Course Title:
Seminar in American History: The American Experience in Vietnam

Course Number:
HIST 6400-221

Course Description:
This course will explore how America became involved in Vietnam and the political, diplomatic, intellectual, military, and moral results of that involvement. We will focus on American policy - what assumptions and political factors led to its formulation, how the policy was defended and attacked by Americans at home, and what were the consequences of our course of action for the American people.

Class Dates, Location and Hours:
Dates: February 18-23, 2014
Location: Wiesbaden, Germany. See Site Director for classroom site.
Hours: Tue-Fri 6:00-9:30 p.m.; Sat-Sun 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.
Last day to enroll or drop without penalty: January 20, 2014

Site Director:
Wade Jackson, Taylor Chavis, and Nicole Gray. Phone: 00-49-611-705-5937; DSN 337-5937; Fax: 00-49-611-705-6188; DSN 337-6188; E-mail: apwiesbaden@ou.edu

Professor Contact Information:
Course Professor: David W. Levy, Ph.D.
Mailing Address: Department of History
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455 West Lindsey St.
Norman, OK 73019-0535
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(405) 325-6002 Dept. office
(405) 210-3565 Cell
Fax Number: (405) 325-4503
E-mail Address: dwlevy@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 OU Follett Bookstore located at 1185 Asp Avenue; Norman, OK. Orders can be placed online at www.oklahoma bkstr.com. Faxed orders may be placed 24 hours a day at (405) 325-7770. Representatives are available by phone at (405) 325-3511 or (800) 522-0772 (toll-free) or E-mail at 0831mgr@fheg.follett.com from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Thursday; 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Friday; and 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday (CST). Summer hours: 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday (CST). (Text prices are available online.)


Note: Follett 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 Follett.

**Course Objectives:**

The object of this course is to learn about the history of the American involvement in Vietnam. It is also hoped that the Vietnam experience can serve as a “case study” and that students will emerge with a better understanding of the processes and the pressures that come into play when a nation sets out to make and implement foreign policy in a complex world. Another objective in this course, as in any other, is to improve the writing, reasoning, and analytical skills of the participants.

**Course Outline:**

I. Introductions, etc.
   a. Collecting the pre-seminar assignment
   b. The history of Vietnam through 1954
II. American becomes involved, 1940-1965
III. Quiz over Herring and Appy
   a. The ideology of American involvement
IV. The contentions of opponents of the war
V. American politics and Vietnam
   a. Combat in Vietnam
   b. The Tet Offensive
   c. How various groups of Americans felt about the war
   d. The search for peace
VI. Closure
   a. How Americans now feel about the war
   b. Final examination

**Assignments, Grading and Due Dates:**

The grade in this course will be given on the basis of the following five components:

**First:**

There will be a pre-course writing assignment that will count for 20% of the grade. This is the assignment:

Write a three- to five-page paper in which you defend any one of the following statements:

a. George Herring’s book, *America’s Longest War*, is biased on the “conservative” side—that is, it is too supportive of American policy in Vietnam, too “hawkish” (pro-war), and too sympathetic to American purposes and actions in Vietnam.

b. George Herring’s book, *America’s Longest War*, is biased on the “liberal” side—that is, it is too critical of American policy in Vietnam, too “dovish” (anti-war), and too unsympathetic to American purposes and actions in Vietnam.

c. George Herring’s book, *America’s Longest War*, is, on the whole, balanced and objective—that is, it tries to be even-handed and fair to all shades of opinion and is not biased in any particular direction.

This pre-course assignment (obviously) is designed to require students to read Herring’s account of the Vietnam experience with some care, but also with detachment and in a critical spirit, to “judge” his work as a historian and not to merely accept his judgments as being “true” and beyond questioning.

In this paper, students should support their arguments with examples from Herring’s book, with close analysis of his arguments and the language he uses to make his case, with speculation about other ways of looking at things, etc.
The paper should be well written—understandable, concise, carefully argued. It should avoid jargon and strive for directness and clarity of expression. It should also be correct—obeying the normal rules of paragraphing, punctuation, spelling, etc. If documentation is used, any commonly accepted form of notation (footnotes, parentheses in the text, endnotes) will be satisfactory—as long as the same form is used consistently through the paper and the reader will be able to check quotations used in the paper, for accuracy and context. The paper will be collected at the first session of the class.

