

Draft Syllabus for Upper-Division Undergraduate Course based on Linda Ho Peche, Alex-Thai Vo, and Tuong Vu, eds., *Toward a Framework for Vietnamese American Studies: History, Community, and Memory* (Temple University Press, 2022).

VIETNAMESE AMERICA: HISTORY, COMMUNITY, AND MEMORY

Course Abstract:

This course introduces students to the vibrant ethnic/immigrant/refugee community of Vietnamese Americans in all its complexities. The class begins with exploration of contemporary intellectual and political debates within Vietnamese American studies and on Vietnamese American identity(ies). The course will provide students with a history of the Vietnam War, discuss Vietnamese refugee migration to the United States, and explore how these refugees formed their communities in America. Situating Vietnamese American within a history of war and migration, the course will guide students in the examination of important and complex contemporary issues germane to the community, including anticommunism, refugeeism, transnational activism, and the politics of memory. Students will be appraised of the literature on forced migration, diaspora, memory, oral history, and community politics. The course aims to provide students with knowledge of and familiarity with the history and politics of Vietnamese America.

Graded Items:

Core Assignments: There will be two core assignments for the class: a midterm (20%) and a final (35%).

- Midterm will take the form of a 5-page, bring-home, analytical essay. It will involve course readings, topics discussed in class, and the films shown. Knowledge of the contents of these films will be essential for the completion of this assignment.
- The Final will involve a 15-page research proposal (20%) and a class presentation (15%) of the proposal. On the 10th week of class, students will form groups of 3 or more (depending of size of class) to develop a research proposal on a topic of their choosing in consultation with the instructor and aligned with the purposes of the class. During consultation, students will schedule their presentation for an allotted class time during Week 15 of class. The presentation will cover the issues expressed in the assignment's guidelines.

Attendance (15%) Attendance will be recorded at the beginning of each class. There will be a total of 30 attendance point given throughout the duration of the quarter—one attendance point for each class session. **More than 5 absences will result in a drop in letter grade; more than 8 absences will result in an automatic failure.**

Class Participation (15%): Class participation takes the form of engaging in class discussion through questions, comments, and analysis of proposed topics in the class or from the readings. Please come having read the readings assigned. Please do readings in the order that they are assigned.

Reading Reflections (15%): All readings will be provided digitally by the instructor. Reading reflections will take the form of weekly submitted comments, questions, or analysis of the week's readings. Beginning with Week 2, reflections are due at 5pm on Monday of each week. Students are to pick one (if ambitious, or more) reading from the last week and write a 1-paragraph reflection on the reading. This means that for Monday of Week 2, reflections should be on readings assigned for Week 1. Reading Reflections will be submitted to the instructor via email. The following is the prompt for each week:

What struck you most about this reading? What did you discover that you did not already know? What new questions do you have after reading this piece? How does the piece relate to other materials discussed in the class?

Grading:

Grades are calculated as follows:

A+ 98-100

A 94-97

A- 90-93

B+ 88-89

B 84-87

B- 80-83

C+ 78-79

C 74-77

C- 70-73

D+ 68-69

D 64-67

D- 60-63

F 0-59

Required Text:

Linda Ho Peche, Alex-Thai Vo, and Tuong Vu, eds. *Toward a Framework for Vietnamese American Studies: History, Community, and Memory* (Temple University Press, 2022).

CLASS SCHEDULE

Week 1: The South Vietnamese Past and Vietnamese American Identity

Tuan Hoang, "The South Vietnamese Flag and the Shifting Representations of the Vietnamese American Experience," *Rising Asian Journal* 1, is. 2(2021).

Viet Thanh Nguyen, "There's a reason the South Vietnamese flag flew during the Capitol riot," *Washington Post*, Jan. 14, 2021.

Van B Huynh, "Trump Rally Attendees Desecrated the South Vietnamese Flag, a Symbol of Identity for My Community," *vbh.medium.com*, Jan. 6, 2021.

"Vietnamese Americans Condemn the Attacks on American Democracy," *Vietnam Rise*, Jan. 9, 2021 <https://www.vietnamrise.org/su-kien/statement-capitol-attack>

Y Nguyen, "Legacies and Diasporic Connectivity: Dialogues and Future Directions of Vietnamese and Vietnamese American Studies," in *Toward a Framework for Vietnamese American Studies*.

Week 2: Contemporary Discussions on Vietnamese Americans

Linda Ho Peche, Alex-Thai Vo, and Tuong Vu, "Introduction" in *Toward a Framework for Vietnamese American Studies*.

Viet Thanh Nguyen (2012), "Refugee Memories and Asian American Critique," *Positions* 20(3), 911-942.

