

History 4404: The History of the Vietnam War, Fall 2008

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Office Hours: 10:00--10:45, M-F & by appointment
Class Meeting: 5:00-6:15, M & W 145 West Hall

Four Required Readings (available in VSU Bookstore)

- (1) *America's Longest War: The United States & Vietnam, 1950-1975*, 4th ed., by George Herring (9780072536188)
- (2) *Major Problems in the History of the Vietnam War*, 4th ed., by Robert McMahon (9780618749379)
- (3) *When Heaven & Earth Changed Places*, by Le Ly Hayslip (9780452271685)
- (4) *A Rumor of War* by Philip Caputo (9780805046953)

COURSE DESCRIPTION, VSU *Undergraduate Catalogue* <http://www.valdosta.edu/catalog/>

An exploration of the many interrelated aspects of the conflict in Vietnam. Topics include French colonization, Ho Chi Minh and Vietnamese nationalism, the 1946-1954 war between the French and the Vietminh, the Cold War policies of the United States, escalating United States intervention in Vietnam, the United States's war in Vietnam (1965-1973), the fall of Saigon, domestic opposition to the war within the U.S.A., and postwar legacies of the conflict. [Credits: 3.00]

FOUR large questions will guide this course.

- (1) What were the origins & nature of the complex conflict in Vietnam (role of early Vietnamese history, French imperialism, & Vietnamese nationalism); what was the Vietnamese context.
- (2) Why did American leaders from Truman to Nixon define the outcome of wars in Indochina as vital to the interests & security of the United States. Why was the United States drawn into the Vietnam War (key here will be to explore certain Cold War policy assumptions held by US leaders).
- (3) How did the United States seek to accomplish its goals in Vietnam from the 1940s to the 1970s. What actions did the U.S. undertake & why did those measures fail.
- (4) What have been the consequences of the war for the United States and for Vietnam.

Although this course will emphasize these four questions, we will not ignore the wealth of facts which make up the history of the Vietnam War. We need to know what happened as well as how or why it happened. In your essay exams, papers, & class discussions, support your ideas w/ factual information.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES & ASSESSMENTS (History Selected Educational Outcomes in *Catalogue*)

By the end of this course, students will

- (A) demonstrate knowledge of major political & social developments in American & Asian history. To be assessed using two exams (see p. 2), four papers (see p. 4-5), and instructor questioning during class discussions (see pp. 3-4). [Department Outcomes 1 & 2; VSU Gen Ed Outcomes 1, 2, & 6]
- (B) utilize reading, listening, & writing/oral expression. To be assessed using two exams, four papers, and instructor questioning during class discussions. [Department Outcome 3; VSU Gen Ed Outcome 4]
- (C) utilize critical analysis (the ability to evaluate WHY a historical development occurred). To be assessed using two exams, four papers, and instructor questioning during class discussions. [Department Outcome 4; VSU Gen Ed Outcome 7]

Please turn off Cell Phones during class.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students requesting classroom accommodations or modifications because of a documented disability must discuss this need with me at the start of the semester. Students must be registered with the Access Office for Students with Disabilities located in room 1115 Nevins Hall. The phone numbers are 245-2498 (voice) and 219-1348 (tty). <http://www.valdosta.edu/access/>

TEACHING PHILOSOPHY & TIME REQUIREMENTS

Because effective teaching and learning take time and effort, we will be undertaking a great deal of hard work. To make the best use of our class time, all of us will have to devote out-of-class time to this course. Students should expect to devote at least 2-3 hours to reading and study for each hour we spend in class. You will find it difficult to pass this course without the availability of such time.

** As outlined in Regents policy, students dropping a course after mid-term (Oct. 9) will receive an "F" except under very unusual circumstances such as a serious personal illness or some other unavoidable calamity. In all cases, the student is responsible for handling the appropriate paperwork.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

The assignments below are the sole determinants of your final course grade. No extra credit options will be considered.

