HIST3020, Thinking and Writing in History
The Vietnam War in American Experience
Spring 2019
Thursdays 3:30–6 pm, CHEM 131

This class This is HIST3020, Thinking and Writing in History, with a theme on The Vietnam War in American Experience. The Vietnam War was not only America’s second-longest war, but possibly its most controversial one, and debates about it continue to echo not only among scholars but also among the general public. Therefore, a critical and thoughtful attitude toward understanding the war and different Americans’ experiences of it is crucial.

Goals The course is primarily a research skills course; while you will undoubtedly learn much about the Vietnam War, you should not expect to master a wide variety of content about the war as you might in a content-oriented course. (That course is HIST4166, which I also teach regularly.) The main goal is for you to learn to sift through sources, juxtapose arguments, and set information you gather in context in ways that produces something new. (This also explains why we are focusing on the American rather than the Vietnamese experience of the war: it would be difficult for us to gain sufficient insight into Vietnamese experiences from English-language materials.)

SLOs The history department has recently developed a set of Student Learning Objectives (SLOs) that attempt to formalize the set of habits of mind that we as historians believe are the key aspects of historical thinking. This course will particularly emphasize SLOs 5, 6, 7, and 8.

Decorum

Be kind. Brisk intellectual debate is a wonderful thing; personal attacks are an abomination and a drag. Be courteous and generous toward your fellow students. Try not to come in late, and please avoid disruptive or flagrantly inattentive behavior during class meetings. (Penalties may apply.)

Don’t cheat. Academic dishonesty, apart from generally stinking to high heaven, is an insult to your instructors, your fellow students, and your own abilities. Any kind of cheating or plagiarism is utterly unacceptable and will be penalized. You are required to know and abide by the CU honor code.

I reserve the right to make changes to this syllabus.
Assignments and grade breakdown

Grade breakdown

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canvas quizzes</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homeworks (10)</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm paper</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project proposal</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project proposal revised</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Project lousy draft</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Project final draft</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Presentation (10 minutes)</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
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Extra credit: You can receive extra credit for visiting the Writing Center to discuss a draft of any of the written assignments, half an extra credit point per appointment (up to two total.) You will need evidence of the visit—usually evidence of the appointment and an email explaining what you went over. To learn more about the Writing Center and make an appointment, visit http://www.colorado.edu/pwr/writingcenter.html.

Books and articles


Farge, Arlette. The Allure of the Archives. Yale University Press, 2013. (Chapter 1)


Grading principles

All your written work will be evaluated pass/fail for each of the following components:

**Component 1 (55%): Following instructions.** The author has done what the instructions say. On the whole, the work has the required number of the required types of sources, uses them in the required ways, adheres to the word count requirement, addresses all the questions posed, et cetera. (Note that if one or more non-trivial components of the assignment is missing or seriously incomplete, you **really may receive a zero even on this portion**, i.e., lose more than half the points. Don’t risk it. Read the instructions.)

**Component 2 (15%): Careful completion of requirements.** The author has made sure the work meets the substantive requirements fully and in good faith: for example, the number of sources meets or exceeds the number required, the sources are of good quality, and the work engages with them (i.e., does not simply cite them to be able to count them.)

**Component 3 (5%): Organization.** Effort has gone into organizing the work clearly.

**Component 4 (5%): Formatting.** Basic formatting standards have been followed (has author’s name and assignment title, reasonable font and margins, reasonably clean and intelligible citations, etc.)

**Component 5 (5%): Meticulous professional standard.** The work is spell checked and grammar checked and the presentation is professional.

**Component 6 (5%): Thoughtful work.** Evidence of having taken time to really think about the assignment beyond mere rote completion of requirements.

**Component 7 (10%): Excellence** Excellence includes quality of research, depth of thought, and fluidity and eloquence of communication. You are unlikely to achieve any score for this component if you did not get a pass for all of the above components. The rule of thumb is that about 10 percent of the class will achieve excellence on any given assignment.

**Each component is graded pass/fail**, so that if you meet the expectations you receive full points for that component, and if your work falls short of them you receive no points for the component. This is a rigorous standard and will be applied strictly. The responsibility to make sure you understand the instructions and that your work meets them is yours. If in doubt, ask!

