Course Title:
Seminar in American History: History of the Vietnam War

Course Number:
HIST 6400-104

Course Description:
This course will explore the origins and conduct of the Vietnam War from roughly 1945 to 1975 and consider its continuing relevance today. Specifically, the course will address the lessons and legacies of the war and why they continue to influence American thinking and foreign and military policy. In due course, we will address the historical debates about how the war should be interpreted.

Class Dates, Location and Hours:
Location: 3281 Sheridan Road, Fort Sill, Oklahoma.
Hours: Fri 5:30-9:00 p.m., Sat 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.; Sun 12:00-4:00 p.m.
Last day to enroll or drop without penalty: March 15, 2012

Site Director:
Tamara Sutteer. Assistant: Anita Bailey. Phone: 580-355-1974; Fax: 580-351-9674; E-mail: apftsill@ou.edu

Professor Contact Information:
Course Professor: Charles E. Rankin, Ph.D.
Mailing Address: University of Oklahoma Press
2800 Venture Drive
Norman, OK 73069
Telephone Number: (405) 325-2873
Fax Number: (405) 325-4000
E-mail Address: cerankin@ou.edu
Professor availability: The professor will be available via e-mail to students before and after the class sessions. On-site office hours are half an hour before and after each class session, by appointment.

Textbook(s) and Instructional Materials:
Student materials are available at the Follett/AP Bookstore located in the Oklahoma Memorial Union, 900 Asp Ave., Norman, OK. Orders can be placed online at www.oklahomaunion.bkstr.com or by telephone at 866-369-9713 (toll free in the U.S.) or 405-325-5960 (outside the U.S.). E-mail orders may be sent to oklahomaunion@bkstr.com. Representatives are available from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. CST Monday through Thursday and 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. CST on Friday. Summer hours: 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. CST. Faxed orders may be placed 24 hours a day to 866-223-5607 (toll free in the U.S.) or 405-325-1557 (outside the U.S.).


6. Materials posted on the OU Desire to Learn (D2L) system: Access D2L at [http://learn.ou.edu](http://learn.ou.edu); enter your OU NetID (4+4) and password, and select course to access material. Please contact your local Site Director if you require assistance.
   - First will be the “Conclusion” to Patrick Hagopian’s *The Vietnam War in American Memory: Veterans, Memorials, and the Politics of Healing*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2009, pp. 399-432, 520-29.

Note: The Follett/AP Bookstore is the Advanced Programs contractual textbook provider. Should text changes become necessary after publication of the course syllabus, Advanced Programs will facilitate text returns/refunds only for texts purchased through the Follett/AP Bookstore.

**Suggested reading:**


**Course Objectives:**

One objective of this course will be to give students a well-grounded understanding of America’s involvement in Vietnam, 1945-1975. Another is to explore why the Vietnam War remains relevant today. Key to that are such questions as: Why was the U.S. involved in Vietnam? Could the U.S. have won? Who or what was to blame for U.S. failure in Vietnam? How has the war been interpreted and why is it continuously being re-interpreted? What are the most important lessons and legacies from the Vietnam experience and how and why do they continue to shape American thinking and policies? Still another objective of this course is to help students improve their writing, reasoning, and analytical skills.

**Course Outline:**

Students should read all course texts and other material before our first class meeting. Each class will begin with a short discussion by the professor that introduces the topic and a series of questions for students to consider. Following this discussion, students will participate in further discussion with one of the above listed books being the focus for consideration during each session. The class will be divided into groups so that each group will lead the discussion on the appointed evening or weekend day. The first order of business will always be to consider what the thesis and main ideas of the book are and then to assess the strengths and weaknesses of that author’s arguments.
Assignments, Grading and Due Dates:

The grade in this course will be based on the following components:

1. There will be a pre-course writing assignment that will count for 20 percent of the grade. **Note:**

   *This paper is due on March 30, 2012, and should be e-mailed to me in either Microsoft Word or WordPerfect.* I intend to have these papers marked and graded before I arrive. By doing so, you will get much better feedback from me about the quality of your paper. If you cannot do the paper ahead of time, I will grade them without penalty while in Lawton. If you cannot get your paper to me prior to the start of class, please have it ready by the first meeting. **The paper should be NO MORE than 5 pages in length.**

   **Paper Assignment:** Read the “Conclusion” from Hagopian’s *The Vietnam War in American Memory* and succinctly: 1) discuss what you believe to be the main idea of the essay; 2) identify the key issues he raises and arguments he makes; and 3) assess what you believe to be the greatest strengths and weaknesses of his essay.

