

A CULTURAL WAR: SYLLABUS  
Rollins College  
Tuesday, Thursday 6:00 PM - 7:10 PM

INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Vance Geiger

BOOKS: Understanding Vietnam by Neil Jamieson  
Gunfighter Nation: The Myth of the Frontier in Twentieth-Century America by Richard Slotkin

Course Description: An exploration of the cultural differences between the United States and Vietnam in the context of the Vietnam War. The cultural differences between the United States and Vietnam led Americans to misunderstand Vietnamese culture and the nature of the Vietnamese resistance to French colonialism and the American intervention. This class will focus on the cultural basis for going to war in the context of the differences in what Vietnamese and Americans were fighting for and why.

GRADING: There will be two written assignments and two in-class tests. The writing assignments will incorporate class lectures, class discussions and the reading. The assignments are designed to elicit from the student an understanding of the material and the ability to apply that understanding to the assignment. The tests will cover the material presented in class and the reading. Each assignment and test will be worth 100 points for a possible maximum total of 400 points. The exact requirements for the written assignments will be presented in a separate handout.

#### GRADING SCALE

A = 90-100% = 400-360 points  
B = 80-89% = 359-320 points  
C = 70-79% = 319-280 points  
D = 60-69% = 279-240 points

**WEEK 1: 5/15:** AN INTRODUCTION TO THE CLASS AND THE  
CONCEPT OF CULTURE

: VIETNAMESE ETHNICITY: THE ORIGINS AND EARLY  
HISTORY OF VIETNAM TO THE FRENCH

Reading: Jamieson: Chapters 1 and 2

**Week 2: 5/22:** THE SEEDS OF WAR: AFTER WORLD WAR II

Reading: Jamieson: Chapters 3 and 4

: THE U.S. GETS INVOLVED: QUAGMIRE OR MUD PUDDLE  
Reading: Jamieson Chapters 5 and 6

**Week 3: 5/29:** KIN GROUP, VILLAGE AND ETHNICITY VERSUS NATION STATE:  
THE RESULT: "WE EXPECT THERE TO BE MORE REFUGEES."

Reading: Jamieson Chapter 1 Again

: The End of The War and What It Meant to Vietnamese.

Take Home Test 1

**Week 4: 6/5:** American Culture.

Reading: Slotkin: Chapters 1 and 2

Assignment 1 Due

GUN FIGHTER NATION: MYTH IN ACTION

Reading: Slotkin Chapters 14 and 15.

**Week 5 6/12:** THE MOVIES: "DO WE GET TO WIN THIS TIME?"

Reading: Slotkin: 16, 17

Movies: Rambo First Blood; Part II

**WEEK 6: 6/19: LESSONS:** VIETNAM TODAY: THE SAME, VIETNAMESE REFUGEES  
IN THE U.S.: MISSION ACCOMPLISHED

Reading: Jamieson Chapter 6

Excerpt from McNamara

: THE U.S. TODAY: VICTIMS: "TRAPPED IN A WORLD WE NEVER MADE." OR  
CONQUERING OUR OWN MISTAKES? and "THE VIETNAM SYNDROME IS DEAD?"  
OR THE CONTINUING CULTURAL WAR

Reading: Slotkin: Conclusion

6/21: Assignment 2 Due, Exam 2