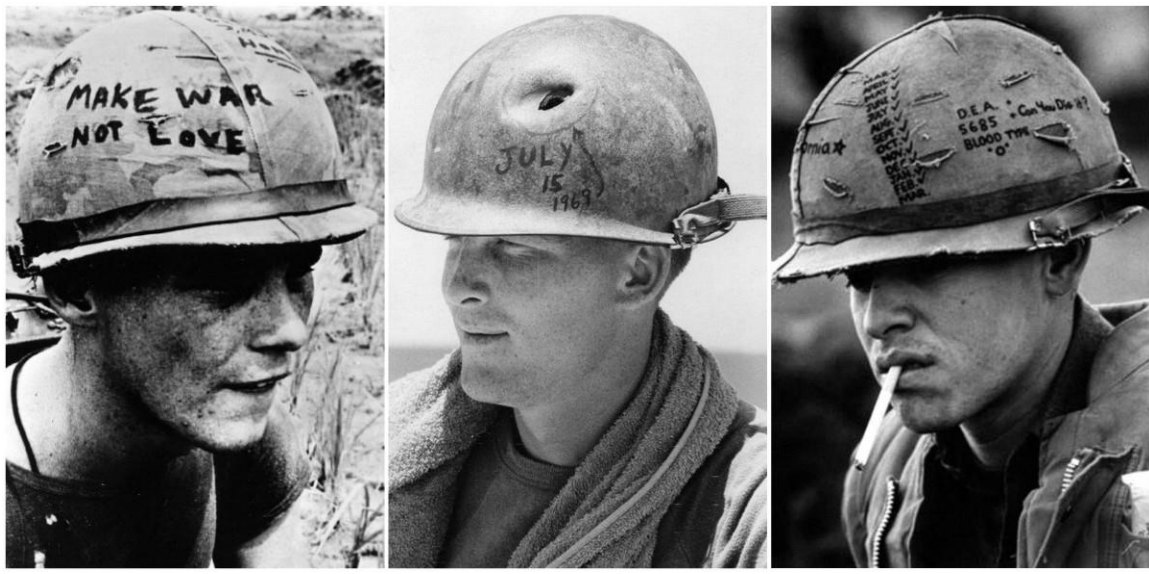


# *The Vietnam War*

Fall 2021  
Drew University



**Instructor:** James Carter

**Email:** [jcarter1@drew.edu](mailto:jcarter1@drew.edu)

**Class Times/Room:** TR, 10:25-11:40 SEM 101

**Office No.** Gilbert House 14

**Office Hours:**

### **Course Description:**

This is an intensive upper division undergraduate course on the Vietnam War and on U.S. involvement in Vietnam generally. The Vietnam War has been and remains controversial and polarizing within the United States. Obviously, it was also tremendously devastating for Vietnam and the Vietnamese. Consequently, we will necessarily explore in some detail issues that continue to be problematic and divisive. The course will examine such issues as imperialism, war, revolution, nation building, nationalism, insurgency, and terrorism. Through secondary readings, film, and documents, we will explore the diplomatic, economic, social, and political aspects of this decades-long conflict.

### **Course objectives/outcomes:**

The student can expect to get from this course:

- An introduction to the vocabulary, content, master narratives, and historical approaches to the study of the Vietnam War
- An appreciation of the global social, political, economic, & ideological vicissitudes of the Vietnam era
- An ability to identify and critically examine thesis, argument, and use of evidence in historical works
- An ability to critically read primary documents

### **Course Assignments/Grading:**

**Sixty percent:** There will be two exams during the term—a midterm and a final—worth 30% each. These exams will consist of some combination of essay and/or short answer questions. The questions will be based on in-class lectures & discussion as well as outside readings & documents. The dates for the exams can be found in the schedule below.

**Thirty percent:** Students will complete and submit three “reading responses” based on readings. They account for 10% each toward the final course grade. These responses will be 750 words in length and conform to the following format: Times New Roman, double-spaced, 12pt. font, no cover letter/sheet, no bibliography/works cited. Specific dates for this assignment can be found in the schedule below. (see specific content instructions at bottom)

**Ten percent:** Attendance and participation will account for the remaining 10% of the course grade. Students are expected to attend class every scheduled day, read the assigned readings ahead of time and be prepared to discuss them and integrate them into the class.

