University of Pennsylvania

Department of History

History 391

***THE VIETNAM WARS: 1945-1979***

Professor Arthur Waldron

Spring 2017

**Summary:**

The Vietnam War(s) are among the most important and consequential events of the last century. They are not well understood, however, even though they are regularly invoked in discussions of International Relations. This course will cover the whole period from 1945 when the French attempted to return, to the period of division following the Geneva conference (1954) that divided the country through the entry of Americans combat troops in the Republic of Vietnam [South Vietnam] 1965 along with those from other allies, the fighting, the withdrawal of the Americans, and the invasion by the Democratic Republic of Vietnam [North Vietnam] that ended this period of conflict in late spring 1975. We will also examine the disastrous Chinese invasion of united Vietnam in 1979.

Since 1975 vast amounts of material about the war have been published in Hanoi that materially affect our understanding of it, in some cases proving almost universally held assumptions to have been wrong. This new first-hand material will be used as much as possible, as well as declassified material from the United States, and available archival material from China and the USSR. If possible we will hear from participants.

Wars affect everybody and everything. We will analyse the conflicts strategically, looking at questions of guerrilla warfare, the use of airpower, espionage, etc. We will also read first-hand account by participants in various stages, including North Vietnamese leaders and soldiers, their South Vietnamese counterparts, and civilian victims of the fighting. International context will be stressed: the roles in particular of the USSR and China, as well as the roles of France and Britain in early stages of the conflict, and South Korea later on. We will also look at the aftermath of the war and how it changed not only Asia, but also, very profoundly, the United States.

Students of military history will find this course most interesting. So too, however, will those interested in diplomacy, in the art and literature of war, in the use of propaganda, the impact of war on society and public opinion, the problems of refugees, and much else. The war is a huge territory: many different paths lead through it. Although we will share basic knowledge, students will be encouraged to find the areas most of interest to them, be they field medicine, or novels, or propaganda posters—or the anti-war movement in America and how it changed our politics, permanently.

Professor Waldron has visited Vietnam, both north and south, twice, and all her surrounding countries.

All students are welcome.

**Structure of the Course:**

The course consists of two lectures per week (12:00-1:30) in Annenberg 110; regular mid-term and final examinations, and a short (8-12 page) paper on a topic of your choice.

**Instructors:**



**Arthur Waldron** has been the Lauder Professor of International Relations in the Department of History at the University of Pennsylvania, since 1997. He works mostly on the history of Asia, China in particular; the problem of nationalism, and the study of war and violence in history. He was educated at Harvard (A.B. ’71 *summa cum laude* Valedictorian,PhD ’81) and in Asia where he lived for four years before returning to Harvard. He previously taught at Princeton University, the U.S. Naval War College (Newport, RI) and Brown University.

His publications include *The Great Wall of China: From History to Myth* (1989) also in Chinese and Italian; *The Modernization of Inner Asia* (1991); *How the Peace Was Lost: The 1935 Memorandum "Developments Affecting American Policy in the Far East" Prepared for the State Department by John Van Antwerp MacMurray* (1992) also in Japanese; *From War to Nationalism: China’s Turning Point, 1924-1925* (1995) also in Chinese, and (with Daniel Moran) *The People in Arms: Military Myth and National Mobilization since the French Revolution* (2003). His latest book, *The Chinese* should appear in 2018. In addition he has sixteen articles in peer reviewed journals, ten chapters in books, and two edited volumes in Chinese, as well numerous scholarly and popular reviews and journalistic essays.

His most recent research has used PRC sources to confirm the discovery made by Scholar/Diplomat Jay Taylor that the “secret” American negotiations with China, 1969 on, mostly carried out by Henry Kissinger, were regularly reported by Zhou Enlai to Chiang Kai-shek, and discussed, using a Hong Kong channel. This is a fact having tremendous importance for our understanding of American-Chinese relations.

