INR 4225
THE VIETNAM WAR

Dr. Robert Bledsoe
1:30-2:45TR
CB1-122

OFFICE: Phillips Hall 302
OFFICE HOURS: 9:00-10:00TR;
12:00-1:00TR

COURSE OUTLINE

1. Purpose of Course: This course is designed to familiarize the student with the background of events leading to America's involvement in Indochina, the course of the Vietnam War, and the legacy of that war upon both the United States and the international system. It is the assumption of the instructor that a generation of students is now in college that has little knowledge of the conflict, its impact upon American society, or its implications upon present and future American foreign policy. Hopefully, this course will be a partial remedy if that assumption is correct.

2. Course Requirements: The course will consist of a series of lectures, videotapes, and textbook/assigned readings (as outlined in Section 5). You are encouraged to ask questions, inject personal observations, and challenge the assertions of the professor. Attend all class meetings. While no record of attendance is kept, you will find that failure to do so will soon be reflected in your course performance, for materials covered in class will often not be found in your textbook for the course. **Read** and **master** the assignments that follow in Section 5. These are found in your textbook for the course:

Stanley Karnow, *Vietnam: A History*. Penguin Books. 1998.

Reading the assignments, keeping up with the lectures and videos is your responsibility. No specific pages of reading will be given from one lecture to another but textbook chapters and assigned readings are listed in Assignments. Pace yourself according to the topics under consideration during lecture periods.

Book Report Project: In addition, you have the option of a book project consisting of you reviewing a book pertaining to the Vietnam War. [See **Bibliography** attachment topically arranged.] You are strongly encouraged to elect this research option, as it will help develop critical thinking and writing skills, as well as provide a learning experience in a substantive area in more depth than covered in class. Critical thinking and writing skills are necessary tools for you to succeed in your chosen career field and

essential skills for pursuing advanced academic or professional degrees.

The following steps are involved in this project:

(1) clear your book with me ahead of time to make certain that you have selected a book which fits your interests. This must be in the form of a dated, typed bibliography which includes the full name(s) of the author(s), book title, place and publisher, and date of publication. **Deadline: Tuesday, January 30 (but I'll be happy to accept it any time before the deadline).**

(2) after completion of your reading and organization of your notes and materials, develop an outline of how you plan to write your book report and give me a dated, typed copy before you start serious writing, including cites of the two book reviews you will use in your book report.

Deadline: Tuesday, March 20 (again, I'll be happy to accept it prior to the deadline and that gives you more time to write the final product after reviewing my comments).

(3) your final typed report must include:

(a) full bibliographic citation of the book being reviewed;
(b) the background of the author(s);
(c) the major themes of the book;
(d) the biases of the book;
(e) the author(s) conclusions;
(g) an analysis of at least two scholarly book reviews on the book (including where you agree and disagree with the reviewers); and
(h) your personal impressions of the book.

Be sure that you include a bibliography of the sources of your book reviews and that you footnote all material which is directly quoted and ideas which you have paraphrased. Failure to do so is taking the ideas of others and passing them on as your own. This is plagiarism and will result in an automatic grade of "F" for your book project. Any citation style is acceptable (including your footnotes as an End Note). Your project must be typed and should be approximately 4-5 pages in length but that is merely a suggested target – getting the job done is what is important. **This book report is due by Tuesday, April 17 (again, if you want to know what your grade would be if you didn't take the final, then turning it in earlier than the deadline gives me more time to**

evaluate your submission). In all fairness to the rest of the class, I will have to deduct a letter grade for each day that the book report is late. Your decision to undertake this optional project is revocable at any point in the process.

3. Examinations: There will be four (4) exams. Each exam will cover that portion of the material outlined in Assignments below. Exams are scheduled as follows and will be held in the normally assigned classroom:

(1) **Thursday, February 1**
(2) **Tuesday, February 27**
(3) **Thursday, March 29**

The final examination (which is not cumulative) will be **Tuesday**, **May 1** from **1:00-3:50**.

