

**LIBERAL STUDIES DEGREE PROGRAM
THE SCHOOL OF CONTINUING STUDIES
GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY
FALL 2008**

LSHS- 429-01 U.S.-Vietnam Relations: Five Themes
Time: Tuesday, 6:15 p.m - 8:45 p.m. Room: TBA
Instructor: Dr. Pamela Sodhy. Tel: 703-903-8945 (home)
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Syllabus

Course Description

This course examines U.S.-Vietnam relations from the end of World War II until the present, under the five major themes that have dominated the relationship. The first and earliest theme is U.S. economic interest in Vietnam. This interest, which dates back to French rule in Vietnam, has revolved around Vietnam's economic resources and potential. At that time, however, the United States was unable to extend its influence to Vietnam because the country was firmly under French control. During WWII, President Franklin D. Roosevelt attempted to dismantle the French and other European colonial empires in Southeast Asia through a Trusteeship Plan to be implemented after the war, but this plan had to be discarded when America needed Allied support for the war effort.

The second major theme in U.S.- Vietnam relations is the containment of Communism. This anti-Communist stand led the United States to reject Ho Chi Minh's post-war appeals for aid and to side with France during the First Indochina War, 1946-1954. When France lost that war to the Communist Vietminh forces despite massive American support, the United States agreed to the Geneva Conference's partition of Vietnam so as to deny victory to the Communists. America also replaced the French in Vietnam in order to prevent the spread of Communism. America's containment measures in Vietnam contributed to the outbreak of the Second Indochina War or Vietnam War. From 1954 to 1975, when the war ended, all the U.S. Presidents -- Eisenhower, Kennedy, Johnson, Nixon, and Ford -- followed the containment policy. The United States and its allies fought on the side of non-Communist South Vietnam against Communist North Vietnam and its allies. To prevent the Communists from getting help from neighboring Laos and Cambodia, the United States launched bombing raids on both countries, violating their neutral status under the Geneva Accords. In spite of U.S. efforts, however, the war ended in a Communist victory.

The third theme in U.S.-Vietnam relations revolves around the Sino-Soviet dispute which the United States used to its advantage. For example, in the late 1960s, the United States used this dispute to reestablish ties with China and to influence China to bring North Vietnam to the negotiating table. It also used the dispute to side with China and the ASEAN states in the Cambodian conflict, or Third Indochina War, which began when Vietnam invaded Cambodia in December 1978. In this conflict, the Soviet Union aided Vietnam by financing its occupation of

Cambodia. By then, the United States was involved both in the Cold War and the Sino-Soviet dispute while Vietnam and Cambodia had become the pawns of the major powers. When Vietnam finally ended its occupation of Cambodia in 1989, the U.S.-Vietnam relationship began to improve.

The end of the Cold War in 1990 then saw the reemergence of the economic theme in U.S.-Vietnam relations. Under the Clinton Administration, which came to power in November 1992 by promising economic recovery for the nation, then struggling with huge federal and trade deficits, the decisions to lift the trade embargo on Vietnam in early 1994, to normalize relations in 1995, and to sign the U.S.-Vietnam Bilateral Trade Agreement (BTA) in 2000 were motivated mainly by economic considerations. Vietnam also wanted economic recovery after decades of war and serious problems with its economy. Moreover, after the breakup of the Soviet Union, it could no longer depend on its former ally for aid. Under the present Bush Administration, the economic theme continues to be the dominant theme in U.S.-Vietnam relations and is marked by both cooperation and tension.

Meanwhile, with the normalization of U.S.-Vietnam relations, closer ties have appeared on the social and cultural fronts, resulting in a new theme in their relationship -- socio-cultural ties. These socio-cultural ties revolve around educational and cultural exchanges between the two nations and U.S. humanitarian aid to Vietnam. The educational and cultural exchanges include those between universities of both nations, exchanges under the Fulbright Program, and exchanges under the newly established Vietnam Education Foundation (VEF). The Foundation, which is funded by the former Saigon government's war time debt to the United States, has a Scholarship Fund for the training of Vietnamese students in science, math, technology, and medicine at U.S. institutions of higher learning. The Foundation also funds some fellowships for American students to study in Vietnam. The U.S. humanitarian aid to Vietnam includes medical research programs, HIV/AIDS assistance, narcotics control, de-mining activities, and aid for Vietnamese with disabilities. This new theme manifests much bilateral cooperation.

