

Seminar: Encounters

Loyola University Chicago – Vietnam Center

Spring 2019

UNIV 103 VO1 S19

Instructor Information

Name: Jason A Picard

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Class Meetings: Thursday (10-12)

Office Hours: By Appointment

Course Objectives:

1. To link classroom learning with the everyday experiences that each student will encounter.
2. To challenge students to recognize and interrogate their own biases and preconceived notions about Vietnam, its peoples, and its cultures.
3. To introduce students to basic coping skills for their time in Vietnam.
4. To help students to decode everyday engagements and interactions.
5. To tackle “big questions” and “big ideas”.

Requirements:

1. Attend and participate in each class meeting
2. Complete readings before each class meeting
3. Keep weekly journal. To be turned in by 8 pm the Wednesday before class

Grading:

Course is Pass/Fail

Course Schedule

1. Introduction – January 17, 2019
 - a. Get to know you session – establishing basic lines of communication with students
 - b. Vietnam essentials – The classroom in Vietnam
2. “The Village Underground”: Củ Chi and The Vietnam War – January 24, 2019
 - a. What was the “Vietnam War”? When did it begin?
 - b. What are the Củ Chi Tunnels?
 - c. Reading Idea:
 - i. Mark P Bradley, *Vietnam At War* (New York: Cambridge Press, 2008).

3. District 5 Walking Tour – January 31, 2019
 - a. Getting to know your new home
 - b. Why is Saigon called Saigon?
 - c. Reading Ideas:
 - i. Erik Harms, *Luxury and Rubble: Civility and Dispossession in the New Saigon* (Berkeley: University of California, 2016).
 - ii. Kimberly Kay Hoang, *Dealing in Desire* (Berkeley: University of California, 2015).
4. Tết Holiday (No Class) – February 7, 2019
5. District 1 Scavenger Hunt – February 14, 2019
 - a. Students will work in teams of four
 - b. This activity is intended to challenge your comfort navigating District 1
 - c. Among other things, you will locate:
 - i. The oldest existing vegetarian restaurant in Saigon
 - ii. Vietnam’s first locally-made gourmet chocolate
 - iii. Street-sold tofu dessert
6. Cambodia – February 21, 2019
 - a. A Brief History of Cambodia
 - b. What is Angkor Wat?
 - c. Who was Pol Pot?
 - d. Reading Ideas:
 - i. Philip Short, *Pol Pot: Anatomy of a Nightmare* (New York: Henry Holt, 2004).
 - ii. Loung Ung, *First They Killed My Father: A Daughter of Cambodia Remembers* (New York: HarperCollins, 2000).
7. Colonial Legacies in Saigon – February 28, 2019
 - a. Visit “From Norodom Palace to Independence Palace, 1868-1966” Exhibit
 - b. How can architecture tell us about history?
 - c. Reading Idea:
 - i. George Orwell, “Shooting an Elephant”
8. Hồ Chí Minh – March 7, 2019
 - a. What is Communism?
 - b. Who was Hồ Chí Minh?
 - c. Was he a Communist? A Nationalist?
 - d. Reading Idea:
 - i. William Duiker, *Ho Chi Minh: A Life* (New York: Hyperion, 2000)
9. The Party and the State – March 14, 2019
 - a. What is the significance of the Communist Party?
 - b. How does the State function in Vietnam?
 - c. Where is Vietnam going?

- d. Reading Ideas:
 - i. Lê Minh Khuê, “A Small Tragedy,” in *The Stars, The Earth, The River* (Curbstone Books, 1997).
 - ii. Dương Thu Hương, *Paradise of the Blind* (New York: Penguin, 1993).
10. Central and Northern Vietnam (Pre-departure) – March 21, 2019
- a. What is the importance of Huế?
 - b. What about the significance of Hội An?
 - c. Reading Idea:
 - i. Christopher Goscha, *The Penguin History of Modern Vietnam* (New York: Penguin, 2016).
11. Hanoi – March 26-27, 2019
- a. What is Hanoi?
 - b. Who was Hồ Chí Minh?
 - c. Reading Ideas:
 - i. William Duiker, *Ho Chi Minh: A Life* (New York: Hachette, 2000).
 - ii. Bill Hayton, *Vietnam: Rising Dragon* (New Haven: Yale University, 2010).
12. Fulbright University – April 4, 2019
- a. What is it?
 - b. What is the school’s significance?
 - c. What challenges does the endeavor face?
 - i. Reading ideas:
 - 1. Mark Ashwill, The Fat Lady Finally Sings: Bob Kerrey Quietly Resigns from Fulbright University...,” May 26, 2017
<https://www.counterpunch.org/2017/05/26/the-fat-lady-finally-sings-bob-kerrey-quietly-resigns-from-fulbright-university-vietnam-leadership-position/>
 - 2. Viet Thanh Nguyen, "Bob Kerrey and the 'American Tragedy' of Vietnam," 20 June 2016,
<https://www.nytimes.com/2016/06/20/opinion/bob-kerrey-and-the-american-tragedy-of-vietnam.html>
13. The Mekong Delta (Pre-departure) – April 11, 2019
- a. Brief history of the Delta
 - b. State of the Delta today
 - c. Reading Ideas:
 - i. John Vidal, “Mekong: A River Rising,” *The Guardian*, November 26, 2015. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/ng-interactive/2015/nov/26/the-mekong-river-stories-from-the-heart-of-the-climate-crisis-interactive>
 - ii. David Biggs, *Quagmire: Nation-Building and Nature in the Mekong Delta* (Seattle: University of Washington, 2011).

14. Wrap-up – April 18, 2019

- a. Your thoughts about the semester
- b. How have your perceptions about Vietnam/Southeast Asia changed over the course of the semester?
- c. What are you taking away from the experience?
- d. Applying your experience after you leave Vietnam.

Reading Ideas

1. David Biggs, *Quagmire: Nation-Building and Nature in the Mekong Delta* (Seattle: University of Washington, 2011).
2. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*, (New York: Verso, 1996, Seventh Edition).
3. Christopher Goscha, *The Penguin History of Modern Vietnam* (New York: Penguin, 2016).
4. Lê Minh Khuê, “A Small Tragedy,” in *The Stars, The Earth, The River* (Curbstone Books, 1997).
5. Mark Philip Bradley, *Vietnam At War* (New York: Oxford University, 2009).
6. Erik Harms, *Luxury and Rubble: Civility and Dispossession in the New Saigon* (Berkeley: University of California, 2016)
7. Bill Hayton, *Vietnam: Rising Dragon* (New Haven: Yale University, 2010).

Possible Films

1. *Em bé Hà Nội* [The Girl From Hanoi], Hải Ninh (Director), 1974.
2. *Apocalypse Now*, Francis Ford Coppola, 1979.
3. *Bao giờ cho đến tháng mười* [When the Tenth Month Comes], Đặng Nhật Minh, 1984.
4. *The Killing Fields*, Roland Joffé, 1984.
5. *Platoon*, Oliver Stone, 1986.
6. *Chuyện tử tế* [The Story of Good Behavior], Trần Văn Thủy, 1987.
7. *Full Metal Jacket*, Stanley Kubrick, 1987.
8. *Indochine*, Régis Wargnier, 1992.
9. *Đời cát* [Sandy Lives], Nguyễn Thanh Vân, 2000.
10. *The Vietnam War*, Ken Burns and Lynn Novick, 2017.
11. *First They Killed My Father*, Angelina Jolie, 2017.