   **Paper format:** as noted above, the paper should be 5 pages in length. It should be well-written, closely argued, and tightly organized. It should avoid jargon, it should be lucid, and it should be free of grammatical and typographical errors. So that the papers will follow some kind of consistent format (and not because I am a compulsive maniac), please type your paper in 12-point Times New Roman or Bookman Old Style typeface, double-spaced it, and number all pages consecutively at the bottom center. Allow one-inch margins all around, except on the first page, which should have your name in the upper right-hand corner, then drop two inches to the title of your essay, then double-space to the beginning of the text. Indent all paragraphs five spaces, but do not quadruple space between paragraphs. You do not need a title page with fancy graphics. Any commonly accepted form of notation (footnotes, endnotes, parentheses in the text) will be satisfactory as long as you are clear and consistent.

   **Plagiarism:** Be sure not to practice any form of plagiarism. Avoiding plagiarism is simple: A good paper is all your own work with proper citations for all quoted material or proper attribution for ideas that are not your own or for material that is paraphrased. Just be clear whose words and ideas they are—yours or someone else’s. If it’s the latter case, they need citation or attribution.

   **Please be aware of the University of Oklahoma’s Guide to Academic Integrity** ([http://www.ou.edu/provost/integrity/](http://www.ou.edu/provost/integrity/)). See especially the Provost’s policy on plagiarism.

   If you have any questions about what’s right or appropriate, please ask before it’s time to turn in your paper.

2. Class participation will count 40 percent of the grade. While such an evaluation is highly subjective, the focus of evaluation will be less on quantity than on quality of participation; that is, the assessment will be based on the student’s ability to contribute to discussions by presenting thoughtful, incisive, provocative comments to the group.

3. The course will require a research paper of roughly 10 pages but NO MORE than 12 pages submitted in the format described above for the initial assignment plus a standard bibliography. Students may use any or all of the in-class readings for this paper and will be expected to draw from at least five additional secondary (or primary) sources in completing this assignment. The purpose of this assignment will be to take one of the major lessons, legacies, or topics of contention considered during the course (for example, limited war, the role of domestic politics or the media, counter-insurgency, civilian/military decision-making, memorialization, etc.) and argue why this lesson, legacy, or topic is, in your opinion, the most important. This assignment will count 40 percent of the grade.
4. The literature on the Vietnam War is vast, including historical monographs, anthologies, essay collections, memoirs, compilations of letters, diaries, and journals, poetry, short stories, novels, music, documentaries, and motion pictures, to name a few of the major genres. Sources for this assignment will be limited, however, to those that are written and non-fiction in nature.

Due Date: This paper will be due three weeks after the last day of the course. It is strongly encouraged that students complete the assignment on time. Not doing so may cause a problem with further enrollment in the program or with funds to pay for the class if the professor is forced to give an Incomplete or “I” for the course. If difficulties arise and the paper simply cannot be completed by the due date, students will have to email the professor and formally request an “I” grade.

Grading: This is a letter-graded course: A, B, C, D, or F.

NOTICE: Failure to meet assignment due dates could result in a grade of I (Incomplete) and may adversely impact Tuition Assistance and/or Financial Aid.
POLICIES AND NOTICES

Attendance/Grade Policy

Attendance and participation in interaction, individual assignments, group exercises, simulations, role playing, etc. are valuable aspects of any course because much of the learning comes from discussions in class with other students. It is expected that you attend all classes and be on time except for excused emergencies.

Excused absences are given for professor mandated activities or legally required activities such as emergencies or military assignments. Unavoidable personal emergencies, including (but not limited to) serious illness; delays in getting to class because of accidents, etc.; deaths and funerals, and hazardous road conditions will be excused.