In government, he served as one of twelve members of the highly-classified Tilelli Commission (2000-2001), which evaluated the China operations of the Central Intelligence Agency. He was also an original member of the Congressionally-mandated U.S-China Economic and Security Review Commission (2001-2003). He is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations and former Director of Asian Studies at the American Enterprise Institute, as well as a Senior Fellow of the Foreign Policy Research Institute. A regular traveler, he has visited some fifty countries, in Asia and beyond. He has lectured all over the world, including Europe, Russia (in Russian), Japan, and Australia. Most recently he has traveled to Japan, Egypt, the Baltic, Russia, and China, and Hong Kong. Born in Boston in 1948 Professor Waldron married the former Xiaowei Yü (born Beijing) in 1988. With their two sons they live in Gladwyne, Pennsylvania.

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**Office Hours:** Th.1:30-4:30 and later if required. Please email if you must come after 4:30 and I will happily wait for you.

**Teaching Assistant:** to be announced.

**Lectures:**

Lectures will be from 12-1:30 Tuesday and Thursday in (TBA) You are expected to attend.

**Readings:**

For each unit reading is assigned. Pages will be indicated. Ours is a very complex topic. You will not be tested on material that appears *only* in the reading but rather on that which *also* turns up in lecture. But you are responsible, in a more general way, for knowing the arguments and theses of the readings.

**Examinations:**

Examinations will be no problem if you come to lectures and do the reading. Some students truly excel in this course; others do just fine. Disasters are rare.

In class midterm examination (March 03 Thursday): this will include identifications and extracts from reading on which you will comment. Its goal is to see how much you know.

The regular final examination (May 03 Tuesday 09:00-11:00) will combine some short questions with an essay for which you will have a choice of topics. Its purpose is to let you present your own ideas on the course’s topics: in other words to see how you think.

**Course Paper:**

One class paper due on April 30, eight to twelve (8-12) typed double spaced pages, or more if you wish, to be delivered as directed. The topic choice is up to you, though we will provide suggestions. Be creative. Present your ideas on a topic of your choice (consult with our teaching assistant, or with me) based on perhaps some additional reading. This is not intended as an onerous task, but rather an interesting one.

*We are very sorry that we* ***cannot*** *accept electronic submissions of written work. We simply lack the sort of industrial printing capacity that would require. So your papers and your final should be handed in typed on paper to one of our colleagues.*

**Grading:**

Grading is an art not a science. We strive for fairness. If you do badly on one exercise, a good performance on another can outweigh that. Roughly speaking, the mid-term examination will count about 30%, and the final examination 30% and the paper about 40%. If you *follow the directions* for the course you will do fine.

**Lecture Schedule and Readings:**

**Page numbers will be supplied for readings in assignments.**

Textbooks:

Nguyen, Lien-Hang T. *Hanoi’s War*.(Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012 ) ISBN 978-0-8078-3551-7

January:

***Introduction:***

First Lecture: January 12 The Vietnam Wars in History

Readings:

McConnell, Scott. *Leftward Journey: The Education of Vietnamese Students in France 1919-1939* (New Brunswick, N.J. and Oxford: Transaction Publishers, 1989) ISBN 0-88738-236 X

***The Aftermath:***

Second Lecture January 17

Third Lecture: January 19

Readings:

Cargill, Mary Terrell and Jade Quang Huynh. *Voices of Vietnamese Boat People* (Jefferson, N.C. and London: McFarland & Co.,2000) ISBN 978-0-7864-0785-9

Hoa Minh Truong. *The Dark Journey: Inside the Reeducation Camps of Vietnam* (Eloquent Books, 2010)

***Vietnam before and after World War II:***

Fourth Lecture: January 24

Fifth Lecture: January 26

Readings:

Chapuis, Oscar. *The Last Emperors of Vietnam* (Westport, CT and London: Greenwood Press, 2000) ISBN 0-313-31170-6

January-February

***The Defeat of the French: What kind of War?***

Sixth Lecture: January 31

Seventh Lecture: February 2

Readings:

Galula, David*. Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice (*Praeger, 2006) **ISBN-13:** 978 027599303

