

LIT 391: The Vietnam War & Its Aftermath in Literature

Fall 2017

Dr. Quan M. Ha
Office hours: Tues & Thurs 8:45-9:30 & 11:45-12:30
Class meetings: Tues & Thurs 12:30-1:50

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Classroom: LA 233

Course Description

The conflicting attitudes toward, and the moral dilemmas surrounding, the Vietnam War are recorded extensively in Vietnamese, Vietnamese American, and U.S. histories and literatures. Each side interprets the war from its own partisan perspective, creating a plethora of opinions and well-argued positions on the political and military conflict. This course examines how the war, from a comparative perspective, is presented by each side of the conflict in order to emphasize the multiple “realities” of the war, rejecting each side’s monolithic interpretation of this immensely complex war and demystifying America-centric memory and representation of Vietnam and its people. The readings selected for this course are written by Vietnamese authors (in translation), Vietnamese American refugees, and U.S. writers, with an emphasis upon the politics of remembrance, personal experiences, propaganda, and representations of war-related myths and images.

Required Textbooks

1. Tim O’Brien, *If I Die in a Combat Zone, Box Me Up and Ship Me Home*
2. David Rabe, *Streamers*
3. Bobbie Ann Mason, *In Country*
4. Le Ly Hayslip, *When Heaven and Earth Changed Places*
5. Kien Nguyen, *The Unwanted*
6. Dang Thuy Tram, *Last Night I Dreamed of Peace*
7. Duong Thu Huong, *Novel without a Name*

Classroom policies

1. You are not allowed to read newspapers or class-unrelated materials while class is in session.
2. The use of cell phones, beepers, or other electronic devices is prohibited during class.
3. Any persistent talking or sleeping while the instructor or another student is speaking will result in (1) a warning and (2) then your dismissal from the classroom.
4. You are permitted to use laptops during class for note-taking and other class-related work only.
5. Behave in a courteous and respectful manner toward your instructor and your fellow students.

E-mail correspondence

Use your UM e-mail account for electronic correspondence with the instructor. You may expect my response within 48 hours (except weekends and holidays). I expect you to use a professional tone in your correspondence with me. E-mails that have no greeting or express a disrespectful tone will not be answered.

Attendance and Tardiness

1. Tardiness of between 5 and 10 minutes will be noted: each such tardiness after the first two will be counted as an unexcused absence; tardiness of 20 minutes or longer will be treated as an unexcused absence.
2. If you have to leave class early due to personal problems, inform me before class starts.
3. You are allowed TWO free absences. After your second unexcused absence, 10 points will be deducted for each additional absence. More than 5 unexcused absences will result in the failure of the course.
4. If you miss no class, I will add 10 bonus points to your final grade.
5. Make-up quizzes are for excused absences only.

Assignments

THREE ESSAYS: Specific instructions to be announced.

- Essay # 1: four pages (100 points)
- Essay # 2: six pages (150 points)
- Essay # 3: eight pages (200 points)

ONE ORAL PRESENTATION: You will prepare 8 questions for class discussion over the readings you have been assigned. Make enough copies of your questions and bring them to class for distribution.

TWO EXAMS (in class): Specific instructions to be announced

READING QUIZZES: At the beginning of each class meeting, you will take a reading quiz.

Grades

Grades will be assigned as percentage scores (0-1000) throughout the term. Ultimately, your final grade will be converted to the university's letter grade system using this scale:

A (931-1000)	A- (900-930)	
B+ (870-899)	B (840-869)	B- (800-839)
C+ (770-799)	C (740-769)	C- (700-739)
D (640-699)	F (below 640)	

- Reading quizzes----- 200 points
- Three essays----- 450 points
- Two exams----- 250 points (125 points/each)
- One presentations----- 50 points
- Active participation in class discussion----- 50 points

TOTAL: 1,000 points

Policies on written assignments and in-class tests

1. Late papers will be penalized with a 10% deduction for each day after the due date, including weekend days. If extenuating circumstances prevent you from turning in a paper on time, please talk to me BEFORE the paper is due. I am not likely to make allowances after the deadline has come and gone.
2. All papers are to be typed in 12-point font, Times New Roman, double-spaced. Follow the MLA guidelines for formatting, citations, and documentations.
3. For each formal essay, you must enter my corrections and turn in the revised version. Failing to do this will result in a zero on the assignment.
4. Do not ask me to proofread your essays electronically (via email). If you need help with your papers, please schedule an appointment, or just come during my office hours.
5. Under no circumstance will I offer make-up tests/exams.