If you are obtaining financial assistance (TA, STAP, FA, VA, Scholarship, etc.) to pay all or part of your tuition cost, you must follow your funding agency/institution’s policy regarding “I” (Incomplete) grades unless the timeline is longer than what the University policy allows then you must adhere to the University policy.

Students who receive Financial Aid must resolve/complete any “I” (Incomplete) grades by the end of the term or he/she may be placed on “financial aid probation.” If the “I” grade is not resolved/completed by the end of the following term, the student’s Financial Aid may be suspended make the student ineligible for further Financial Aid.

Students are responsible for meeting the guidelines of Tuition Assistance and Veterans Assistance. See the education counselor at your local education center for a complete description of your TA or VA requirements.

Academic Honesty

Honesty is a fundamental precept in all academic activities and … [you] have a special obligation to observe the highest standards of honesty. Academic misconduct in any form is inimical to the purposes and functions of the University and is therefore unacceptable and is rigorously proscribed. Academic misconduct includes:

- cheating (using unauthorized materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise), plagiarism,
- falsification of records, unauthorized possession of examinations, intimidation, and any and all other actions that may improperly affect the evaluation of a student’s academic performance or achievement;
- assisting others in any such act; or attempting to engage in such acts.

All acts of academic misconduct will be reported and adjudicated as prescribed by the student code of the University of Oklahoma. All students should review the “Student’s Guide to Academic Integrity” found at http://www.ou.edu/provost/integrity

Accommodation Statement

The College of Continuing Education [Advanced Programs] is committed to making its activities as accessible as possible. For accommodations on the basis of disability, please contact your OU Site Director.

Course Policies

Advanced Programs policy is to order books in paperback if available. Courses, dates, and professors are subject to change. Please check with your OU Site Director. Students should retain a copy of any assignments that are mailed to the professor for the course.

Copyright

Any and all course materials, syllabus, lessons, lectures, etc. are the property of professor teaching the course and the Board of Regents of the University of Oklahoma and are protected under applicable copyright.

For more information about Advanced Programs, visit our website at: http://www.goou.ou.edu/
INSTRUCTOR VITA
Charles E. Rankin

Education
- B.A. Journalism, University of Oklahoma, Norman, 1971
- M.A. History, Colorado State University, Fort Collins, Colorado, 1982
- Ph.D. History, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, New Mexico, 1994

Current Positions
- Editor-in-Chief and Associate Director, University of Oklahoma Press
- Adjunct Professor, Department of History, University of Oklahoma
- Advanced Programs Professor since 2011

Frequently Taught Advanced Programs Courses
- HIST 6400 Seminar in American History

Major Areas of Teaching and Research Interest
- History of the American West
- History of journalism and mass communications
- Vietnam War

Representative Publications and Presentations
Books:
- Wallace Stegner: Man and Writer, editor, University of New Mexico Press, with introduction, 1996.

Articles:
- “‘Not Such a Pretty Picture’: Complexity and Understanding in The West,” Western Historical Quarterly, 28 (Autumn 1997), 298-304.
- “Type and Stereotype: Frederic E. Lockley, Pioneer Journalist,” American Journalism, 14 (Spring 1997), 182-204.
Representative Honors and Awards Received

- The Huntington Library, Fletcher Jones Fellowship, two months, 1995
- The Huntington Library, Keck Fellowship, one month, 1992
- Dorothy Woodward Fellowship, History Department, University of New Mexico, 1989-1990
- The Huntington Library, Fletcher Jones Fellowship, 1989-1990
- Bert M. Fireman Prize, Western History Association, 1989-1990
- University of New Mexico, Endowed Graduate Fellowship, 1988-1989
- University of New Mexico, Graduate Achievement Award, 1988-1989
- Western History Association, Walter Rundell Award for Outstanding Graduate Student, 1988
- University of New Mexico Graduate Student Association Research Grant, 1988
- Charles Redd Center for Western Studies, Student Fellowship, summer 1986
- University of New Mexico Graduate Student Association Research Grant, 1986
- Wyoming Council for the Humanities, Fellowship Grant for Independent Study, 1984-1985

Major Professional Affiliations

- Society for Military History
- Organization of American Historians
- Western History Association