C. N. Le, "Better Dead Than Red: Anti-Communist Politics among Vietnamese Americans," in Ed. Ieva Zake, *Anticommunist Minorities in the US: Political Activism of Ethnic Refugees* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 189-210.

Espiritu Yen Le (2005), "Thirty Years AfterWARD: The Endings That Are Not Over," *Amerasia Journal* 31(2), xiii-xxiii.

Week 3: American Historiography of the War

In Class Film: "*In the Year of the Pig*" (1969).

Mark Atwood Lawrence, *The Vietnam War: A Concise International History* (Oxford University Press, 2008), 1-90 (skim).

"The Wall and the Screen Memory: The Vietnam Veterans Memorial," in Marita Sturken, *Tangled Memories: The Vietnam War, the AIDS Epidemic, and the Politics of Remembering* (UC Press, 1997), 44-84.

Robert J. McMahon, "Contested Memory: The Vietnam War and American Society, 1975-2001," *Diplomatic History* 26, No. 2 (2002), 159-184.

Nu-Anh Tran, “The Neglect of the Republic of Vietnam in American Public Memory,” in Tuong Vu and Sean Fear, *The Republic of Vietnam, 1955-1975: Vietnamese Perspectives and Nation Building*, (Southeast Asia Program Publications, 2018).

Edward Miller and Tuong Vu, “The Vietnam War as a Vietnamese War: Agency and Society in the Study of the Second Indochina War,” *Journal of Vietnamese Studies* 4, No.3 (2009), 1-16.

Week 4: Vietnam Before the War

Thi Bui, *The Best We Could Do* (Abrams, 2010), chapters 1-5.

Christopher Goscha, *Vietnam: A New History* (Basic Books, 2017), 1-11, 73-95, 182-210, 440-462.

Week 5: The Republic of Vietnam—National and State Formation

Tuong Vu and Sean Fear, *The Republic of Vietnam, 1955-1975: Vietnamese Perspectives and Nation Building*, (Cornell University SE Asia Program, 2019), introduction and chapters 4 and 12.

Trinh Luu and Tuong Vu, eds. *War and Society in South Vietnam: Crises, Opportunities and Diasporic Legacies* (under review, University of Hawaii Press), introduction.

Edward Miller, *Misalliance: Ngo Dinh Diem, the United States, and the Fate of South Vietnam* (Harvard University Press, 2013), chapters 1 & 4.

Heather Stur, *Saigon at War: South Vietnam and the Global Sixties* (Cambridge University Press, 2020), introduction and chapter 1.

Week 6: The Republic of Vietnam—The Republican Society

In Class Film: Purple Horizon / Chân Trời Tím (1974) [or videos of South Vietnamese music]

Van Nguyen-Marshall, “Voluntarism and Political Activism in Wartime South Vietnam,” in *Toward a Framework for Vietnamese American Studies*.

Wynn Gadkar-Wilcox, “Universities and Intellectual Culture in the Republic of Vietnam,” in *Toward a Framework for Vietnamese American Studies*.

Olga Dror, *Making Two Vietnams: War and Youth Identities, 1965-1975*, (Cambridge University Press, 2018), chapters 4 & 5.

Tuong Vu and Sean Fear, *The Republic of Vietnam, 1955-1975: Vietnamese Perspectives and Nation Building*, (Cornell University SE Asia Program, 2019), chapter 13.

Week 7: Midterm Week

Week 8: War, Flight and Migration

In Class Film (excerpts): “Journey from the Fall” and “Bolinao 52”

Thi Bui, *The Best We Could Do* (Abrams, 2010), chapters 6-10.

Osten Wahlbeck, “The concept of diaspora as an analytical tool in the study of refugee communities,” *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 28, no.2 (2002), 222-238.

“Flight from Indochina,” in UNHCR, *The State of The World’s Refugees 2000: Fifty Years of Humanitarian Action*, (Oxford University Press, 2000), 79-103 <<https://www.unhcr.org/3ebf9bad0.html>>.

Elwing Suong Gonzalez, “Building a Place in the Space of Los Angeles: Vietnamese Refugee Community Creation, 1975-1990,” in *Toward a Framework for Vietnamese American Studies*.

Week 9: Life and Community

In Class Film: “Nailed It!”

Susan Eckstein and Thanh-Nghi Nguyen, “The Making and Transnationalization of an Ethnic Niche: Vietnamese Manicurists,” *International Migration Review* 45, no. 3 (September 2011), 639-674.

Jennifer Huynh, “Female Vietnamese Entrepreneurs in the United States,” in *Toward a Framework for Vietnamese American Studies*.