At the same time, however, another new theme, has appeared in U.S.-Vietnam relations - human rights. The United States has expressed concern about the following human rights abuses in Vietnam: the restrictions on the media, the curbs on religious freedom, and the harsh treatment of political dissidents and minority groups. Not surprisingly, this new theme in the bilateral relationship is marked by much tension. For example, the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom has called on the Bush Administration to designate Vietnam as a "country of particular concern", a label that would allow the imposition of sanctions. In July 2003, the U.S. House of Representatives also passed the Vietnam Human Rights Act with the provision to prohibit U.S. non-humanitarian assistance if Vietnam shows no progress on human rights. At the start of the 21st century, therefore, the U.S.-Vietnam relationship is marked by both cooperation and tension.

Required Texts:

Vietnam: A Country Study. Area Handbook Series (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1989).

George C. Herring, *America's Longest War: The United States and Vietnam, 1950-1975* (New York: McGraw Hill, 2002). 4th edition.

William Appleman Williams, Thomas McCormick, Lloyd Gardner, & Walter LaFeber (eds.), *America in Vietnam: A Documentary History* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1989).

William J. Duiker, *Vietnam: Revolution in Transition* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1995), 2nd edition.

David Lamb, *Vietnam Now* (New York: Public Affairs, Perseus Books Group, 2002).

Hy V. Luong (ed.), *Postwar Vietnam: Dynamics of a Transforming Society* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies and Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2003).

Method:

This course will consist of lectures, discussions, and many films. Under a chronological framework, the lectures and discussions will deal with the five main themes in US-Vietnam relations since 1945. The films on Vietnam and on America's involvement in that country will include a French- produced film, in English, entitled "Prelude to Vietnam", several videos in the American- produced PBS series "Vietnam: A Television History", and contemporary films on Vietnam.

Course Requirements:

There will be a map test on Vietnam, a mid-term exam, and a research paper on an aspect of U.S.-Vietnam relations to be chosen in consultation with the course instructor. Since the mid-term will cover the period from 1945 to 1968 and there is no final exam, the research paper should be on a topic within the period from 1969 to 2008. The paper should also contain footnotes and a bibliography. The length of the paper should be around 15-20 pages. Both primary and secondary sources are to be used for the research paper. The primary sources might include government documents and reports, contemporary newspapers, texts of treaties, speeches, memoirs, novels, poems, and short stories. Students should meet with the course instructor to settle on a topic by Tuesday, September 16, 2008. A brief paper proposal of a few paragraphs in length, together with a preliminary bibliography, should be submitted to the course instructor by Tuesday, September 30, 2008. The proposal should include the following information: the title of the paper, its aim and scope, and how it will be organized. The preliminary bibliography should list, in two separate sections, the primary and secondary sources to be used. The deadline for the submission of the research paper is Tuesday, December 2, 2008. The paper will be graded on content, organization, style, analysis, and use of sources. Students in the course are expected to complete the required readings, to attend class regularly, and to participate in class discussions. Regarding an absence from class, students should contact the professor and documentation may be required.

Grading:

Map Test: 10%
Class Participation: 30%
Mid-Term Exam: 30%
Research Paper: 30%

Important Dates:

Tuesday, September 23, 2008 -- Map Test
Tuesday, September 30, 2008 -- Submission of Research Paper Proposal
Tuesday, October 7, 2008 -- Mid-Term Exam
Tuesday, December 2, 2008 -- Deadline for Submission of Research Paper

CLASS MEETINGS

1st CLASS

Sept. 2, 2008:

THE EARLY ECONOMIC THEME

Course Introduction and Overview
Background Information on Vietnam
Early U.S. Economic Interest in Vietnam and U.S. Policy until 1945
Film on Vietnam

Readings: *Vietnam: A Country Study*, Chpt. I, pp. 3-50.

Williams, et. al. (eds.), *America in Vietnam*, Part I.

Duiker, *Vietnam: Revolution in Transition*, Chpts. 1-2, Chpt. 3, pp. 30-45.

Optional: Robert H. Miller, *The United States and Vietnam, 1787-1941* (Upland, PA: Diane Publishing Co., 1994).

Walter LaFeber, "Roosevelt, Churchill, & Indochina, 1942-45", *American Historical Review*, 80:5 (December 1975), 1277-1295.

2nd CLASS

Sept. 9, 2008:

THE CONTAINMENT THEME

U.S.-Vietnam Relations in the Immediate Post-War Period, 1945-1946.
U.S. Policy during the First Indochina War, 1946-1954
Film on the First Indochina War ("Prelude to Vietnam") & Discussion of Film.

Readings: Herring, *America's Longest War*, Chpt. 1.

Vietnam: A Country Study, pp. 50-56.

Williams, et. al. (eds.), *America in Vietnam*, Part II: Introduction & Docs. 11, 15, 17, 20, 21, 22, 24, 25, 26, 27, & 31;
Part III: Introduction & Docs. 32, 34, 35, & 36.