Grade Appeals

If you wish to appeal a grade, you should first consult with me. You will have 7 days, from the time the grade is assigned/posted, to set up an appointment with me to discuss the grade. After 7 days, all grades are final.

Accommodations

Students with disabilities will receive reasonable accommodations for coursework. To request accommodation, please contact me as soon as possible in the semester. I will work with you and Disability Services in the accommodation process. For more information, visit the Disability Services website at <http://www.umt.edu/dss/> or call 406.243.2243 (Voice/Text).

Academic Integrity

Refer to http://www.umt.edu/vpsa/policies/student_conduct.php for information about academic misconduct. If you are found guilty of academic misconduct, legal action will be taken. It is your responsibility as a student to understand the Student Conduct Code described in the link above.

Reading Schedule (subject to change)

The symbol [●] indicates the readings from the Coursepack, which will be sent to your email.

The American Perspective

Week 1: Aug. 28—Sept. 3

Thurs: Introduction & Syllabus

Week 2: Sept. 4--10

Tues: **The Boy from Montana + Butch** + How to Tell a True War Story + **A Soldier's Burial**

Thurs: Rabe's *Streamers* CHASE

Week 3: Sept. 11--17

Tues: O'Brien's *If I Die in a Combat Zone* (pp. 1-114) AMANDA

Thurs: O'Brien's *If I Die in a Combat Zone* (pp. 115-end) HANNAH

Week 4: Sept. 18-24

Tues: Nada + The Red Convertible + The Track + Mr. Green •

Thurs: No Matter What We Do (war poetry) • ANSON

Week 5: Sept. 25-Oct. 1

Tues: Mason's *In Country* (pp. 1-125) NATHAN

Thurs: Mason's *In Country* (pp. 126-end) CHEYENNE

*****Essay # 1 due, 12:00 Noon, Friday, my office

The Vietnamese American Perspective

Week 6: Oct. 2--8

Tues: Hayslip's *When Heaven and Earth Changed Places* (pp. ix-101) STEPHANIE

Thurs: Hayslip's *When Heaven and Earth Changed Places* (pp. 102-235) NICHOLAS

Week 7: Oct. 9--15

Tues: Hayslip's *When Heaven and Earth Changed Places* (pp. 236-end) SCOTT

Thurs: TBA

Week 8: Oct. 16--22

Tues: EXAM # 1

Thurs: Child of Two Worlds + Notes of a Warrior's Son + The Stories They Carried •

Week 9: Oct. 23--29

Tues: Nguyen's *The Unwanted* (pp. 1-156) ANSON

Thurs: Nguyen's *The Unwanted* (pp. 157-end) KIRA

Week 10: Oct. 30—Nov. 5

*****Essay # 2 due, 12:00 Noon, Monday, my office

Tues: Mango + Miss Lien + Gates of Saigon •

Thurs: The Boat + The War Years + Exploring the Function of the Anti-communist Ideology ... •

The Vietnamese Perspective

Week 11: Nov. 6--12

Tues: The Ivory Comb + Fragile as a Sun Ray + A Crescent Moon in the Woods •

Thurs: A Marker on the Side of the Boat + The Xanu Jungle + An Old Story •

Week 12: Nov. 13--19

Tues: Dang's *Last Night I Dreamed of Peace* (pp. v-115) MARGARET

Thurs: Dang's *Last Night I Dreamed of Peace* (pp. 116-end) ERIN

Week 13: Nov. 20--26

Tues: Duong's *Novel Without a Name* (pp. 1-150) NATALIE

Thurs: Thanksgiving / NO CLASS

Week 14: Nov. 27—Dec. 3

Tues: Duong's *Novel Without a Name* (pp. 151-end) ISAAC

Thurs: **The Legend** + *Wandering Souls* + *Above a Woman's House* •

Week 15: Dec. 4—10

***** *Essay # 3 due, 12:00 Noon, Monday, my office*

Tues: War poetry •

Thurs: Homecomings (from the book *Wandering Souls*) •

Week 16: Dec. 11-17

Tues: Last Day of Class / Conclusion & Review

Exam # 2: TBA