Modern Vietnamese History
HIST 300E / 3 Credit Hours
Offered Fall and Spring Semesters
Instructor: Ngoc Thi Bich Tran

Meeting Time & Location

Wednesday: 10 AM to 12:30 PM
Institute of Research for Educational Development (IRED)

Course Description

This course covers the history of modern Vietnam, from 1802 to the present. Lectures are organized by topics within a chronological framework, from imperial times through colonial rule, revolution, and war to the postwar period.

Opening with a brief introduction to the country and a short historical account of the pre-modern period, the course will begin the modern Vietnamese history with the establishment of the Nguyễn dynasty in 1802 and examine why Gia Long and his successors intensified Confucian ideology as the official doctrine in Vietnam during the 19th century and the consequences of this trend for the country as a whole and for different social classes...

The course will continue to study the origins of French conquest of Vietnam and the transformation of Vietnamese economy, society and culture under French domination as well as the emergence of Vietnamese nationalism and communism. It will also examine the political and military interactions between agents of France, the United-States, China, Great Britain, Japan, and Vietnam in the process of decolonization until a Communist-led war at Điện Biên Phủ, ended French colonial rule in Vietnam.

Then the division of the country with the Geneva Agreement, the formation of separate post-colonial states in the North and the South of Vietnam; the American intervention; Southern and Northern societies during the Vietnam War and the collapse of the South Vietnamese regime will be explored. The course will conclude with an analysis of the Vietnam War and its legacies, and the social, political and economic dilemmas that face postwar Vietnam.
This course combines classroom lectures, screenings, guest speaker and class outings. Students will visit two museums and will watch and discuss two films.

**Course Requirements**

- Students will be expected to read all the assigned readings before attending the class. Students will be asked questions from the weekly readings during class.
- Students will be required:
  - To write three short papers on each major period of modern Vietnam based on lectures and the course readings. Each paper should be 3 pages in length, the text is double-spaced.
  - To take a take-home final examination. The final will comprise three short essays covering major topics of the course lectures and readings. Questions for the final will be sent by e-mail at 12PM on December 2\textsuperscript{nd}. All final exams must turn in by 12PM on December 3\textsuperscript{rd}. Students may use course notes and readings for the take-home exam.

Papers and final exam will be assessed on the student’s understanding of major questions and arguments surrounding the chosen topic. Students may write about any aspect of each major period of modern Vietnam and may use of additional sources (but not required) but must acknowledge them through the use of footnotes. Unexcused late papers and exam will result in lower grades.

**Student Assessment**

Students will be graded on the following basis:

- Full attendance and class participation---------------- 25%
- First paper------------------------------------------15%
- Second paper---------------------------------------15%
- Third paper----------------------------------------15%
- Final exam-----------------------------------------30%

**Lecture Schedule – Fall 2015**

Week 1 (Wednesday August 26)

1. Introduction to the course
2. Summary of the Pre-modern Vietnam
3. Screening: *Vietnam-My Home Land* (30 minutes)

Reading: William Duiker, *Vietnam: Nation in Revolution*, pp.1-23

Week 2 (Wednesday September 2)

*Vietnamese Independence Day* - No Class *(Make-up class on Friday September 11)*

Week 3 (Wednesday September 9)
The Nguyễn Dynasty and the Intensification of Confucian ideology in Vietnam

Reading: Woodside, *Vietnam and the Chinese Model*, pp. 7 – 50

Friday September 11: Make-up Class for Wednesday September 2 (Holliday)

1. The Ruling class and the Ruled under the Nguyễn Dynasty
2. Vietnam’s Foreign Relations in the 19th Century

Reading: Alexander B. Woodside, *Vietnam and the Chinese Model*, pp. 60-74; 169-194; 234-261

Week 4 (Wednesday September 16)

Class Outing: Vietnam History Museum

*Note: Time TBA*

Week 5 (Wednesday September 23)

- Colonial Conquest and the Constructing of French Indochina
- Colonial Economy and Society

Reading:
- Joseph Buttinger, *Vietnam: A Political History*, pp. 75-116

**FIRST PAPER DUE**

Week 6 (Wednesday September 30)

No Class: *Excursion to Central and Northern Regions*

Week 7 (Wednesday October 7)

- The rise of Vietnamese nationalism and communism: Phan Bội Châu and Hồ Chí Minh
- The Japanese Occupation and the August Revolution
- France’s return to Vietnam and the Indochina War
- Video clip: *Diên Biên Phủ French defeat in Vietnam* (14 minutes)

Reading:
  - Mark Bradley, *Vietnam at War*, pp. 41-74

Week 8 (Wednesday October 14)
Class outing: Hồ Chí Minh City Museum

Week 9 (Wednesday October 21)

No Class: Cambodia Excursion

Week 10 (Wednesday October 28)

A film screening and discussion: Indochina (2 hours and 38 minutes)

SECOND PAPER DUE

Week 11 (Wednesday November 4)

- The division of Vietnam and the American intervention
- The formation of post-colonial states in the North and the South of Vietnam

Reading:
- William Duiker, Vietnam: Nation in Revolution, pp. 45-53
- Mark Bradley, Vietnam at War, pp. 77-113

Week 12 (Wednesday November 11)

- The Vietnam War
- The final Northern offensive and the collapse of the Southern regime
  - Video Clip: The Fall of Saigon (10 minutes)

Reading:
- William Duiker, Vietnam: Nation in Revolution, pp. 53-65
- Mark Bradley, Vietnam at War, pp. 115-174

Week 13 (Wednesday November 18)

A film screening and discussion: Don’t Burn (1 hour and 40 minutes)

THIRD PAPER DUE

Week 14 (Wednesday November 25)

1. After 1975
2. Guest Speaker: John TRINH, “Agent Orange 30 years later”

Reading:
Mark Bradley, Vietnam at War, pp. 174-196

Week 15 (Wednesday December 2)

Overview
TAKE-HOME FINAL EXAM

Reading list