



VIETNAM CENTER

Contemporary Vietnam: Class, Family, and Gender

SOCL 264 / 3 Credit Hours Offered

Fall and Spring Semesters Instructor:

Nam Nguyen

Meeting Time & Location

Tuesday: 10:00 AM to 12:30 PM

Location: TBA

Course Description

This course furnishes its students with a critical examination of contemporary Vietnamese culture from a combination of sociological and cultural studies perspectives. Concentrating on the political dynamics of contemporary culture, students will understand changes and reinventions in modern Vietnamese culture and figure out the roles of various agencies in shaping and reshaping “national culture” within global contexts.

Students will be able to identify and analyze a number of key issues in the development of modern Vietnam, including national identity, family, social classes, and gender. Moreover, through the exploration of archaeology, literature, performing arts, and gastronomy, students will be able to employ various approaches from different disciplines to scrutinize how the Vietnamese have received, assimilated and localized foreign factors to enrich their cultural life. Finally, student will be able to develop different ways of understanding the diversity and drivers of Vietnamese culture. At the end of the course, students will be able to examine how contemporary Vietnamese culture and history have been perceived, shaped and presented through mainstream media and official discourses.

In order to help students better understand local culture and strengthen their spirit of community engagement, each student’s required service learning (experiential learning) assignment is an integral part of this course. Students must complete 30 hours of service work to partially fulfill the course requirements. Throughout the semester students will be asked to contemplate the linkages between their service experience and the main themes in this course, both in lectures and through a series of four ninety-minute reflections outside of class with a designated faculty member. Please see the listing of service learning opportunities at the end of this syllabus.

In addition to selected readings, documentaries (and occasionally, a feature film) are introduced in class. These cinematic materials not only provide students with vivid images of a changing Vietnam, but also bring up several issues that might have not been discussed in the readings. Excerpted clips from the assigned videos will be shown in class for discussion.

Requirements

Attendance: Regular attendance is crucial; class participation is an important part of the course.

Reading: Students are expected to cover all assigned TEXTS before attending classes

Weekly Responses:

- During your study abroad semester, you will be paired with a Vietnamese peer. Select one of the assigned readings of the week, and discuss ONE issue that you find most interesting with your Vietnamese partner. Based on your discussion (and social observations), write a 500-word response and email it to the instructor ONE day prior to class. Please note that the conversation with your Vietnamese student peer is NOT a sociological fieldwork, but provides you with a chance to review your selected issue from a local and comparative perspective.
- Each student will have a five-minute in-class presentation during the semester. The presentation will be counted toward “Attendance and class participation” (see GRADING below).

Tests:

- Two multiple-choice quizzes scheduled **for Sessions 7 and 12**.

Service Learning:

- Students must complete required service learning hours working in a local NGO or government agency. Placements include a variety of entities in the health care, education, and social services area. This experience allows students to move beyond the classroom to have direct experience with Vietnamese people and institutions. Students are encouraged to keep a journal relating to this experience.
- Each student will make a brief formal presentation to the class in the second half of the course, describing their placement and noting the relevance of this experience to topics addressed in class.
- Over the course of the semester, students will prepare and submit 2 brief reflection papers based upon their service learning experience.
- As noted in the next section, students will also incorporate their experiences with Vietnamese society, including their service experience, into their final course paper.

Final Paper:

- A final paper: This will be the analysis of a cultural issue introduced during the course, or recommended by the instructor. The analysis should be from a cultural studies perspective. More importantly students should incorporate their Vietnam experience into their reading/analysis of the selected works. The final paper should be from 6 to 8 pages in length.

- Students are encouraged to browse over the course's contents and figure out what they are interested in the most. Starting from Session 6 students should submit their potential paper topic(s) with the instructor for approval. Paper outline and references are due during Session 7.