All exams will consist of short answer questions asking you to identify, define, explain, contrast, list, etc. the major concepts, principles, points, arguments, events, etc. covered during the course. **Attendance at exams is mandatory. There are no makeup exams save in the case of medical emergencies. Best man or bridesmaid at a close friend's wedding, going to the UCF infirmary with a headache the day of the exam, attending a funeral, etc. will not hack it. Also note: After the first person has turned in their exam and left the room, no one who is tardy and arrives after that time will be allowed to take the exam - they will have missed the test.** Please provide me with four (4) examination booklets prior to the first midterm. You will write your exams in them. They can be purchased at the Book Store.

4. Grades: Evaluation of your performance will be based upon the following:

examinations 4 x 25% = 100%
Book Report = 25%

You must have **four (4)** grades to successfully complete the course. This means that you can take four exams and not do the optional Book Report or do the Book Report and take all exams and drop the lowest grade; or do any three exams and the Book Report. **Be careful how you decide upon your course of action as there are no make-up exams except as noted above**. If you miss a test, you have dropped your lowest grade already. Make your Summer vacation plans, wedding plans, return home, etc. for after the final exam. There will be no early final exam (ergo, getting a cheaper plane ticket and wanting to take the exam early will not hack it). In no case is it wise to miss the first examination.

Grades are based as follows:

A	100-90
B	89-80
C	79-70
D	69-60
F	<60

Grades are not curved nor do I assign + or - to letter grades.

5. **Assignments**: Chptr #s in Karnow
(plus lectures and videotapes)

Part I.

Introduction: Preface (maps; chronology)
Why Study the Vietnam War?

Historical Context: Chptrs. 2-3
Pre-French "Vietnam"
Vietnam under French Colonialism
Vietnam under the Japanese in WWII
"Independence"

First Indochina War: Chptrs. 4-5
The Vietminh
The French Forces
Fighting Methods
Logistics
Red River Delta
Operation Lorraine
Operation Castor
Dien Bien Phu
Geneva Agreements

----**First midterm exam (Thursday, February 1)----**

Part II.

Post-Geneva Vietnam: Chptrs. 6-9
South Vietnam under Diem
Viet Cong and North Vietnamese
Ho Chi Minh Trail
Kennedy and Johnson: U.S. Domestic Politics and Decision-Making

----**Second Midterm exam (Tuessday, February 27**)---

(NOTE: withdrawal deadline is **March 21st** - prior to our 3rd midterm)

Part III.

Second Indochina War(cont.): Chptrs. 10-14
- Gulf of Tonkin Incident
- The Americanization of the War
- Strategy and Tactics
- Weapons
- Bombing
- Khe Sahn
- Tet Offensive
- Legal/Moral Debate
- The Media, Education and the Protest Movement

----**Third Midterm exam (Thursday, March 29**) ---

Part IV.

Vietnamization: Chptrs. 15-16
- The Secret Wars
  - Laos
  - Cambodia
- The Paris Talks
- The Road to Collapse
- Easter Invasion
- Final Offensive
- Entrance into Saigon
- Aftermath

Present Day Vietnam: Chptr. 1
- Five-Year Plans
- Economic Reforms
- Normalization of Relations
- Foreign Policy Challenges

Legacies and Lessons of the War (factor analysis; assigned readings)
- US Domestic Politics
- US Foreign Policy
- Iraq and the Vietnam Analogy

----**Final exam (Tuesday, May 1)----**

WELCOME TO THE VIETNAM WAR
AND MAY YOU HAVE A SUCCESSFUL SPRING TERM

Some ground rules:

(1) Classroom

- O No food or drinks (except water)
- O No smoking
- O All electronic devices OFF
- O You may use a recorder or laptop
- O If you are late, please come anyway but try not to be disruptive when entering the room

(2) Communications

- O Feel free to email me:
  office – robert.bledsoe@ucf.edu
  or in our Webcourse
- O Call me at the office (823-2608) but not at home
- O See me during office hours or make an appointment in advance

(3) Exams

- O Once the exam has been handed out, you may not leave the classroom until you have finished you exam
- O If you are late on exam day and a student has already turned in their exam and departed before you arrive, you are too late and I will not let you take the exam
- O Exam grades during the course will not be posted on our Webcourse since you will get them back with your exam booklets. Final grades are only posted on myUCF and will not be given out over the telephone, by e-mail, or by the Department staff. I will let you know your final exam grade, course average, and/or return materials you have not picked up if you provide me ahead of time with a stamped, addressed envelop or mailer.

Attachments: Factor Analysis
Maps
Chronology of Events
Bibliography