicians, media critics, anti-war activists, and veterans have attempted to explain Vietnam.

During the semester, we will also be viewing documentaries such as *Hearts and Minds*, *Remember My-Lai*, *The War at Home*, and *Regret to Inform*, and excerpts from feature films such as *Apocalypse Now* and *Hamburger Hill*.

The format of the class will be lectures with frequent discussions, and the viewing of documentary and feature films.

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### **Student Learning Objectives/Outcomes**

Through lectures, class discussions, readings, and written work, students will improve their reading, writing, and speaking abilities. Students will also have a solid understanding of the history of the American Experience in Vietnam, 1945-1975.

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### **Required Textbooks and Materials**

George Herring, *America's Longest War*. 4th ed.  
Duong Van Mai Elliot, *The Sacred Willow*.  
David Halberstam, *Ho*.  
Philip Caputo, *A Rumor of War*.  
Tim O'Brien, *The Things They Carried*.  
Duong Thu Huong, *Novel without a Name*.

### **Suggested Course Materials**

None

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### **Assignments & Academic Calendar**

#### I. Vietnamese Nationalism (August 27 to September 12)

Topics to be analyzed include: key themes in Vietnamese history; the impact of Chinese domination; the experience of French colonialism; the rise of Vietnamese nationalism.

Elliot, *Sacred Willow*, pp. 1-102.

Halberstam, *Ho*, pp. 3-61.

#### II. To Dien Bien Phu, 1940-1954 (September 17 to October 3)

Topics to be analyzed include: the impact of World War II on Vietnamese political life; the French colonial war; the Geneva Accords; the roots of U.S. involvement.

Elliot, *Sacred Willow*, pp. 103-272.

Halberstam, *Ho*, pp. 62-104.

Herring, *America's Longest War*, pp. 3-52.

### III. Building South Vietnam, 1954-1965 (October 8 to October 24)

Topics to be analyzed include: the Eisenhower, Kennedy, and Johnson's commitment to an independent South Vietnam; the policies of Ngo Dinh Diem, the rise of the Viet Cong and the spread of guerilla insurgency.

Herring, *America's Longest War*, pp. 53-170.

Halberstam, *Ho*, pp. 105-18.

Caputo, *A Rumor of War*, all.

### IV. The U.S. War in Vietnam, 1965-1975 (October 29 to November 14)

Topics to be analyzed include: U.S. military strategies in Vietnam; the Tet Offensive of 1968; the anti-war movement; Richard Nixon and Vietnamization; the Paris Accords.

Herring, *America's Longest War*, pp. 171-322.

Elliot, *Sacred Willow*, pp. 273-404.

O'Brien, *The Things They Carried*, all

### V. Legacies of Vietnam, 1975-2011 (November 26 to December 12)

Topics to be analyzed include: veteran's issues, the response of novelists, artists, filmmakers to the American experience in Vietnam; the impact of war on Vietnamese society; contemporary relations between the United States and Vietnam.

Herring, *America's Longest War*, pp. 323-368.

Elliot, *Sacred War*, pp. 405-474.

Duong Thu Huong, *Novel without a Name*, all.

#### REQUIREMENTS:

Examination #1:	October 15
Examination #2	December 12
Elliot Paper	September 24
Halberstam Paper	October 8
Caputo Paper	October 29
O'Brien Paper	November 26
Duong Thu Huong Paper	December 5

#### **Grading Policy**

All students must take the *two* (2) examinations and submit *three* (3) of the *five* (5) assigned papers. Assignments are given equal weight (20 percent) for grading purposes. Students will not receive credit for the course unless they complete the five assignments on time.

Examinations will be taken in class on the assigned date. There are no “make-up” examinations.

All papers must be delivered in class on the assigned days in “hard-copy” form. The instructor will not accept papers as EMAIL attachments.

In order to receive credit for the course, students must also attend class regularly.

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**Course & Instructor Policies**

The instructor gives the highest priority to class attendance. Students are expected to attend class regularly and participate in class activities. HIST 3370 is not a correspondence course. Students will not receive credit for the course, unless they attend class regularly. Attendance will be taken at each class. Attendance is MANDATORY.

University policy on classes can be found at: <http://provost.utdallas.edu/home/syllabus-policies-and-procedures-text>