Student Assessment

Class Participation	15%
Weekly responses from readings and discussions with Vietnamese peers	20%
Service learning	20%
Two mid-semester quizzes on the readings and lectures 10% each)	20%
Final Paper	25%

Class Schedule

SESSION 1:

Vietnamese Culture as Seen from Inside and Outside Vietnam

- Peter Cody Hunt, "An Introduction to Vietnamese Culture for Rehabilitation Service Providers in the US", at <http://cirrie.buffalo.edu/culture/monographs/vietnam.pdf>

Screening

Biological and Cultural Diversity, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=koQjksrfd1o> Hanoi

Café, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eW2B2oedp6w>

Oppa Saigon Bet Café Style, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P0HIBiSPcYQ>

SESSION 2:

A Glimpse of Cultural Studies and Vietnamese History

- Chris Barker, "Investigating Problems in Cultural Studies," in *Making Sense of Cultural Studies*, SAGE, 2002, pp. 1-20.
- Alexander Woodside, "Vietnamese History: Confucianism, Colonialism and the Struggle for Independence," *Vietnam Forum*, no. 11 (Winter-Spring 1988), pp. 21-48.

Screening

Vietnam – Timeless Charm, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pK5tGgmckZ4>

SESSION 3:

Reconstructing the Past, Reshaping National Identity

- Maurice M. Durand and Nguyen Tran Huan, *An Introduction to Vietnamese Literature*, New York: Columbia University Press, pp. 1-6.
- Ian C. Glover, "Letting the Past Serve the Present – Some Contemporary Uses of Archaeology in Vietnam," *Antiquity*, vol. 73 (1999), pp. 594-602.

Screening:

- "Dong Son Echoes," <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cvu6JBF3kvs>
- "The Worship of Hung Kings in Phu Tho," <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XAhhNIJcW-s>

SESSION 4:

Continuously Changing Religious Lives

- Laurel Kendall, Vu Thi Thanh Tam and Nguyen Thi Thu Huong, *Beautiful and Efficacious Statues: Magic, Commodities Agency and the Production of Sacred Objects in Popular Religion in Vietnam*, New York: American Museum of Natural History, 2010.
- Ngo Duc Thinh, “The Mother Goddess Religion: Its History, Pantheon, and Practices,” Karen Fjelstad and Nguyen Thi Hien, eds., *Possessed by the Spirits: Mediumship in Contemporary Vietnamese Communities*, Cornell University Southeast Asia Program Publications, 2006, pp. 19-30.

Screening:

“Drums on the Red River”, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e6F2Oolwkk8>

SESSION 5:

Family, Community, and the State

- Edyta Roszko, “From Homes to National Shrines: Religious Traditions and National-Building in Vietnam,” *East Asia*, no. 29 (2012), 25-41.
- Heonik Kwon, “Spirits in the Work of Durkheim, Hertz and Mauss: Reflections on Post War Vietnam”, *Journal of Classical Sociology*, vol. 14 (1), 2014, pp. 122-131.

Screening:

“Vietnam’s Ancestor Worship – Death Anniversary Rituals,” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y10XCrTmPSI> “The Modern Face of Vietnam – Religion Segment,” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oWXDsVryZ3A>

SESSION 6:

Social Classes in Late Socialist Vietnam

- Minh T. N. Nguyen, “Fictitious Kinship – Intimacy, Relatedness and Boundaries in the Life of Hanoi’s Migrant Domestic Workers”, *Cambridge Anthropology*, vol. 32 (2), Autumn 2014, pp. 81-96.
- Erik Harms, “Neo-Geomancy and Real Estate in Post-reform Vietnam,” *Positions*, vol. 20:2 (Spring 2012), pp. 405-434.