**Why grade like this?**

**Rigor** The purpose of assignments is to help you learn. If you do not read instructions carefully or if you allow yourself to turn in sloppy work, you learn less. Components 1 through 5 aim to ensure this does not happen. Components 6 and 7 recognize that producing excellent, thoughtful work requires more than routine completion of requirements.

**Consistency** I find that when grading on a point scale, there is a certain level of arbitrariness: while “C” work is pretty easy to define, it is rather hard to define the difference between a 72 and a 74. Yet sometimes a one-point difference may affect your final grade for the course.

**Transparency** The largest part of the grade is made up of components 1 through 5. For each of these, you should be able to ensure a pass by meticulously following instructions and double-checking your work (which are good habits to cultivate.)

**Reduced stress** Hopefully, the transparency will reduce your stress about the assignments. Meanwhile, I can use my grading time more productively in giving you substantive suggestions for improvement rather than in agonizing over whether you should get an 81 or an 82.
Weekly routine

Don’t forget the Canvas quiz and (most weeks) homework. If you fail to complete the quiz and homework prior to class, you only get half credit for attendance that day. Most of our time in class will be spent discussing or in hands-on work, though I may provide brief lectures on various aspects of the war.

Homeworks marked (T) have a template. Get the template before doing the reading for that week. Templates are on Google Docs: http://bit.ly/3020homeworks — download the template or make a copy of it into your own Google Drive so you can edit it. Leave the questions in place. Submit on Canvas.

Formatting of written work: Double-spaced, 12-point Times New Roman or similar font, one-inch margins, include page numbering, your name, assignment name, class number, and date.

Schedule

Week 1, 1/17: The arc and issues of the Vietnam War

Themes: Overview of the war and of this class; starting to think about how history is produced and what it is like as a discipline
Reading: None
Skills: Active listening; building a birds-eye view; being attentive to genres of scholarship
Homework: None

Week 2, 1/24: What is history?

Themes: Historiography; types of history; how & why written history changes over time
Mabbett reading: Chapter 1 (A History Essay is History)
Other readings: Edwards, “How to Read” (10 pp.); McMahon, “Contested Memory” (26 pp.); Farge, Allure of the Archives, ch 1 (17 pp.)
Skills: Purposeful reading; skimming
Homework: 1: Close reading McMahon’s article (T)

Week 3, 1/31: Reading scholarship

Themes: What’s a book/article about and not about?; reading scholarship for research; using library resources
Mabbett reading: Chapter 2 (A History Essay is More than History) and Chapter 3 (History Essay as a Process)
Other readings: Appy, Intro & last chapter, plus skim ALL endnotes and bibliography
Skills: Gaining an overview of a work and its evidence
Homework: 2: Write about one page (ca. 300-350 words) answering the following question: What is Appy’s main argument and what kinds of evidence does he rely on?

Week 4, 2/7: Argument and evidence

Themes: Juxtaposing scholarly arguments and comparing evidence; distinguishing between types of evidence; evaluating scholars’ viewpoints
Mabbett reading: Chapter 6 (Reading Critically) and Chapter 8 (Explanation, Judgment, Historical Imagination)
Other readings: Appy, Chapter 1; Moon, “Peace on Earth”
Skills: Moving between different levels of evaluation and analysis
Homework: 3: Comparing Appy, McMahon, and Moon (T)
Week 5, 2/14: The production of scholarship

Themes: The bread and butter of scholarship; primary versus secondary sources
Mabbett reading: Chapter 4 (Knowing your sources)
Other readings: Appy, Chapters 2–4; Appy, “Muffling of Public Memory”; find and read two (2) book reviews of Appy’s Working Class War
Skills: Understanding how scholarship is produced and evaluated; how to track and begin to participate in the scholarly conversation; finding primary sources and understanding their use
Homework: 4: Write a two-page (ca. 600 words) analysis of how the book reviews you found evaluate Appy’s book and how Appy evaluates the work of other scholars in “Muffling of Public Memory.”

Week 6, 2/21: Archives; Oral history

Please note: We will meet in Special Collections (Norlin Library room M350B) for the first hour of class.