Attendance	= 5%
Participation	= 5%
Paper on Hayslip I (Sept. 17)	= 10%
Mid-Term Exam (Oct. 1)	= 25%
Paper on Caputo I (Oct. 15)	= 10%
Paper on Caputo II (Nov. 5)	= 10%
Paper on Hayslip II (Nov. 24)	= 10%
Final Exam (<u>MON.</u> , Dec 8 at 5:00)	= 25%

MID-TERM & FINAL EXAMS

These exams will be completely essay. At least one week before each exam, I will pass out a list of 5 to 8 possible questions. On the mid-term, you will have to answer 1 question out of a choice of 2 or 3 questions on the exam. The final exam will not be cumulative and will follow a similar structure.

Each possible essay will be based on one chapter in the McMahon reader along with the assigned pages in the Herring text. In each question, you will be required to synthesize the material discussed in class and the assigned readings. You will be held responsible on the exams for all of the reading assignments listed in the syllabus, even if there is not time to discuss all of the reading material in class.

GRADING SCALE & DEFINITION OF GRADES

Your final course grade will be based on this scale as the VSU computer system does not register "+" or "-".

A = 90 -- 100	A= Excellent: of highest or finest quality
B = 80 -- 89	B= Good: of high quality
C = 70 -- 79	C= Satisfactory: adequate
D = 60 -- 69	D= Passing: cursory, superficial
F = 0 -- 59	F= Failing: below the acceptable minimum

MAKE-UP EXAMINATIONS

Make-up examinations are strongly discouraged. Any student missing a scheduled examination must have an extremely good reason (such as a serious personal illness, death in the family, required court appearance, or a similar emergency). Absence from an exam for an inadequate reason will result in a grade of zero for the missed test. If I find a student's reason for missing an exam to be valid, I will arrange with the student for a make-up exam to be given. Students taking a make-up examination will be given NO choice as to which essay question they will answer.

ACADEMIC HONESTY

All students will be held accountable to the policy on “academic dishonesty” outlined in the Student Handbook. "No student shall receive or give or attempt to receive or give assistance not authorized by the instructor in the preparation of any essay, examination or other assignment included in any academic course." <http://romulus.valdosta.edu/judicial/StudentHandbook.shtml>

Any student who engages in any form of academic dishonesty will receive an F for this course. Students should be aware that academic dishonesty can lead to official hearings before VSU’s Judicial Committee and that this committee can and has permanently expelled students for acts of academic dishonesty. Students should always do their own work. If you have any questions about this policy, you should ask me immediately. Other policies will follow (e.g., no leaving the room during an exam, no hats worn during exams, no access to cell phones during an exam, etc.).

ATTENDANCE

Roll will be taken at each class meeting. Attending class is vital to your success in this course for class is organized around the materials you must read and the possible questions you will be given on each exam. Your attendance will account for 5% of your final course grade and will be calculated on the following scale.

Absences	--	Grade	Absences	--	Grade
0	=	100	5	=	75
1	=	95	6	=	70
2	=	90	7	=	0
3	=	85	Each Over 7 = 5 Points Deducted		
4	=	80	from Final Average		

This policy is based on VSU policy that "A student who misses more that 20% of the class work of a course will be subject to receiving a failing grade," see “Absence Regulations” in *Undergraduate Catalogue*. <http://www.valdosta.edu/catalog/> For every absence beyond 7 days, for whatever reason, FIVE POINTS will be DEDUCTED from your final course AVERAGE.

The only excuse for absence from class is official VSU business. If you are on some official VSU activity, you must supply me with written documentation specifying which days you will be absent. A student will be NOT be excused for illness, work, or other personal reasons. It is the responsibility of the student to keep track of his or her absences.

PARTICIPATION

One of the basic premises of this course is that ideas count, yours as well as mine, and that a mutual sharing of ideas will be intellectually stimulating for everybody. Class participation will account for 5% of your final course grade. To create informed discussion, I will assign the whole class a series of reading assignments to discuss in class. At certain points during class, I will ask students to answer questions and offer comments about the assigned readings.

I will not call on specific students who do not raise their hand; instead, all students have two options.

Option A: For students who want to participate regularly in class discussions, you must prepare yourself for class and assert yourself in the class discussions. The grade assigned for class participation will be somewhat subjective as I will evaluate not only how much you say in class, but also what you say; i.e., how well your comments and questions reflect your preparation for class and your understanding of the assigned material.