Screening:

“Vietnam Boom,” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ATg4Z2jLJ8c>

- * **IN-CLASS DISCUSSION: YOUR SERVICE LEARNING EXPERIENCE** *
- * **SUBMIT YOUR POTENTIAL PAPER TOPIC FOR APPROVAL** *

SESSION 7:

Disparities within Social Classes

- Mytoan Nguyen-Akbar, “The Tensions of Diasporic ‘Return’ Migration: How Class and Money Create Distance in Vietnamese Transnational Family,” *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, March 26, 2014, DOI: 10.1177/0891241613516630, 1-26.
- Elizabeth Pond, “Vietnam’s Second Revolution,” *World Policy Journal*, March 2014 vol. 31:1, 107-113

Screening: TBA

- * **First Quiz** (Covering the contents of the first six sessions) *

SESSION 8:

Gender Issues in Socio-Cultural Contexts

- Philip Martin, “‘I want to take risks, like my mother’: Memory, affect, and Vietnamese Masculinities – The Legacy of Gendered Variations in Socio-Economic Mobility during *Đổi mới*,” *Norwegian Journal of Geography*, vol. 67:4, pp. 210-218.
- Catherine Earl, “Middle Classes in Post-Reform Ho Chi Minh City”, in *Vietnam’s New Middle Classes – Gender, Career, City*, Copenhagen K, Denmark: Nordic Institute of Asian Studies (NIAS), pp. 1-35.

Screening:

“Building Gender Equality in Vietnam,” <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZpYay-aG1tA>

SESSION 9:

Various Paths of Life in a Changing Society

- Catherine Earl, “Living in Twenty-First Century Ho Chi Minh City”, in *Vietnam’s New Middle Classes – Gender, Career, City*, pp. 87-109.
- Kristen W. Endres, “‘*Lộc* Bestowed by Heaven’: Fate, Fortune, and Morality in the Vietnamese Market,” *The Asia Pacific Journal of Anthropology*, vol. 16:3 (2015), pp. 227-243.

Screening: TBA

SESSION 10:

Family Planning and Divorce

- Tine M. Gammeltoft, “Choice as Belonging”, in *Haunting Images – A Cultural Account of Selective Reproduction in Vietnam*, Berkely and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 2014, pp. 7-28.
- Ha Song Vu et al., “Divorce in the Context of Domestic Violence against Women in Vietnam,” *Culture, Health & Sexuality*, 2014, vol. 16:6, 637-647

Screening:

“War of the Lotuses – A Divorce Mock

Mediation,” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mDNr0spaaDU>

SESSION 11:

Assimilating and Localizing Foreign Actors

- Huong Nguyen, “Globalization, Consumerism, and the Emergence of Teens in Contemporary Vietnam,” *Journal of Social History* (2015), doi: 10.1093/jsh/shv009, pp. 1-16.
- “K-Pop Entrances Youth but to What Effect?” *Vietnam News*, January 15, 2013 at <http://vietnamnews.vn/sunday/features/235313/k-pop-entrances-youth-but-to-what-effect.html>

Screening:

“Saigon Electric” (A feature film, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YuT2s49dN7U>)

* PAPER OUTLINE & REFERENCES DUE THIS WEEK *

SESSION 12:

Stories of the Three Cities – Hanoi, Hue, and Ho Chi Minh (aka. Saigon)

- Colin Long, “Feudalism in the Service of the Revolution – Reclaiming Heritage in Hue,” *Critical Asian Studies*, vol. 35:4, pp. 535-558.

- Erik Harms, “The Problem of Urban Civilization on Saigon’s Edge”, in *Saigon’s Edge – On the Margins of Ho Chi Minh City*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011, pp. 193-220.

Screening:

“Hanoi Public Market,” <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=78m8VetEWTU>

* **SECOND QUIZ** (Covering contents from Sessions 7 to 12) *

SESSION 13:

Different Tastes of Vietnam

- Nir Avieli, “Local Specialties, Local Identity”, in *Rice Talk – Food and Community in a Vietnamese Town*, Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2012, pp. 66- 99.

Screening:

“Luke Nguyen’s Memories of Vietnam”

* **FINAL PAPER DUE ON DECEMBER 6, 2016 BY 11:00 PM LOCAL TIME** *

Service Learning Placements Fall 2016

Studying at the Vietnam Center provides students with an excellent opportunity to engage the local Vietnamese community, and be engaged by them, through our service-learning program. Integrated into the required sociology course (service learning is 20% of the grade for this course) students commit 2-3 hours a week to working with various non-profit or humanitarian organizations throughout Ho Chi Minh City. Depending on their interests, students can design and teach English curriculum for Vietnamese living with disabilities; work in a local Vietnamese orphanage and participate in fun activities with the children; take action for better housing rights through advocacy work with Habitat for Humanity; or volunteer with a local free-clinic and gain valuable experience in physio-therapy and other aspects of patient care.