Hoang Vu Nguyen, “Trapped within the White Frame: Vietnamese Americans in Post-Katrina New Orleans,” in *Toward a Framework for Vietnamese American Studies*.

Thien-Huong Ninh, “Performing Gender in the Diaspora: Devotion to Holy Mothers among Vietnamese Americans,” in *Toward a Framework for Vietnamese American Studies*.

Week 10: Political Integration and Intergenerational Dynamics

Linda Trinh Vo, “Whose School District Is This? Vietnamese Americans and Coalitional Politics in Orange County, California,” *AAPI Nexus* 5, no. 2 (Summer/Fall 2007), 1-31.

Christian Collet, “Vietnamese American Politics: Evolution at the Grass Roots, 1981-2020,” in *Toward a Framework for Vietnamese American Studies*.

Sucheng Chan, *The Vietnamese American 1.5 Generation* (Temple University Press, 2006).

Linda Ho Peche, "Religious Spaces: Boat People Legacies and the Vietnamese American Second Generation," in Faith Nibbs and Caroline Bretell, eds. *Identity and the Second Generation* (Vanderbilt University Press, 2016).

Week 11: Oral Histories and Lived Experiences

In Class Videos from The Vietnamese in the Diaspora Digital Archive (selected videos)

Marita Eastmond, "Stories as Lived Experience: Narratives in Forced Migration Research," *Journal of Refugee Studies* 20, no.2(2007), 248-264

Nguyen-Vo Thu Huong, "Forking Paths: How Shall We Mourn the Dead?" *Amerasia Journal* 31, no. 2 (2005), 157-175.

Thuy Vo Dang, "The Preservation and Production of Diasporic Knowledge: Oral History and Archival Contribution," in *Toward a Framework for Vietnamese American Studies*.

Week 12: Collective and Political Memory

In Class Videos from The Vietnamese in the Diaspora Digital Archive (selected videos)

Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, preface and chapters 3 & 4.

"Introduction" in Natalie-Huynh Chau Nguyen, *Memory is Another Country: Women of the Vietnamese Diaspora* (Praeger, 2009).

Quan Tran, "Remembering War and Migration: Memoryscapes of the Vietnamese Diaspora," "Not Coming to Terms: Diaspora, Multidirectional Memory and the Limits of Reconciliation" in *Toward a Framework for Vietnamese American Studies*.

Hai-Dang Phan, "Not Coming to Terms: Diaspora, Multidirectional Memory and the Limits of Reconciliation," in *Toward a Framework for Vietnamese American Studies*.

Week 13: Contextualizing Vietnamese American Anticommunism

Thuy Vo Dang, "The Cultural Work of Anticommunism in the San Diego Vietnamese American Community," *Amerasia Journal* 21, no. 2(2005), 65-86.

Tuan Hoang, "The August Revolution, the Fall of Saigon, and Postwar Reeducation Camps: Understanding Vietnamese Diasporic Anticommunism," in *Toward a Framework for Vietnamese American Studies*.

Jana Lipman, "A Refugee Camp in America: Fort Chaffee and Vietnamese and Cuban Refugees, 1975-1982," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 33, no.2 (2014), 57-87.

Week 14: Homeland Connections

Duyen Bui, "Diasporic Nationalism: Continuity and Changes," in *Toward a Framework for Vietnamese American Studies*.

Vinh Pham, "Rhizomatic Transnationalism: Nhac Vang and the Legacy of Republicanism in Overseas Vietnamese Communities," in Trinh Luu and Tuong Vu, eds. *War and Society in South Vietnam: Crises, Opportunities and Diasporic Legacies* (under review, University of Hawaii Press).

Lan Duong, "Vietnam and the Diaspora: Absence, Presence, and the Archive," in Brenda Boyle and Jeehyun Lim, eds. *Looking Back on the Vietnam War* (Rutgers University Press), 64-78.

Week 15: Transnational Activism

Christian Collet, "Vietnamese Americans and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam: The Grassroots Lobby Takes on the Corporatized State," in James A. Thurber, Colton C. Campbell, and David A. Dulio, eds. *Congress and Diaspora Politics: The Influence of Ethnic and Foreign Lobbying* (SUNY Press, 2018).

Ivan Small, "Vietnamese Americans and Their Homeland: Transnational Advocacy Efforts and Diasporic Ties," in *Toward a Framework for Vietnamese American Studies*.

Quan Tran, "Broken but Not Forsaken: Disabled South Vietnamese Veterans and the Vietnamese Diaspora," in Brenda Boyle and Jeehyun Lim, eds. *Looking Back on the Vietnam War* (Rutgers University Press), 64-78.