Duiker, *Vietnam: Revolution in Transition*, Chpt. 3, pp. 45-51.

3rd CLASS THE CONTAINMENT THEME

Sept. 16, 2008: The Geneva Conference, 1954.
The Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO), 1954.
America's Increasing Involvement in Vietnam, 1954-1960.
First Part of Film on the Diem Regime & Discussion on Film.

Readings: Herring, *America's Longest War*, Chpt. 2.

Williams, et. al. (eds.), *America in Vietnam*, Part III – Docs. 36, 37, 38, 40, 43, 44, 45, 46, 48, 50.

Vietnam: A Country Study, pp. 56-60.

Duiker, *Vietnam: Revolution in Transition*, Chpt. 3, pp. 51-64.

Optional: Bernard Fall, *The Two Vietnams: A Political and Military Analysis* (New York: Praeger, 1963).

Stanley Karnow, *Vietnam: A History* (New York: Penguin Books, 1991), Chpts. 6-7.

4th CLASS THE CONTAINMENT THEME

Sept. 23, 2008: Map Test
The Southeast Asia Treaty Organization, 1954.
U.S. Involvement in Vietnam under President Kennedy, 1961-1963.
Second Part of Film on the Diem Regime & Discussion of Film.

Readings: Herring, *America's Longest War*, Chpt. 3.

Williams, et. al. (eds.), *America in Vietnam*, Part III – Docs. 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 58.

Vietnam: A Country Study, pp. 60-64.

Optional: Karnow, *Vietnam: A History*, Chpt. 8.

5th CLASS THE CONTAINMENT THEME

Sept. 30, 2008: U.S. Involvement in the Vietnam War: The Johnson Administration, 1963- 68.
Film on the Vietnam War & Discussion of Film
Review for Mid-Term Exam on the 1945-1968 Period.
Submission of Research Paper Proposal

Readings: Herring, *America's Longest War*, Chpt. 4-6.

Vietnam: A Country Study, pp. 60-72.

Williams, et. al. (eds.), *America in Vietnam*, Part IV – Introduction
& Docs. 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 66, 67, 68, 72, 73, & 74.

Optional: George McT. Kahin, *How America Became Involved in Vietnam*
(New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1986).

Robert S. McNamara, *In Retrospect: The Tragedy and Lessons of Vietnam* (New York: Times Books, 1995).

6th CLASS THE CONTAINMENT THEME

Oct. 7, 2008: Mid-Term Exam on the 1945 to 1968 Period (6pm – 7:30 pm).
Film on the Nixon Administration and Discussion of Film

Readings: *Vietnam: A Country Study*, pp. 72-79.

Duiker, *Vietnam: Revolution in Transition*, Chpt. 4, pp. 72-78.

Oct. 14, 2008: NO CLASS: LIBRARY RESEARCH

7th CLASS CONTAINMENT & THE SINO-SOVIET DISPUTE

Oct. 21, 2008 U.S. Involvement in Vietnam under Presidents Nixon & Ford, 1969- 1976.
Film on the End of the Vietnam War & Discussion of Film.

Readings: Herring, *America's Longest War*, Chpt. 7 & Chpt. 8, pp. 323-349.

Williams, et. al. (eds.), *America in Vietnam*, Part IV – Docs. 75, 76,
77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84.

Vietnam: A Country Study, pp. 224-228.

Frederick Z. Brown, *Second Chance: The United States and Indochina in the 1990s* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations Press, 1989), Chpt. 3, pp. 18-21.

Optional: Robert J. McMahon (ed.), *Major Problems in the History of the Vietnam War* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2003), 3rd ed. Chpt. 14, "The Paris Peace Accords of 1973 & The Fall of South Vietnam", pp. 475-493.

8th CLASS

CONTAINMENT & THE SINO-SOVIET DISPUTE

Oct. 28, 2008: U.S.-Vietnam Relations under the Carter Administration from 1977-1978.
U.S.-Vietnam Relations during the Third Indochina War, 1979-1989.
Film on Cambodia & Discussion of Film

Readings: Herring, *America's Longest War*, Chpt. 8, pp. 349-364.

Frederick Z. Brown, *Second Chance: The United States and Indochina in the 1990s* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations Press, 1989), Chpt. 3, pp. 21-36.

Vietnam: A Country Study, pp. 218-224; 252-260

Duiker, *Vietnam: Revolution in Transition*, Chpt. 8, pp. 210- 216.