The service-learning program is a unique chance for students to deepen their intellectual and emotional understanding of life for the people living in a developing country, as well as their understanding of social justice.

DRD

Disability Research and Capacity Development Center (or DRD) began in December 2005, with a grant from the Ford Foundation. DRD's mission is to work for an inclusive and barrier-free society, where PWDs have capacity to participate in all activities equally and equitably. The immediate goals are to: 1) Enhance the disability - equality awareness of Vietnamese society members and PWDs themselves; 2) Build capacity for PWDs and groups/organizations of PWDs, including capacity for PWD's to work in meaningful jobs.

No skill is more valuable than English fluency for helping the clients of DRD obtain a good job in Vietnam. Loyola students support the DRD English program by going to DRD twice a week to serve as English tutors, and lead the clients of DRD in English Speaking Club. Recently, students have started designing the English curriculum themselves, creatively introducing new language activities to better fit the needs of members with varying fluency levels. Over the three years of Loyola's involvement with DRD, there has been a dramatic rise in the English level of DRD participants.

Mai Tam

Established in Ho Chi Minh City in July 2005 by the Jesuits, Mai Tam was set up to care for and feed street children, abandoned children, orphans and especially babies who were infected with HIV. From the original two mothers and two babies, the shelter has now grown to 60 children, only eight of whom are not HIV+. Initially the shelter functioned only to house abandoned children, but thanks to good-hearted benefactors the children now enjoy benefit from various learning tools, educational resources, and toys, which enhance their lives. Loyola students who participate at Mai Tam play games with the young residents, teach them basic English, and give them love and affection.

Green Bamboo Warm Shelter

The Green Bamboo Warm Shelter cares for boys who have been living on the street by providing them

with shelter, food, healthcare and education. Three years ago, the shelter opened a small kitchen on its premises, and delivers lunches each day to the employees of local businesses. The sales of these lunches is the main source of support for Bamboo Shelter and also provides an opportunity for training the boys. Students in the Loyola program help with lunch preparation and also teach the young boys English. Activities such as art, music and sport are also popular with the boys. The shelter regularly hosts German and Dutch student-volunteers throughout the semester that work closely with Loyola Vietnam Center students and share their service experiences.

Free – Clinic

Healthcare in Vietnam does not adequately meet the needs of the people. The Carmelite order runs a free-clinic on the grounds of a local Catholic church, close to the dormitory where the Loyola students live during the program. The clinic is funded by parishioners and organized by priests; doctors, dentists, medical students, and volunteers provide services, depending on their qualifications, such as routine check-ups, acupuncture, physical therapy, dental services, and free medicines to poor or unemployed Vietnamese. Loyola students have served as assistants at the clinic, performing tasks such as taking heart rates and blood pressure, removing acupuncture needles, assisting in physical therapy, or monitoring patients' vitals. Students have also organized donation drives in which they collect toiletries, vitamins, or old clothing to provide to the clinic. This is an excellent service learning opportunity for a student interested in a career in the medical field.

Habitat for Humanity ASEAN

Habitat for Humanity opened its first office in Vietnam in 2001. Since then, HFH has expanded throughout the country and enabled more than 12,823 low-income Vietnamese families to improve their living conditions through decent homes, clean water and sanitation. Students in the Loyola program have the opportunity to work with HFH's team in HCMC, where they actively advocate for affordable and sustainable housing rights for low-income Vietnamese, as well as create and implement fundraising ideas or events. There is also an opportunity for a group of Loyola students to form a team to build a house in the Mekong Delta toward the end of the semester, planning all aspects of the project from beginning to end. Working with HFH presents those students interested in a career within the non-profit field (especially for those interested in international development).