Option B: For students who do not participate regularly in class discussions, their attendance grade will be extended to determine 10% of their final course grade instead of 5%.

TARDINESS OR LEAVING CLASS EARLY

Tardiness and/or leaving class early will be penalized. People coming to class late and/or leaving early disrupt the learning process for everyone else. If you come in late, it is your responsibility to tell me after class to record you as present. It is also unacceptable for a student to leave class before I dismiss the group, unless he or she is deathly ill or has permission from me in advance to leave. If a student must depart before the end of class, I must be informed in advance, or the student will not receive credit for attending class.

After the first four instances of either tardiness and/or leaving class early, every time you are tardy and/or leave class early, I will deduct $\frac{1}{2}$ point from your final exam grade.

CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR AND MUTUAL RESPECT

I encourage questions and class discussion. I will not, however, tolerate talking that is unrelated to the class. If anyone wishes to ask a question or offer a comment, he or she can do so by raising a hand and being recognized by the instructor. I will dismiss class. Do not begin to prepare to leave before I announce the end of the class for the day.

Students will not receive credit for attending class if they fall asleep or engage in unacceptable activity (e.g., talking, working on material for another class). You will be counted as present only so long as you are present in mind & body.

Any student who fails to follow these rules will not receive credit for attending class and in certain cases will be told to leave. In accordance with the *Student Handbook*, any students who engages in “DISORDERLY CONDUCT” will be DROPPED from the class with either a “WP” if before mid-term or an “F” if after mid-term. <http://romulus.valdosta.edu/judicial/StudentHandbook.shtml>

PAPERS ON MEMOIRS BY HAYSLIP & CAPUTO

In place of a research paper, you will write four papers carefully analyzing the memoirs by Hayslip & Caputo and integrating documents from your McMahon reader into your analysis.

Each of your papers must be typed & double spaced, and you should expect that it will take at least FIVE FULL pages of text to cover adequately the assigned material. Your goal is to demonstrate your command of the assigned material.

If a paper is handed in after the due date, five points will be deducted for each day it is late, including weekend days.

Each paper should reflect your mastery of English composition. If it becomes apparent that the student has little mastery of English composition (misspelled words, misuse of words, errors in syntax, etc.), the paper's grade will suffer.

A paper should contain only a few direct quotations. Rather than quoting extensively, the student must master and assimilate the material and translate it into his or her own words. As one historian has said, "Papers that are simply strings of quotations tied together with a few comments are evidence that the author did not really understand what he was writing about." If the precise wording of a given piece of information is crucial to one's paper, then one may profitably quote. If the writing style is striking, quoting the source is permissible. Otherwise, one should do one's own writing.

* DO NOT PLAGIARIZE! The literal meaning of the word plagiarism is "the act of stealing and passing off as one's own the ideas or words of another." In any case, academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. At the first sign of plagiarism, the student will receive a grade of "F" for the paper!

In each paper you should (1) briefly summarize the scope of the assigned sections of the book in no more than one or two paragraphs at the start of the paper. (2) More importantly, you must then demonstrate via specific examples that you have read the assigned pages & document(s) and thought about how these materials elucidate the Vietnam War (its origins, the nature of the fighting, the stresses & strains of war on its participants).

Hayslip I: Pp. 1-23, 159-164, 26-54, Prologue, 144-157, and Doc 4, CH. 9 (McMahon)

Use these sections to explore traditional Vietnamese rural society, the impact of the French, & why so many peasants supported first the Vietminh and then the Vietcong insurgency.

Caputo I: Pp. 1-226, & Doc 2 & 3, Ch.8, (McMahon)

Use these sections to explore Caputo's background, training, & attitudes, as well as the environment/climate of Vietnam. Why does Caputo call Vietnam a "phantom war?" How does Caputo get exposed to the war's brutality & confusing nature?

Caputo II: Pp.227-337, Prologue, Epilogue, Postscript, & Doc 7 & 8, CH. 8 (McMahon)

Use these sections to explore in detail the nature of the war that Caputo & his men fight and how it affects them?

