**HTS 3015 History of the Vietnam War**

Fall 2004, MWF 1-2, DM Smith 104

Doug Flamming; Office: D.M. Smith 311; Phone: 4-6850; doug.flamming@hts.gatech.edu

**Course Description and Goals:**

In this course we will examine America’s war in Vietnam through lectures, readings, films, and research projects. We will also hear from special guests, including Vietnam veterans. Our three basic goals in the course will be: 1) to understand the basics about America’s war in Vietnam; 2) to understand the impact Vietnam had -- and continues to have -- on American society, politics, and foreign policy; and 3) to sharpen our analytical skills through reading, writing, and research.

**Grades:**

Grades in this course will be determined by the number of “credits” you earn. You *must* earn two “exam credits” by passing objective tests that cover the basics about the 1960s and the Vietnam War. Beyond that, you may accumulate up to four “project credits” for the successful completion of brief research projects. To receive an “A” for the course, you must earn the exam credit and *four* project credits. This grading system is explained in detail on a separate sheet.

In addition, ATTENDANCE IS MANDATORY. If you miss more than five class meetings, for any reason (excused or not), you will forfeit one project credit. If you miss more than eight class meetings, you will forfeit another project credit.

**Books for the course are available at Engineers Bookstore**:

Anderson, *The Sixties*

Herring, *America’s Longest War*

Herring, ed., *The Pentagon Papers*

O’Nan, *The Vietnam Reader*

Palmer, *Shrapnel in the Heart*

TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE

**Unit 1: The Basics, 1850-1990** (Aug. 16 through Sept. 24)

Readings:

Week 1: Read all of Anderson's *The Sixties*

**Basic “Sixties” exam on Wednesday, Aug 5**

Week 2: Begin Herring’s book, and read hard until you are finished.

**Basic “Vietnam War” Exam, Friday, Sept. 24**

**Unit 2: The Soldiers' Experience** (c. three weeks of class)

Readings: Explore the O’Nan anthology, which has rich material on this topic.

Submit first projects at the end of this unit.

**Unit 3: The War at Home** (c. three weeks of class)

Readings: Herring, ed., *The Pentagon Papers*

Also, O'Nan has some good material. Reviewing Anderson would be helpful.

Submit second projects at the end of this unit.

**Unit 4: Legacies of the War** (c. three weeks of class, until the end of the term)

Readings: Palmer: as much as your heart can bear at each sitting

Also see O’Nan – especially the later chapters.

Submit final projects during finals week; deadline is Thursday, 5 pm.

**Note:** The following are special violations of the Honor Code in this class:

1. Submitting work you did for another class as one of your projects in this course;

2. Reviewing books or films you have read or seen prior to taking this course;

3. Submitting work that you did not do.

All other aspects of the Georgia Tech Honor Code must also be upheld.

**Projects and Grading for Flamming’s “History of the Vietnam War”**

One purpose of this grading system is to give you some flexibility and independence. Outside of class, you will be able to examine the aspects of Vietnam that *you* find most compelling. In the process, you will create your own Vietnam guidebook or journal (call it what you will), which you should keep as a base for future reference and study.

The “exam credits” are mandatory; so is attendance. The “project credits” are optional.

Course grades will be assigned as follows:

Failure to earn exam credits = Drop the Course

Exam credits + unacceptable attendance = F

Exam credits + acceptable attendance = D

Exam credits + acceptable attendance + one project credit = C

Exam credits + acceptable attendance + two project credits = B

Exam credits + acceptable attendance + four project credits = A

**Questions & Answers About This Grading System:**

**Q: What will the basic exams cover?**

A: The first six weeks of class will provide an overview of the “Sixties” and America’s war in Vietnam. Both exams will be objective exams. The goal is to ensure that everyone in the course is well-grounded in the basic story before we dig deeper.

**Q: What grade do I have to get on the test to earn my exam credit?**

A: You must make at least an 80 to pass the exams. Those who make a 96 or better will receive one free “project credit” as a reward. Those who fail the exams once must take them a second time; those who fail twice must drop the class.

**Q: What do I have to do to get my project credits?**

A: Attached is a menu of possible projects. You will earn one credit for successfully completing a project. Projects will not earn the usual letter grades. I will mark them “P” for Pass or “F” for Failure. I will specify clearly what you will need to do to receive an “P”; if you are unsure about the requirements, see me BEFORE you turn it in. **NB: No second chances on these projects! Do them right the first time, or no credit.**

**Q: How many projects may I turn in during each project-submission period?**

A: Two, maximum. And, yes, if you receive an “F” on an early project, you can try to overcome that with an additional project the following project-submission period. But you *still* cannot turn in more than two projects during any submission period. If you make an “F” on the final project, that's that; the course will be over.

**Menu of Projects**

During the third week of class, I will distribute detailed specifications and requirements for each type of project. The brief menu below will allow you to ponder the possibilities in advance.

Note: You may not submit two projects from the same category. If, for example, you turn in two book reviews -- category # 2 -- I will only give you credit for one of them, even if both are successful.

1. **The Technology of War.** Using the U.S. Patent Office records in the Tech Library, find out who created and patented the weaponry, tools, medical supplies, and gadgets used during the Vietnam War -- or inspired by the war. Examples: the “Rome plow” (manufactured in Cartersville, GA); Napalm or Agent Orange (both made by DOW Chemical); airplanes or helicopters (or specific improvements to them); guns and bullets and bombs; communications equipment; spy stuff; backpacks; helmets; claymore mines; life-saving equipment; you get the idea.

2. **Write a 1,500 word review of a book on some aspect of the Vietnam war or its aftermath.** Any book cited in the “suggested readings” sections of the Herring or Anderson texts, or any book included in the O’Nan anthology, is acceptable. Our library has been loading up on new Vietnam books, so check our holdings. Books for review may be history, autobiography, or fiction. Not sure about a book? See me.

3. **Tape record an oral history interview and write report on the interview.**  You may interview anyone who lived through America's Vietnam era and is willing to be interviewed by you. **Interviews can be time-consuming, so begin to think about this early. This project, if successfully completed, will count for TWO project credits.**

4. **Write a 2,500-word review of three films.** These may be Hollywood films or documentaries. Any of the films covered in O’Nan are acceptable, as are mainstream documentary films. See me about others you might want to use.

5. **Report on one week of the Vietnam War as it appeared in the *Atlanta Constitution*.** The AJC is on microfilm at the main Tech library. Write a 2,000 word report on what you find, giving specific citations when you use quotes or refer to important stories, editorials, etc.

6. **Analyze all the works in any TWO chapters of the O’Nan anthology and write a 4-5 page review of them.** Chapters 4, 5, or 8 will NOT count toward this assignment.

Use the following format for your written work: one-inch margins; Times New Roman font, size-12; black ink only.