

History 464: Vietnam
Oberlin College Spring 2014
M 2:30-4:20 Peters 305

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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.

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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:

Weekly Discussion Board submission	25%
Quality (not quantity) of participation in class	25%
Papers	50%

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 USED IN COURSE:

Used copies should be found on-line and are available in OHIOLINK

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.

Luong, Hy Van and Nguyen Dac B. *Revolution in the Village: Tradition and Transformation in North Vietnam, 1925-1988*. University of Hawaii Press.

James Harrison, *The Endless War: Vietnam's Struggle for Independence* Columbia University 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 9

CLASS MEETINGS

- Feb. 3: Introduction to the course
- Feb. 10: Vietnam: Introductory Readings
D. R. SarDesai, *Vietnam, Past and Present*, pp. 1-31 (an overview of VN and its early history).
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. 17: The Origins of Vietnam and the Millennium of Chinese Domination
Keith Taylor, *The Birth of Vietnam*, xvii-86, 126-40, 163-65, 222-26, 296-301
- Feb. 24: Nguyen Dynasty Vietnam
Alexander Woodside, *Vietnam and the Chinese Model, 1-66, 112-141, 152-158, 169-194, 223-233, 261-294*
- Mar. 3: French Cochinchina to French Indochina
Truong Buu Lam, *Colonialism Experienced: Vietnamese Writings on Colonialism, 1900-1931*, 1-104, Documents 1-2, 4, 7, 9
Mark Philip Bradley, "Becoming *Van Minh*: Civilizational Discourse and Visions of the Self in Twentieth-Century Vietnam," *Journal of World History* 15.1:65-83 (March 2004)
- Mar. 10: Anticolonialism and Nationalism
David G. Marr, *Vietnamese Tradition on Trial, 1920-1945*, vii-100, 136-287, 413-20
- Mar. 17: 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. 24 Spring Recess**
- Mar. 31: The Communist Movement
Nguyễn Thi Dinh, *No Other Road to Take: Memoir of Mrs. Nguyễn Thi Dinh*
James P. Harrison, *The Endless War*, 1-129
- Apr. 7: Village Revolution
Hy V. Luong, *Revolution in the Village: Tradition and Transformation in North Vietnam, 1925-1988*
- Apr. 14: The Thirty-Years War, 1945-1975
Woodside, *Community and Revolution*, 201-245

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James P. Harrison, *The Endless War*, 133-316

Apr. 21 The Village War

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

Apr. 28 Issues in Nation Building: The Countryside

Steve Déry, "Agricultural Colonisation in Lam Dong Province, Vietnam," *Asia Pacific Viewpoint* 41.1:35-49 (April 2000)

Steffanie Scott, "Changing Rules of the Game: Local Responses to Decollectivisation in Thai Nguyen, Vietnam," *Asia Pacific Viewpoint* 41.1:68-84 (April 2000)

For background and overview: Ngo Vinh Hai, "Postwar Vietnam: Political Economy," in *Coming to Terms: Indochina, the United States and the War*, eds. Douglas Allen and Ngo Vinh Long (Boulder: Westview Press, 1991), 65-88

May 5 Final Discussion : The Vietnamese Nation

Patricia Pelley, "The History of Resistance and the Resistance to History in Post-Colonial Constructions of the Past," in K. W. Weller and John K. Whitmore eds *Essays into Vietnamese Pasts*, 232-245

Liam Kelley, "Vietnam as a 'Domain of Manifest Civility' (*Van Hien chi Bang*)," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 34.1:63-76 (February 2003)

K. W. Taylor, "Surface Orientations in Vietnam: Beyond Histories of Nation and Region," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 57.4:949-978 (November 1998)