Hayslip II: Pp. 65-97, 103-124, 128-130, 133-140, 168-190, 194-204, 209-215, 221-227, 236-239, 255-262, 274-284, 294-303, 307-310, 319-333, 343-355, & Doc 6, CH. 13 (McMahon)

Use these sections to explore the escalating brutality by all combatants (VC/NVN, SVN/ARVN, & USA) in the late 1960s and how the struggle by Vietnamese peasants to survive became much more difficult. What is the nature of the South Vietnamese government & society as described by Le Ly?

Le Ly's Family: Le Ly Hayslip is the youngest of 6 children.

Hai -- oldest sister, her husband arrested by French

Ba Xuan -- sister, forced to marry a SVN police officer (Chin), important in "Hayslip I"

Bon Nghe -- oldest brother, goes to NVN in 1950s

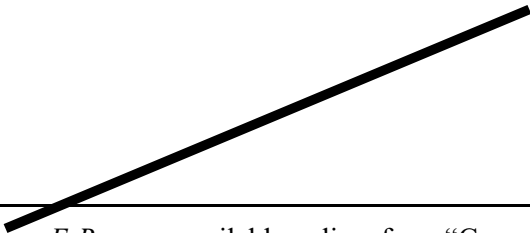
Lan -- sister, important in the "Hayslip II." Through Lan, Le Ly begins to interact with Americans.

Sau Ban -- brother, discussed in "Hayslip I"

FURTHER INFORMATION ON EXAMS & PAPERS

Students will have an opportunity to look over their graded exams & papers in class, but I will keep all exams and papers for use in assessment of the VSU History Major.

READING ASSIGNMENTS

<i>Mid-Term Ex = Mon., Oct. 1</i>	<i>Final Ex = Mon. Dec 8 @ 5 pm</i>
EQ1: Pre-1945 Vietnam McMahon, Chap. 2 Herring, ix-xiv, 2-8	EQ1: US Military, '65-'67 McMahon, Chap. 7 Herring, 171-191, 213-223
EQ2: Truman & Vietnam McMahon, Chap. 3 Herring, 8-30	EQ2: N. Vietnam & Viet Cong McMahon, Chap. 9; Chap. 14: Doc 6 & Essay 2 Herring, 45, 80-82, 105-06, 131-32, 140-41, 146, 160, 174-79, 183-89, 201-04
EQ3: Eisenhower & Vietnam McMahon, Chap. 4 Herring, 30-87	EQ3: TET Offensive, 1968 McMahon, Chap.10 Herring, 224-268
EQ4: Kennedy & Vietnam McMahon, Chap. 5 Herring, 88-129	EQ4: Nixon & Vietnam McMahon, Chap. 11 Herring, 270-320
EQ5: Johnson & Vietnam, '63-'65 McMahon, Chap. 6 Herring, 130-169	EQ5: Anti-War Movement McMahon, Chap. 12 Herring. 145-46, 149, 154, 158-61, 165-67, 169, 204-13, 219-21, 241-45, 260-61, 278-79, 282-83, 293-96, 298-301, 308, 317
	EQ6: Media & South Vietnam McMahon, Chap. 10: Doc 4 & Library E-Reserve "EQ6_Docs" (pp. 389-398) Herring, 79-80, 104-06, 110-11, 144, 154, 158-59, 165-67, 232-33, 241-45 = Media ; SVN = 56, 58-61, 68-80, 83-84, 101-02, 106-09, 112-13, 132-35, 140-41, 146-47, 151-52, 161-62, 165, 190-201, 258-60, 264-66, 283-88, 302-03, 309
<i>Library E-Reserve</i> available online from "Course Reserves" link under "Get It" or "Find It" on Library's web http://www.valdosta.edu/library/ or via the "Search Course Reserves" link in the GIL Catalog, http://www.gil.valdosta.edu	EQ7: End of War, 1974-'75 McMahon, Chap. 13 Herring, 323-340
	EQ8: Legacies, post-1975 McMahon, Chap. 15 Herring, 340-368