### **Required Readings:**

George Herring, *America's Longest War: The United States and Vietnam, 1950-1975*, 4<sup>th</sup> edition

Additional readings on Moodle

### **Course Schedule:**

**Week one (Aug 31 & 2):** Introduction; The Vietnam War & History as a “Problem”  
Reading: Andrew Bacevich, “Autopsy of a Failed War”

**Week two (Sept 7 & 9):** (no class Jan 21—MLK, Jr., Day) Lies, Damn Lies, and History: Historiography & the Vietnam War

**Reading:** Gary Hess, “From the Streets to the Books: The Origins of an Enduring Debate”—on Moodle

**Week three (Sept 14 & 16):** The First Indochina War & the Origins of U.S policy in Vietnam, 1945-1954

**Reading:** George Herring, *America's Longest War*, ch. 1; Ho Chi Minh letter to U.S. President Truman, Vietnamese Declaration of Independence—on Moodle

**Week four (Sept 21 & 23):** Colonial Vietnam & the Rise of Nationalism, 1900-1945

**Reading:** William Duiker, *The Roots of Revolution*, Peter Zinoman, *The Thai Nguyen Rebellion*—on Moodle

Reading response/discussion: **the two selections above**

**Week five (Sept 28 & 30):** The U.S. & Nation Building, 1954-1961

Reading: Herring, *America's Longest War*, ch. 2

**Week six (Oct 5 & 7):** The Vietnamese Revolution & the Rise of the National Liberation Front

Reading: Truong Nhu Tang, with David Chanoff & Doan Van Toai, *The Birth of the National Liberation Front*—on Moodle

**Week seven (Oct 14—no class Oct 12, Tuesday)** From Nation Building to War, 1961-1963

Reading: Herring, *America's Longest War*, ch. 3; James Carter, "'A Permanent Mendicant:' Southern Vietnam, 1960-1963"—on Moodle

Reading response/discussion: [the two selections above](#)

**Week eight (Oct 19 & 21):** "Americanization:" The American War in Vietnam, 1963-1968

Reading: Herring, *America's Longest War*, chs. 4 & 5; selection from Michael Herr's *Dispatches*, McNaughton's "Plan for Action in South Vietnam"—on Moodle

**Week nine (Oct 26 & 28):** **MIDTERM EXAM—Thursday, Oct 28**

**Week ten (Nov 2 & 4):** The American Soldier in Vietnam

Reading: Christian Appy, *Mapping the Losses* article—on Moodle

**Week eleven (Nov 9 & 11):** The Tet Offensive, 1968

Reading: Herring, *America's Longest War* ch. 6; Nick Turse, *A My Lai a Month*—on Moodle

**Week twelve (Nov 16 & 18):** The War at Home: the Anti-War Movement

Reading: Noam Chomsky, *The Responsibility of Intellectuals*, Martin Luther King, Jr., *Declaration of Independence from the War in Vietnam*—on Moodle

Reading response/discussion: [the two selections above](#)

**Week thirteen (Nov 23—no class Thursday, Nov 25, Thanksgiving break):** Nixon's Vietnam War

Reading: Herring, *America's Longest War*, ch. 7

**Week fourteen (Nov 30 & Dec 2):** The End of the Vietnam War?

Reading: H. Bruce Franklin, *M.I.A. or Mythmaking in America: How and why belief in live POWs has possessed a nation*, chs. 1 & 2—on Moodle

**Week Fifteen (Dec 7 & 9):** The War After the War...

Reading: Herring, *America's Longest War*, ch. 8, Robert MacMahon, "Contested Memory: The Vietnam War and American Society"—on Moodle

## Final Exam TBD

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### **Reading response:**

Topic: What is subject of the reading(s)? Give the dates covered, area studied and themes chosen for investigation.

Thesis: What is/are the authors' main argument? What point is the author trying to get across about the topic?

Implications: What are the underlying conclusions one should draw based on the reading? What are the underlying assumptions in the readings?

Source Material: What are the various sources in the readings used to make the point? What is the balance between primary and secondary sources used? What kinds of potential sources does this author NOT employ? What is important about the author's choice of sources? In the case of fictional accounts (novels), these are less urgent questions and your responses here may be substantially abbreviated.

