

HIST 3225-601 Summer 2011

Günter Bischof & Stephen E. Ambrose

ED 104: Tu Thu 6:00 – 8:45 pm

Dr. Bischof's office hours in LA 196 (CenterAustria):

Office hours: Tu Thu 5:00 – 6:00 (on class days during the day also)

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The War in Vietnam

The Vietnam War is the master narrative of an American intervention in the Cold War gone awry. It has produced one of the great traumas in American History. We will study these aspects and many more. Professor Ambrose's lectures give you the "master narrative" – the basic outline of domestic and international events. Professor Bischof's lectures review the materials assigned and add critical interpretative frameworks and questions such as comparing the French and the American Indochina wars, the American and North Vietnamese soldiers' experiences, Vietnamese perspectives of the war, the essence of 1960's America, and American memories of the war.

This is a distance learning course. You will be responsible for listening to Professor Ambrose's lectures accessible on the UNO media site mentioned below and for attending Professor Bischof's scheduled evening sessions without fail. Readings will have to be done **by** the dates indicated on the syllabus so you will be prepared for discussing them in class.

Grades

Midterm: 30 %

Final: 30 %

Papers: 30 % (first paper 10 %, oral history 20 %)

Class Participation: 10 %

Class Readings (books available for purchase at UNO book store)

** Mark Philipp Bradley, *Vietnam at War*. New York: Oxford UP 2009. Oxford University Press, 2009 [textbook – war from Vietnamese perspective]

** Christian G. Appy, *Patriots: The Vietnam War Remembered from All Sides*. New York: Penguin 2003 [textbook: an oral history of the war – war and home fronts]

Melvin Small. *Antiwarriors: The Vietnam War and the Battle for America's Hearts and Minds*. Wilmington: Scholar Resources 2002 [the variety of the antiwar protest movements]

Bao Ninh, *The Sorrow of War: A Novel of North Vietnam*. Transl. by Phan Thanh Hao New York Riverhead Pb 1993 [novel depicting the traumatic experience of a North Vietnamese soldier]

The Ambrose Lectures on the Vietnam War can be viewed on

<http://media.uno.edu/>

Click on:

UNO Community Media Site

(requires UNO username@uno.edu & password)

Click on: Vietnam Stephen Ambrose file (This is a WMV file)

Attendance Policy

Students have to attend ALL class lectures held on the UNO Lakefront campus; unexcused absences will result in one grade drop per absence; a class can only be excused by contacting the instructor in advance (phone or e-mail); if you cannot make the 8 scheduled evening classes, drop the course!

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is fundamental to the process of learning and evaluating academic performance. Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, the following: cheating, plagiarism (including copying work from the Internet!), tempering with academic records and examinations, falsifying identity, and being accessory to acts of academic dishonesty. Refer to the UNO Judicial Code for further information. The Code is available online at http://www.uno.edu/~stlf/policy%20Manual/judicial_code_pts.htm.

Students with Disabilities

Students who qualify for services will receive the academic modifications for which they are legally entitled. It is the responsibility of the student to register with the Office of Disability Services (UC 260) each semester and follow their procedures for obtaining assistance.

Student Learning Objective

After successfully completing this course, students should be able to

- ◆ Identify on a world map the major theaters of operation in this region and during this war
- ◆ Identify the major figures (politicians, generals, diplomats) of the major belligerents who drove the war's events
- ◆ Understand the nature of American interventionism during the Cold War and its intersection with the postwar global decolonization struggle
- ◆ Have a basic understanding for what motivated the fighting soldiers in the field and how the brutality of war affects individuals for their entire lives
- ◆ Comprehend the enormity of the brutality of the war and how a democratic nations could increasingly be drawn into unethical practices during this very destructive war
- ◆ Understand how the legacies and memories of the Vietnam War powerfully linger on – and affect both *individuals* and *nations* -- to this day