Themes: The nature of oral history; how archival collections work
Mabbett reading: Chapter 12 (Citing)
Other readings: Finish Appy; Portelli, “Death of Luigi Trastulli”
Skills: Understanding archives and other types of historical source material
Homework: 5: Create a list of correctly formatted citations from secondary and primary sources given (T)

Week 7, 2/28: Peer critique (online, no class meeting)

***Midterm paper due on Monday 2/26, 3pm No quiz this week

Themes: Synthesizing and evaluating scholarship and peer work
Mabbett reading: None
Other readings: All your classmates’ midterm papers
Skills: Offering constructive critique; learning from seeing how others do things
Homework: 6: Peer critiques of classmates’ papers on Canvas (due Friday 3/1 3pm)

Week 8, 3/7: Working with primary sources & developing a project idea

Themes: The difference between a primary-source and secondary-source research paper
Mabbett reading: Chapter 9 (Planning); Chapter 10 (Writing and Independent Thought); Chapter 11 (Writing and Organizing)
Other readings: Three Tests for a Good Thesis; revisit Appy, “Muffling” and Moon, “Peace on Earth”
Skills: Learning to formulate a good question; understanding the relationship between sources and scope
Homework: 7: Write a one-page idea for your project and bring one relevant primary source related to it to class. In your one-pager, explain what kinds of sources the project draws on—ideally you will have identified some potential source collections. Also make clear what the (tentative) central question(s) is/are.

Week 9, 3/14: Project proposal workshop

***Project proposal draft due Monday 3/11 3pm (for peer critique)

Themes: Refining research plans
Mabbett reading: Reread Chapter 2 (A History Essay is More than History)
Other readings: Two of your peer’s proposal drafts
Skills: Talking about your research; giving and learning from critique

Homework: 8: Detailed peer critiques of two classmates’ proposals on Canvas

**Week 10, 3/21: Deeper into sources & refining a project idea**

***Project proposal revision due before class***

Themes: Developing a deeper understanding of a primary-source research project

Mabbett reading: Reread Chapter 3 (History Essay as a Process)

Other readings: Primary source packet (TBA)

Skills: Finding, analyzing, and sifting through primary sources

Homework: 9: 1) write a few examples of Moon (“Peace on Earth”) paraphrasing and quoting (just copy the examples down, and cite the page number) and 2) write one paragraph with examples of you describing, quoting, and paraphrasing one of your primary sources. Think of this paragraph as going into your research paper.

**Week 11, 3/28: ***Spring Break***

**Week 12, 4/4: No class, work on your project**

Individual meetings this week; schedule a 30-minute meeting with me M/Tu/W

Also highly recommended that you meet with the history librarian.

**Week 13, 4/11: The iterative process of talking about, writing, and researching your paper**

Themes: Evaluating what is “enough” and how to improve

Mabbett reading: Reread Chapter 11

Other readings: None

Skills: Reverse outlining; evaluating your evidence; revising your argument; oral presentation

Homework: 10: Prepare a 3-minute mini-presentation of your project.

**Week 14, 4/18: No class, work on your project**

Individual meetings this week; schedule a 30-minute meeting with me.

**Week 15, 4/25: Warrior Storyfield (tentative)**

***Project lousy draft due Fri 4/26 3pm***

***Quiz due a day early, Wed 4/24 11am***

Meet at Warrior Storyfield, Longmont, for a discussion with Vietnam War veterans and others on the experience and memory of (the Vietnam) war. https://www.warriorstoryfield.org/

**Week 16, 5/2: Presentations**

No quiz this week, instead fill out anonymous Qualtrics survey providing responses to WSF folks

Themes: Presentations of your projects!

Readings: None

Skills: Oral presentation; active listening

Homework: None

Sun May 5, 7 pm: Final paper due at the end of the final exam slot (no meeting)
The fine print

Academic integrity. All students enrolled in a University of Colorado Boulder course are responsible for knowing and adhering to the academic integrity policy. Violations of the policy may include: plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, lying, bribery, threat, unauthorized access to academic materials, clicker fraud, resubmission, and aiding academic dishonesty. All incidents of academic misconduct will be reported to the Honor Code Council (honor@colorado.edu; 303-735-2273). Students who are found responsible for violating the academic integrity policy will be subject to nonacademic sanctions from the Honor Code Council as well as academic sanctions from the faculty member. Additional information regarding the academic integrity policy can be found at http://www.colorado.edu/policies/academic-integrity-policy and http://honorcode.colorado.edu/.

Digital distraction. When your laptop or tablet screen is displaying things irrelevant to class, you distract not only yourself but other students to whom the screen is visible. Research demonstrates that such distraction is detrimental to learning. We expect your full attention and presence, and we expect you to allow the same to others.