Counter Arguments: What, if any, are the holes or problems in any or all of the readings? What would a hostile reader object to? What are the other ways of envisioning this topic? What does the author overlook (is there anything the author SHOULD have included, but did not)?

Success: Does the author succeed in proving the stated thesis? Is the book about what the author said it would be about? Is the book convincing to you? Do you find the book to be an important contribution to the field?

### **Course Policies:**

**1. Absence Policy:** In addition to the course attendance policy, students should be aware of their rights and responsibilities regarding absences for legitimate reasons as described in the University's Absence Policy:

<http://catalog.drew.edu/content.php?catoid=29&navoid=1338#attendance> You may access this policy by selecting Attendance in the Academic Policy section of Drew's Course Catalog. **Make-up Examinations:** For students who miss a scheduled exam, a make up exam will be arranged if you are able to document the legitimacy of your absence. The makeup will come from the same materials and review guides as the regular exams. Because of the nature of the course, however, students are strongly advised to take the exams at the originally scheduled times.

**2. Extra Credit:** You have enough to do in the regular assignments for this course. No extra credit will be available.

**3. Assistance:** Office hours are intended to make this course less forbidding. Feel free to come by and talk with me about your work or about history in general during the office hours listed. If you cannot make these times, ask me for an appointment.

**4. Freedom of Speech:** Feel free to raise your hand with a question or comment. Reducing confusion, providing clarification, or responding to student curiosity is an important part of the classroom process and will be undertaken to the extent that time and class size permit. In most cases, if you did not understand something, it is because I did not explain it clearly, so you will be doing your colleagues and yourself a service if you ask for clarification.

**5. Academic etiquette:** Universities must maintain standards of academic etiquette in order to create and perpetuate an atmosphere conducive to learning. You are expected to demonstrate courtesy toward each other in and out of the classroom. Talking to one's neighbor(s) during class lectures or general discussions, chronic lateness, leaving class before it has been dismissed, etc., is inherently disruptive and thus injurious to the rights of others to the opportunity to learn. As such, it is unacceptable in a university classroom. Students who are unable to abide by these rules of academic etiquette and normal civility will be removed from the class.

**6. Academic Integrity:** All students are required to uphold the highest academic standards. Any case of academic dishonesty will be dealt with according to the guidelines and procedures outlined in Drew University's "[Standards of Academic Integrity: Guidelines and Procedures.](#)" which is located in the academic policies section of the catalog.

In an online environment, academic policies indicate that you are also expected to:

- seek permission if video capturing a course, a faculty member, or a student
- use only allowable resources on exams or other related assignments
- refrain from using professional online tutoring services for exams or similar assignments
- submit only work that is generated by you for evaluation or grading purposes

**7. Dropping a Class:** I hope no student needs to drop this course. However, events sometimes occur that make dropping a course necessary or wise. The University has set October 29 as the last day to drop a course for the semester with an automatic grade of W.

**8. Late assignments:** I will not accept late assignments for full credit. Those submitted after the due date must also be accompanied by a reasonable, legitimate excuse. These will then be graded down *at least* one letter grade for tardiness. **NOTE:** on turning assignments in, *never* turn in to me your only copy of anything! Make sure you have a back up.

**9. Academic accommodations:** Your experience in this class is important to me. If you have already established accommodations with the Office of Accessibility Resources (OAR), please provide me a copy of your accommodation letter at your earliest convenience so we can discuss your needs in this course.

If you have not yet established services through the Office of Accessibility Resources (OAR), but have a temporary health condition or permanent disability that requires accommodations (conditions include but not limited to; mental health, attention-related, learning, vision, hearing, physical or health impacts), you are encouraged to contact OAR.

OAR offers resources and coordinates reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities and/or temporary health conditions.

Although a disclosure may take place at any time during the semester, students are encouraged to do so early in the semester, because, in general, accommodations are not implemented retroactively. Students are eligible for accommodations for online courses.

**Office of Accessibility Resources contact information:** Director-Dana Giroux Location-Brothers College, Room 119B Phone: 973-408-3962 Email: [dgiroux@drew.edu](mailto:dgiroux@drew.edu), [disabilityserv@drew.edu](mailto:disabilityserv@drew.edu)