

Syllabus
Hist. L227

The Vietnam War Era

Quinebaug Valley Community College
Fall 2008

Tue. & Thu. 9:00 – 10:25pm
W 202

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Ofc. Hrs.: Tue. & Thu. 11:00-12:00 W203

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- History is an attempt to understand the stories of the past. We must not ignore dates and facts, but interpretations define the way we view the world around us.

Course Description

This course is on the Vietnam War experience, as it existed within the larger context of the Cold War. We will examine the background, the causes, and the social, political, and cultural impact of the war on the Vietnamese, the United States Government, and the American people.

Often the Vietnam War is viewed as an isolated event in history. We will try to understand the war as merely a part of a larger global conflict, a factor in the changing attitudes of 1960s American culture, and a chapter in a thousand year struggle for Vietnamese independence. Through lectures, written history, interviews, film, and direct accounts you will receive several different and often conflicting viewpoints. It will be up to you to decide what truly happened during the Vietnam Era and why.

Objectives

By the end of the semester you will:

- Develop your own understanding of how the economic, political, and cultural world changed during the long 1960's, and impacts us today?
- Master the use of interviews as works of historical documentation, accounting for selective memory, emotional self-editing, agenda based interpretation, etc.
- Be able to devise original arguments about historical trends and events and prove them using both primary and secondary information.

Expectations

- All written and verbal work should demonstrate your best effort to develop your own ideas and arguments on any given subject, and prove your assertions with the evidence you have available.
- The course will be a mix of lecture and daily discussion of both the subject matter and primary documents. You are expected to have read the assigned material listed on the syllabus before entering the classroom and be ready to take an active part in discussion.
**Quizzes will be given if there is a need to enforce this expectation.
- Attendance: The Classroom experience is an integral part of this course, and will only serve to

benefit you. In addition, it is very difficult to earn a participation grade when one is not present to participate. If legitimate problems arise be sure to contact me promptly so that we may work around them before you get behind.

-All assignments are due at the beginning of class on the assigned due dates.

Late work will suffer a penalty of one letter grade per day unless a valid excuse is provided BEFORE the assignment is due.

-Any **Cheating or Plagiarism** will result in an immediate **failure** of the course, and the incident will be reported to the Dean of Students.

=I do not care what you did before.....this is College and dishonest work will not be tolerated.

Plagiarism = Any utilization of others *language or ideas* (including internet sources) without properly citing the author and the passage from the work.

-All cell phones, pagers, I-pods, I-phones, Blackberrys, personal video games, and GPS systems must be turned off before the start of class. Students who ignore this policy may be asked to leave the classroom. Extenuating circumstances will be considered on an individual bases prior to the start of class.

-Any students needing special arrangements in test taking or other work need to talk to me well in advance.

Course Materials

-*America Divided: The Civil War of the 1960s, Ed. 3* Isserman & Kazin.

-*Patriots: The Vietnam War Remembered from All Sides*, Christian G. Appy.

Assessment

20%= Participation

Based on attendance, reading, and active engagement in discussions.

10%= Midterm

-Questions will be distributed exactly two weeks before due date.

20%= Film interpretation paper: (4 pgs)

Part:1= Watch a movie about the Vietnam War. Based on your own knowledge and ideas about the era, you will write a paper answering the following questions: How historically accurate do you think the film was? What stereotypes does the movie fixate on?

Your papers should be argumentative and detailed w/ specific examples.

Part: 2= Watch the movie again, later in the semester, and rewrite the paper based on what you have learned over the semester. (You will turn in the graded version of the original paper with the major revision that you do.)

Approved Movies: The Deer Hunter
Platoon
The Green Berets
Full Metal Jacket
Hamburger Hill

25%= Interview paper: (6-7pgs.)

You will pick a single event or movement from the Vietnam War Era and interview an individual who was there, or remembers the event. From this interview and your own research you will write an analysis of what the significance was.

Your subject may be based upon the person who you interview, so you may want to arrange a topic for the interview, before you decide what your event or movement is.

I will require proposals for this project by mid semester.

25%= Final (120 min)

Review sheets, containing multiple possible essay questions will be distributed well before the exam.

Content:

Week 1

Sep. 2 T- Intro = Vietnam War overview

Sep. 4 R- Communism on the rise & the American reaction
 Communist Manifesto (Only read Ch. 1,2, &4)
<http://www.bibliomania.com/2/1/261/2448/frameset.html>

Week 2

The Early Cold War & 1950s culture

Sep. 9 T- Isserman: Intro
 --Appy: pp. xv.-xxvii "preference"

Sep. 11 R- Isserman: Ch. 1
 --Appy: pp. 28-34 "Where is Vietnam"

Week 3

The Civil Rights Movement in America

Sep. 16 T- Isserman: Ch. 2
 --Appy: pp. 142-149 "From Civil Rights to Antiwar"

Sep. 18 R- Isserman: Ch. 5
 --Appy: pp. 413- 428 "We really believed...."

Week 4

Vietnam: A struggle for Independence

Sep. 23 T- Read Handout
 --Appy: pp. 35- 43 "History is not made with ifs"

Sept. 25 R- --Appy: pp. 44-59 "Deliver us from Evil"

Film Paper Due

Week 5

1960s Domestic politics & the Great Society

Sep. 30 T- Isserman: Ch. 3
 --Appy: pp. 184-194 "Morale Boosters"

Oct. 2 R- Isserman: Ch. 6
 --Appy: pp. 240-255 & 259-261 “Cameras, books, and guns”
Receive Exam Review

Week 6

Why did the United States fight in Vietnam?