Weekly Meeting and Reading Schedule

- Th June 2 NO Class!
Readings: Bradley, Ch. 1
- Tu June 7 Class: Introduction**
Ambrose Lecture 1
- Class question: The nature of the Vietnam War and its long afterlife in American History. Are there parallels with the current war in Iraq & Afghanistan?
- Th June 9 Class: The French and the First Indochina War and the Origins of the American Involvement (Truman and Eisenhower)**
Ambrose Lecture 2
Readings: Bradley, ch. 2
Appy, pp. 3-31
- Class question: Why were the French in Indochina and why did the Americans want to be there and replace the French involvement?
- Tu June 14 Class: Kennedy, the Third World, and the Deepening of the American Involvement**
Ambrose Lecture 3
Readings: Appy, pp. 41-98
- Class question: What kind of ally was Diem? Did JFK plan to withdraw?
- Th June 16 No Class! The Making of a Quagmire: Johnson and the Sending of Regular American Troops in 1965
Ambrose Lecture 4
Readings: Bradley, ch. 3
Appy, pp. 101-199
- Class question: Would Kennedy have escalated and why did LBJ escalate?
- Tu June 21 Vietnam War and Film
View at your convenience at home: *Platoon* (Oliver Stone, 1986)
- Th June 23 No Class! The North Vietnamese and the War
Readings: Bao Ninh, *The Sorrow of War* (**entire**)
Bradley, ch. 4 (Experiencing War)

1st Paper (4 pages) due in class June 28: How does Bao Ninh describe the nature of the battlefield in Vietnam and North Vietnam way of fighting the war? Is the North Vietnamese soldiers' experience similar to the American soldiers' experience in the Vietnam War as depicted in *Platoon* and some of the oral histories in Appy?

Tu June 28 Class: Johnson and the Americanization of the War

Ambrose Lecture 5

Readings: Appy, pp. 200-282

Class question: Why did LBJ's strategy of "search and destroy", body counts and "daylight of the end of the tunnel" fail?

Thu June 30 Midterm Exam!

Tu July 5 No Class! Home Front and Anti-War Movement

Ambrose Lecture 8

Readings: Small, *Antiwarriors* (**entire**)

Appy, pp. 142-149, 262-278, 328-342

2nd paper (2 pages) (due in class July 12) – write a book review of Small's book? How does he characterize the variety of the antiwar movement? What role did it play in ending the war (more quickly)?

Thu July 7 No Class! Tet and 1968

Ambrose Lectures 6 & 7

Readings: Appy, pp. 285-327, 343-370

Tu July 12 Class: Nixon and the Vietnam War

Ambrose Lectures 9 - 12

Readings: Appy, pp. 371-429

Class question: Was Nixon's madman strategy effective in "Vietnamizing" the war? Was the outcome Nixon and Kissinger negotiated a "peace with honor"?

Thu July 14 No Class: The American Withdrawal

Ambrose Lectures 13 & 14

Readings: Bradley, ch. 5 & Coda

Appy, pp. 430-511

Class question: Was Nixon's "*decent interval*" a strategy of defeat and betrayal of the U.S.'s South Vietnamese allies? Was it a "cut and run" strategy?

Tu July 19 Class: Vietnam Documentary
***The Fog of War* (Errol Morris, 2004)**

3rd Paper due in class - Oral History (6-8 pp): Conduct an oral history and write a historical narrative on it – interview a Vietnam veteran, or an active opponent of the war, or a Vietnamese war refugee living in the U.S. today (you can also drop the paper in my mail box in the History Dept. Office, LA 117; or at CenterAustria, LA 196)

Thu July 21 Class: Who Won? Legacies and Memories of the War
Readings: Appy, pp. 515-549

Class question: Did anybody win? Why is the American memory of the Vietnam War so intense? What role did "The Wall" in Washington play in exorcising the war? What effect did the war have on US – Vietnamese relations? What happened to the countless refugees of the war?

July 26 6:00 – 8:00 pm Final Examination