Second:
There will be a short quiz given over the two required texts. This quiz will be objective and will require students to demonstrate that they have read and understood the two books. The questions will concentrate entirely on the contents of the books and will not involve interpretation or analysis—probing these deeper aspects of the books will take place in our class discussion of them. About half the questions will be drawn from Herring and about half from Appy. The questions will be in the form of multiple choice or short essay answers and it should require no more than half an hour of class time. This quiz will be worth 20% of the final grade.

Third:
There will be a final examination in this course, given on the last day. It will be designed to last for two hours and it will be entirely in the essay format. In it students will be expected to demonstrate a thoughtful and analytical synthesis of all the materials of the course—readings, lectures, class discussions. There will be some choice given on the final exam (two out of three questions, or three out of four). The final examination will be worth 20% of the final grade.

Fourth:
The professor will attempt to make some evaluation of the quality of each student’s participation in discussions—the premium will be placed not on the mere “quantity” of the talk, but on the intelligence, thoughtfulness, and helpfulness of contributions to class discussions. This evaluation will count for 20% of the final grade.

Fifth:
There will be a post-seminar reading assignment designed both to enhance the course objectives and to permit students to pursue their own interests relating to the topic of the course. This assignment will require each student to read three additional books (that is, books other than the two required texts by Herring and Appy). Each student is perfectly free to choose his or her three from the following list, basing the choice on each one’s own concerns.

- Kinnard, Douglas, *The War Managers* (1977). A general who was there interviews other generals about their perceptions of the war.


Highly acclaimed study—the war could have been avoided.


Moore, Harold and Joseph Galloway, *We Were Soldiers Once...and Young: Ia Drang, the Battle that Changed the War in Vietnam* (1992). One of the best books written on actual combat—a classic.


If a student wishes to substitute a book of his or her own for ONE of the books on the above list (no more than one), please check with me in advance. I will be sympathetic to a proposed substitution, but will also want to assure myself that the book being proposed meets accepted academic standards.

Each student will write a short (roughly two page, double-spaced) report on each of the three books. Each of these three reports should consist of two unequal parts. The first third (or so) of each report should explain what the author attempts to accomplish in the book—what are the main topics, the principal themes and ideas, the central arguments, etc. In short, the first third of the report should constitute proof that the student has read the book carefully and understands its contents and point of view. The second two-thirds (or so) of the report should consist of the student’s thoughtful evaluation of the book—its strongest and weakest points, the competency of its research, whether or not it is biased one way or another, what questions it raises but doesn’t answer, how it compares to other views the student may have encountered, etc. In short, the second two-thirds of each of these reports should constitute proof that the student has thought carefully and hard about the book and is prepared to make critical judgments about its quality. This aspect of the course will count for 20% of the final grade.

These reports should be in the professor’s hands any time before March 16, 2014; the sooner the better.

**Grading:**

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

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>Percent of Grade</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-course assignment</td>
<td>First class session</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quiz over Herring and Appy</td>
<td>Third class session</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Examination</td>
<td>Last class session</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>During class sessions</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Seminar Assignment</td>
<td>March 16, 2014</td>
<td>20</td>
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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. It is the policy of the University to excuse absences of students that result from religious observances and to provide without penalty for the rescheduling of examinations and additional required class work that may fall on religious holidays. 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

Accommodation Statement

The University of Oklahoma is committed to making its activities as accessible as possible. For accommodations on the basis of disability, please contact your local 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. Advanced Programs does not provide duplicating services or office supplies.

Copyright

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INSTRUCTOR VITA

David W. Levy, Ph. D.

Education

- 1959  B.A., University of Illinois
- 1961  M.A., University of Chicago
- 1967  Ph.D., University of Wisconsin

Current Positions

- Advanced Programs Professor since 2000
- David Ross Boyd Professor of American History, The University of Oklahoma, Emeritus
- Irene and Julian J Rothbaum Professor of Modern History, Emeritus

Major Areas of Teaching and Research Interest

- American intellectual history
- The progressive movement
- American legal history
- Vietnam

Representative Publications and Presentations

- FDR’s Fireside Chats (Penguin Books, 1994)
- The Letters of Louis D. Brandeis (5 vols.; State University of New York Press, 1972-78)
- Mark Twain: The Divided Mind of America’s Best-Loved Writer (Prentice Hall, 2010)
- Around fifty articles in various scholarly and popular journals, encyclopedias, etc.

Representative Honors and Awards Received

- Phi Beta Kappa
- AMOCO Distinguished Teaching Award (1971)
- Regents Award for Superior Teaching (1973)
- University of Oklahoma Students’ Award for Best Teacher on the Campus, 1985
- University of Oklahoma Students’ Award for Best Teacher in the College of Arts and Sciences (1995)
- Various research grants