Oct. 7 T- Isserman: Ch. 4
 --Appy: pp. 60-78 “Kick the tires and light the Fires”

Oct. 9 R- --Appy: pp. 79-89 “The Emperor has no clothes”

Week 7

Escalation and the search for Victory

Oct. 14 T- Isserman: Ch. 7
 --Appy: pp. 101-110 “Trails to War”

Oct. 16 R- --Appy: pp. 112-127 “You want me to start WWII”

Midterm Due

Week 8

1960s Youth Culture in an age of protest

Oct. 21 T- Isserman: Ch. 8
 --Appy: pp. 262-278 “Antiwar Escalations”

Oct. 23 R- Isserman: Ch. 9
 --Appy: pp. 150-155 “The ultimate protest”

Week 9

The War Experience

Oct. 28 T- Isserman: Ch. 10
 --Appy: pp. 128-140 “Central Highlands”

Oct. 30 R- --Appy: pp. 162-176 “Triage”

Week 10

1968

Nov. 4 T- Isserman: Ch. 12
 --Appy: pp. 285-303 “Tet”

Nov. 6 R- --Appy: pp. 307-323 “From Johnson to Nixon”

Week 11

Nixon’s War

Nov. 11 T- Isserman: Ch. 14
 --Appy: pp. 343-353 “My Lai”

Nov. 13 R- --Appy: pp. 371-389 “An Acute lack of forgetfulness”
 “From Cambodia to Kent State”

Interview Paper Due

Week 12**A Conservative Shift and a Faltering War**

Nov. 18 T- Isserman: Ch. 11
 --Appy: pp. 393-411 "The end of the tunnel"

Nov. 20 R- --Appy: pp. 328-342 "Families at War"

Week 13**A War Ends, and a Nation Adjusts**

Nov. 25 T- Isserman: Ch 13
 --Appy: pp.430-460 "Watergate,"
 "The world was coming to an end,"
 "Everybody thought we won the war"

Nov. 27 R- NO CLASSES

Week 14**Historical Memory: Memorializing, Remembering and Reliving**

Dec. 2 T- Isserman: Conclusion
 -- Appy: pp. 536- 550 "Taps"

Dec. 4 R- --Appy: pp. 520- 535 "War zone Childhoods"
 "Silences"

Film Paper Revision DueWeek 15**Vietnam in the Global World**

Dec. 9 T- -- To be announced

Dec. 11 R- --To be announced

Final Exam

-----I reserve the right to modify this Syllabus at any time during the semester-----

Kinch's Writing Guidelines

The purpose of writing is to communicate ideas to the reader in a clear and straightforward way. You should express yourself in the briefest manner possible, while using significant evidence to prove the main thesis. What follows is a general outline of rules that, if followed, will produce a quality paper worthy of your abilities.

(Summaries do not cut it here. Your ideas should be original!)

- Before writing:
 - Decide on the main thesis of the paper.
(What you are trying to prove.)
*To write an effective paper you must make an **Argument**.*
Original ideas (no regurgitations)
 - Decide what evidence you are going to use.
You have limited space. *Use it well.*

- Structure
 - Title
Catch the reader's attention
 - Introduction
Begin the paper by stating your thesis (*state your argument*).
Explain what you are arguing.
 - Body
Prove your argument, using examples from the readings.
Focus your information on proving your thesis.
 - Conclusion
Do not just restate your thesis, drive the nail into the coffin of your argument.

- Paragraphs
 - The paper should consist of several paragraphs.
 - =Begin them with a topic sentence.
 - =The following sentences should prove the topic sentence.
 - =The last sentence should smoothly transition into the next paragraph.

- Flow
 - When you have finished writing, **read the paper aloud** to yourself, or have someone else read over it.
This will help you catch any unclear sentences or poor wording.

Another technique is to change the font of the paper before you revise it.
 - Use your spellchecker.
****Check your Grammar.****
You will be graded down for severe grammatical mistakes.

- Quoting
 - There should be quotes and examples from the documents in the paper.
 - Do not fill the paper with quotes: 2 per page max.
 - It is better to put the writers ideas in you own words and cite him/her.
 - A **full citation** of the sources in footnote form is **necessary**.

- John's Pet Peeves.
 - Necessities of formal writing
 - Always use **past tense** when discussing the past.
 - Never write in the first person: "*I*" or "*we*."
 - Never use contractions: *can't / shouldn't / it's*.
 - Never begin a sentence with the word "*Because*."
 - Never use the phrase: "*In conclusion*."

- Follow the directions of the assignment.
 - Answer the question completely.
 - Use: 12 font
 - Times New Roman
 - 1 in. margins
 - Double spacing
 - 3pgs. Means 2 ½ minimum.
 - 6pgs. Means 5 ½ minimum.

I will not read past the assigned # of pages. Brevity is the key to good writing!
TREES NEED LOVE TOO!

+You will need to use material from the lectures and previous readings, but you should focus upon the assigned reading, and the majority of your examples should come from this reading.

+No outside research is required. You are welcome to use anything that will help your argument but will receive no special treatment for doing so.

+Do not be afraid to ask me for help at any time.

Your grade will reflect any failure to observe the rules of this Guide.