Pamela Sodhy, "A Survey of U.S. Post-Vietnam Policy and the Kampuchean Dilemma, 1975-1989: A Southeast Asian View", *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, 11:3 (December 1989), 282-312.

Optional: Nayan Chanda, *Brother Enemy: The War after the War* (New York: MacMillan Publishing Co., 1986).

9th CLASS

THE REEMERGENCE OF THE ECONOMIC THEME

Nov. 4, 2008: U.S. Policy toward Vietnam in the Post-Cold War Era: Under Pres. George H. W. Bush, 1990-1992, & under Pres. Clinton's 1st Term, 1993-1996.
Film on Contemporary Vietnam & Discussion of Film

Readings: Handouts (to be given the previous week) on Bush's "Road Map" for normalization of relations with Vietnam and on Vietnamese views on U.S. - Vietnam relations.

Frederick Z. Brown, "U.S.-Vietnam Normalization -- Past, Present, Future", in James W. Morely and Masashi Nishihara (eds.), *Vietnam Joins the World* (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 1997), pp. 200-224.

Duiker, *Vietnam: Revolution in Transition*, pp.154-162; 216-228.

Lamb, *Vietnam Now*, Chpts. 1-6.

10th CLASS THE ECONOMIC THEME

Nov. 11, 2008 US Policy toward Vietnam in the Post-Cold War Era: Under Clinton's 2nd Term, 1997-2000, & under the present Bush Administration, 2001- present.
Film on Contemporary Vietnam & Discussion of Film

Readings: Herring, *America's Longest War*, Chpt. 8, pp. 364-368.

Lamb, *Vietnam Now*, Chpts. 7-9.

Mark E. Manyin, "The Vietnam-U.S. Bilateral Trade Agreement" updated September 15, 2000, CRS Report for Congress, Congressional Research Service, The Library of Congress.

John McAuliff, "Reflections on the President's [Clinton's] Visit to Vietnam", *Interchange: Fund for Reconciliation and Development Quarterly Newsletter*, 10:3 (Dec. 2000), pp. 1, 14 & 15.

Raymond F. Burghardt, U.S. Ambassador to Vietnam, "Update on U.S.-Vietnam Relations", Remarks before the American Chamber of Commerce, April 29, 2003.

Carlyle A. Thayer, "Vietnam: The Stewardship of Nong Duc Manh", *Southeast Asian Affairs 2004*, pp. 313-326.

11th CLASS THE SOCIO-CULTURAL THEME

Nov. 18, 2008 Social and Cultural Ties between the United States and Vietnam
Film on Vietnam & Discussion of Film

Readings: Zachary Abuza, "The Politics of Educational Diplomacy in Vietnam: Educational Exchanges under Doi Moi", *Asian Survey*, 36:6 (June 1996), pp. 618-631.

"U.S. Senators and Leading Educators Favor Scholarship-for-Debt Program with Vietnam", *Interchange: Fund for Reconciliation and Development Quarterly Newsletter*, 10:3 (Dec. 2000), pp.12-13.

Lamb, *Vietnam Now*, Chpt. 10-14.

Raymond F. Burghardt, U.S. Ambassador to Vietnam, "Address to

the Asia Society” , Washington D.C. Chapter, January 21, 2003,
<http://hanoi.usembassy.gov/wwwhambo30121.html>

Tuesday, November 25, 2008: NO CLASS

12th CLASS

Dec. 2, 2008

THE HUMAN RIGHTS THEME

U.S.-Vietnam Tensions over Media Control, Religious and Political Prisoners,
and Minority Ethnic Groups.

Submission of Research Papers

Readings: “Vietnam” in *Amnesty International Report, 2002* (London:
Amnesty International Publications, 2000), pp. 265-266.

David G. Marr, “A Passion for Modernity: Intellectuals and the
Media”, in Luong (ed.), *Postwar Vietnam*, Chpt. 9.

Shaun Kingsley Malarney, “Return to the Past? The Dynamics of
Contemporary Religious and Ritual Transformation”, in Luong (ed.),
Postwar Vietnam, Chpt. 8.

A. Terry Rambo & Neil L. Jamieson, “Upland Areas, Ethnic
Minorities, and Development”, in Luong (ed.), *Postwar Vietnam*,
Chpt. 5.

Nguyen Manh Hung, “Vietnam: Facing the Challenge of
Integration”, *Southeast Asian Affairs 2004*, pp. 297- 311.

Disabilities Statement:

If you believe you have a disability, then you should contact the Academic Resource Center (arc@georgetown.edu) for further information. The Center is located in the Leavey Center, Suite 335. The Academic Resource Center is the campus office responsible for reviewing documentation provided by students with disabilities and for determining reasonable accommodations in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and University policies.