Classroom conduct. Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Those who fail to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. I pledge to treat each of you with dignity, respect, and professional courtesy; I expect you to do the same for me and for each other. See also http://www.colorado.edu/policies/student-classroom-and-course-related-behavior and http://www.colorado.edu/osccr/.

Accommodation policies. If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit your accommodation letter from Disability Services to me in a timely manner so that your needs can be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities in the academic environment. Information on requesting accommodations is located on the Disability Services website (www.colorado.edu/disabilityservices/students). Contact Disability Services at 303-492-8671 or dsinfo@colorado.edu for further assistance. If you have a temporary medical condition or injury, see Temporary Medical Conditions under the Students tab on the Disability Services website and come talk to me as early as possible.

Religious observances. Campus policy regarding religious observances requires that faculty make every effort to deal reasonably and fairly with all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments or required attendance. If you anticipate any class conflicts due to religious observance, please notify me within the first two weeks of classes to arrange necessary accommodations. See policy details at http://www.colorado.edu/policies/observance-religious-holidays-and-absences-classes-and-or-exams.

Discrimination and harassment. The University of Colorado Boulder (CU Boulder) is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working, and living environment. CU Boulder will not tolerate acts of sexual misconduct, discrimination, harassment or related retaliation against or by any employee or student. For details of the Sexual Misconduct Policy and the Discrimination and Harassment Policy, see http://www.colorado.edu/policies/discrimination-and-harassment-policy-and-procedures and http://www.cu.edu/ope/aps/5014. Individuals who believe they have been subject to misconduct under either policy should contact the Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance (OIEC) at 303-492-2127. Information about the OIEC, the above referenced policies, and the campus resources available to assist individuals regarding sexual misconduct, discrimination, harassment or related retaliation can be found at the OIEC website, http://www.colorado.edu/institutionalequity/.
## Student Learning Objectives

### HISTORY BEYOND THE CLASSROOM
Courses with SLOs 9-10 foster the ability to transmit and apply historical knowledge and skills beyond the classroom

- **SLO 9.** Students will develop cultural literacy: a knowledge and understanding of human diversity in the past and present.
- **SLO 10.** Students will develop a historical view of the present world and will be able to apply their training in historical thinking to their lived experience.

### PRODUCTION OF HISTORICAL KNOWLEDGE
Courses with SLOs 7-8 require students to apply factual, conceptual, and procedural knowledge by conducting historical research and producing historical argument (the central focus is synthesizing historical knowledge—i.e., creating something new)

- **SLO 7.** Students will be able to conduct historical research, which includes: having and applying information literacy; identifying, locating, and managing sources; and summarizing significant amounts of information.
- **SLO 8.** Students will be able to produce historical knowledge in various forms by analyzing, evaluating, and interpreting historical sources in context, and by utilizing applicable theory and methods.

### PRACTICE OF HISTORICAL STUDY
Courses with SLOs 5-6 emphasize skills and methods (procedural knowledge) students need in order to analyze, evaluate, interpret, and synthesize historical knowledge

- **SLO 5.** Students will be able to describe and explain how to differentiate, analyze, evaluate, and interpret various types of primary and secondary sources.
- **SLO 6.** Students will be able to develop a historical argument by synthesizing various types of historical sources and applying relevant theory and methods.

### FOUNDATIONS OF HISTORICAL STUDY

#### SUBSTANTIVE FOUNDATIONS
Courses with SLOs 1-2 introduce students to discipline-specific facts/historically accurate information (factual knowledge)

- **SLO 1.** Students will be able to describe and explain what happened in the past, and how historians use primary sources as evidence.
- **SLO 2.** Students will be able to describe and explain change and continuity over time, as well as the complexity and contingency of historical processes and outcomes.

#### CONCEPTUAL FOUNDATIONS
Courses with SLOs 3-4 emphasize discipline-specific concepts (conceptual knowledge)

- **SLO 3.** Students will be able to explain how historical context, perspective, and bias can shape our understanding of the past.
- **SLO 4.** Students will be able to explain the interpretive nature of historical knowledge, i.e., that while it is evidence-based, it is also constructed and contested.

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For more on the History Teaching & Learning Project (HTLP), please visit: [https://www.colorado.edu/history/history-teaching-and-learning-project](https://www.colorado.edu/history/history-teaching-and-learning-project)