History 360: Vietnam  
Oberlin College Spring 2010  
M 2:30-4:20 Peters 305  

David E. Kelley  
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COURSE OBJECTIVES:  
This course will survey the history of Vietnam from earliest times to the present by focusing on several analytical themes: the construction and meanings of Vietnam’s cultural and national identity; the role of China in the formation of Vietnamese identity; and the legacies of the 19th and 20th century struggles against colonialism and foreign interference for contemporary Vietnam. The written assignments for the course aim to help students develop analytical and interpretive skills to deploy in interrogating the readings and assumptions underlying them, as well as the assumptions I have made in organizing this inquiry into the nature of the Vietnamese past and its import for understanding Vietnam today.  

FORMAT AND REQUIREMENTS:  
This course is a colloquium that meets once a week for approximately two hours. The most important feature of a colloquium is close reading and thoughtful, carefully argued discussion. Therefore, notes should be taken on the readings and reviewed before class so that you have already thought over issues of fact, interpretation and analysis. This also means that the week’s reading assignment should not be left until the night before class.  

Effective learning requires a strategy of active study, thinking and interchange. To encourage reflective reading, no later than by Saturday afternoon of each week you are expected to write out on the Discussion Board section of the course’s Blackboard website – our computerized discussion software – a short reflection of around 500 words on the book or essays we will have read; you are also invited to comment there on what others in the class have written. I will post questions on the reading that you may choose to respond to. You may also use the forum to raise questions on which you would like help from me or from fellow students. You should read the forum before class, to find out what everyone else in the class is thinking. All this preparatory work should help make our discussions more productive.  

You are also expected to participate regularly in class discussions – an activity that our preparation outside of class on the computer forum is intended to make more inviting.
Besides completing the reading and participating in the Discussion Board and class discussions, students will be responsible for two short papers, spaced approximately evenly throughout the semester. A topic will be assigned for each paper that will require around 8 pages of analysis of issues arising from the reading and class discussions.

Your work will be evaluated according to the following weightings:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weekly Discussion Board submission</th>
<th>25%</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quality (not quantity) of participation in class</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Papers</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Please take careful note of these proportions. They reflect my conviction that the week-to-week process of participating in the course through reading, thinking and contributing to everyone else’s learning in discussion is as important to your learning as the papers you will write.

All assignments must be completed to receive credit for the course. Because we only meet for twelve substantive sessions and because participation in discussions is so central to our common project, absences will adversely affect your grade. All work is governed by the Honor Code: see http://new.oberlin.edu/students/policies/10-Policies-Honor.pdf.

BOOKS AVAILABLE FOR PURCHASE:


Lam, Truong Buu. *Colonialism Experienced Vietnamese Writings on Colonialism (1900-1931).* University of Michigan Press.

Marr, David G. *Vietnamese Tradition on Trial, 1920-1945.* University of California Press.


Race, Jeffrey. *War Comes to Long An: Revolutionary Conflict in a Vietnamese Province.* University of California Press.

Paper Assignments: Please submit electronically

First Essay: due before Spring Recess
Second Essay: due May 10
CLASS MEETINGS

Feb 8: Introduction to the course: The Problem of Vietnam
Ngo Vinh Long, “Vietnam,” in *Coming to Terms: Indochina, the United States and the War*, pp. 9-21 (the entire essay is a useful overview of Vietnamese history from the colonial period to the late 1980s).

Feb. 15 The Origins of Vietnam and the Millennium of Chinese Domination I

Feb. 22 The Origins of Vietnam and the Millennium of Chinese Domination II
Keith Taylor, *The Birth of Vietnam*, 222-26, 296-301

Mar. 1 Nguyễn Dynasty Vietnam

Mar. 8 French Cochinchina to French Indochina
Truong Buu Lam, *Colonialism Experienced: Vietnamese Writings on Colonialism, 1900-1931*, 1-104, Documents 1-2, 4, 7, 9

Mar. 15 Anticolonialism and Nationalism
David G. Marr, *Vietnamese Tradition on Trial, 1920-1945*, 1-367

Mar. 22 The Peasantry under the French
Alexander Woodside, *Community and Revolution*, 1-200
Ngo Vinh Long, *Before the Revolution: The Vietnamese Peasants under the French*, selections

Mar. 29 Spring Recess

Apr. 5 The Communist Movement
Nguyễn Thi Dinh, *No Other Road to Take: Memoir of Mrs. Nguyễn Thị Dinh*
James P. Harrison, *The Endless War*, 1-129

Apr. 12 Village Revolution

Apr. 19 The Thirty-Years War, 1945-1975
Woodside, *Community and Revolution*, 201-245
James P. Harrison, *The Endless War*, 133-316

**Apr. 26**  
The Village War

Race, Jeffrey. *War Comes to Long An: Revolutionary Conflict in a Vietnamese Province*

**May 3**  
Issues in Nation Building: The Countryside


**May 10**  
Final Discussion: The Vietnamese Nation