Vo Nguyen Giap (Gen.) *Dien Bien Phu* (Fifth Edition. Hanoi: The Gioi Publishers, 1994)

***The Geneva Conference, 1954.***

Eighth Lecture: February 7

Ninth Lecture: February 9

Readings:

Gaiduk, Ilya V. *Confronting Vietnam: Soviet Policy toward the Indochina Conflict, 1954-1963*

Zhai, Qiang. *China and the Vietnam Wars, 1950-1975*. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000) **ISBN-13:** 978-08078

***Strategic Issues in the two Vietnams:***

Tenth Lecture: February 14

Eleventh Lecture: February 16

Readings:

*Selected Articles by Le Duan, including “Letters from the South”*

Shaw, Geoffrey. *The Lost Mandate of Heaven: The American Betrayal of Ngo Dinh Diem, President of Vietnam.* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2015) **ISBN** 978-1-58617-935-9

***Eisenhower and Kennedy:***

Twelfth Lecture: February 21

Thirteenth Lecture: February 23

Readings:

Halberstam, David. *The Best and the Brightest.* (New York: Random House, 1969) **ISBN 0-394-46163-0**

February/March

***Laos and Neighboring Countries:***

**Fourteenth Lecture**: February 28

Examination March 2 *Midterm examination in class, does not include this week’s readings.*

Readings:

Hannah, Norman. *The Key to Failure: Laos and the Vietnam War*. (Madison Books, 1987) **ISBN-13:** 978-0819164407

Brigham, Robert K. *Guerrilla Diplomacy: the NLF’s Foreign Relations and the Vietnam War* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1999) **ISBN-13:** 978-0807848425

*March 04-12 Spring Break*

***Lyndon Johnson’s Strategic Choices:***

Fifteenth Lecture: March 14

Sixteenth Lecture March 16

Readings:

Chong, Denise *The Girl in the Picture* (New York: Viking, 1999) ISBN 0-670-88040-X

McMaster, H.R., *Dereliction of Duty: Lyndon Johnson, Robert McNamara, the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the lies that led to Vietnam*. (Harper, 1996) **ISBN-13:** 978-1585660384

***Airpower, the Ho Chi Minh Trail***

Seventeenth Lecture: March 21

Eighteenth Lecture: March 23

Readings:

Tilford, Jr. Earl H. *Crosswinds: The Air Force’s Setup in Vietnam* (College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 1993) **ISBN-13:** 978-0890965313

US Army Command and Staff College. *The War for the Ho Chi Minh Trail* (Penny Hill Press, 2015) **ISBN-13:** 978-1522759164

***Nixon, Vietnamization, and the Beginning of the End***

Nineteenth Lecture: March 28

Twentieth Lecture: March 30

Readings:

Snepp, Frank. *A Decent Interval: An Insider’s Account of Saigon’s Indecent End told by the CIA’s Chief Strategy Analyst in Vietnam*. (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2002) ISBN-

13: 978-0700612130

April

***The Anti-War Movement in America and the World: Its Premises and Effects***

**Twenty**-first Lecture: April 04

Twenty-second Lecture: April 06

Readings:

Horowitz, David. *Radical Son* (New York: The Free Press, 1997) ISBN 0-684-82793 X

Oberdorfer, Don. *Tet*: *The Turning Point in the Vietnam War* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press; Revised ed. 2001)

**ISBN-13:** 978-0801867033

***The Fall of South Vietnam and the Cambodian Holocaust***

Twenty-third Lecture: April 11

Twenty-fourth Lecture: April 13

Readings:

Cao Van Vien. *The Final Collapse* (Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History, United States Army, 1985) ISBN (?): 81-607989

Becker, Elizabeth. *When The War Was Over: Cambodia and the Khmer Rouge Revolution* (1986. New York: Public Affairs,1998) **ISBN** 1-891620-00-2

***The Chinese Invasion, 1979-91: The War after the War***

Twenty-fifth Lecture: April 18

Twenty-sixth Lecture: April 20

Readings:

Zhang, Xiaoming. *Deng Xiaoping’s Long War: The Military Conflict between China and Vietnam, 1979-1991.* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2015) **ISBN** 978-1-4696-2124-1

***Lessons for All Sides: Indochina Today***

Twenty-seventh Lecture: April 25

Readings:

Moyar, Mark. *Triumph Forsaken: The Vietnam War, 1954-1965*  (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006) **ISBN** 0-521-86911-0

Last day of classes April 25

**Course Paper Due*:*** At final examination Submit hard copy

**Final Examination:**

**Bibliography and Reference:**

Southeast Asia Map: A good one from *National Geographic* is available from Amazon. You must have good maps!

Here are listed some of the most important books and other sources covering the course material. This is not a reading list. This is for reference purposes.

Ahern, Jr,.Thomas L. *Vietnam Declassified* (University Press of Kentucky, 2012) **ISBN-13:** 978-0813136592

Becker, Elizabeth. *When The War Was Over: Cambodia and the Khmer Rouge Revolution* (1986. New York: Public Affairs,1998) **ISBN** 1-891620-00-2

Berman, Larry. *Perfect Spy: The Incredible Double Life of Pham Xuan An, Time Magazine Reporter and Vietnamese Communist Agent* (New York: Smithsonian Books, an Imprint of HarperCollins, 2007) **ISBN** 978-0-06-088838-1

Brigham, Robert K. *Guerrilla Diplomacy: the NLF’s Foreign Relations and the Vietnam War* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1999) **ISBN-13:** 978-0807848425

Bouscaren, Anthony T., ed. *All Quiet on the Eastern Front: The Death of South Vietnam* (Old Greenwich, CT: Devin-Adair, 1977) ISBN 0=8159-5019-5

Bui Tin. *Following Ho Chi Minh: Memoirs of a North Vietnamese Colonel.* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1995) **ISBN** 0-8248-1673-0

McGeorge Bundy Kennedy Library This folder contains a copy of National Security Action Memoranda number two (NSAM 2) titled, “Development of Counter-Guerrilla Forces,” to the Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara from McGeorge Bundy, Special Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, and a response by McNamara.

Cao Van Vien. *The Final Collapse* (Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History, United States Army, 1985) ISBN (?): 81-607989

Cargill, Mary Terrell and Jade Quang Huynh. *Voices of Vietnamese Boat People* (Jefferson, N.C. and London: McFarland & Co.,2000) ISBN 978-0-7864-0785-9

Chapuis, Oscar. *The Last Emperors of Vietnam* (Westport, CT and London: Greenwood Press, 2000) ISBN 0-313-31170-6

Chong, Denise *The Girl in the Picture* (New York: Viking, 1999) ISBN 0-670-88040-X Davidson, Phillip B., *Vietnam at War: The History: 1946-1975*. (Presidio Press, 1988) **ISBN-13:** 978-0891413066

Duiker, William J. *The Communist Road to Power in Vietnam*.

Duiker William J., *Ho Chi Minh*.

Duiker, William J, *China and Vietnam: The Roots of Conflict* (Berkeley: Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, Indochina Research Monograph, 1986) **ISBN** 0-912966-89-0

Elliott, David W. P. *The Vietnamese War: Revolution and Social Change in the Mekong Delta, 1930-1975.*

Ellsberg, Daniel. *“The Day Loc Tien was Pacified”*

Ellsberg, Daniel. *Secrets: A Memoir of Vietnam and the Pentagon Papers”* (New York: Viking Penguin, 2002)ISBN-13: 978-0142003428

Fall. Bernard B. *Hell in a Very Small Place*.

Gaiduk, Ilya V. *The Soviet Union and the Vietnam War* ISBN 978-1566631037

Gaiduk, Ilya V. *Confronting Vietnam: Soviet Policy toward the Indochina Conflict, 1954-1963* Galula, David*. Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice (Praeger, 2006)* ***ISBN-13:*** *978-0275993030*

Gunn, Geoffrey C. *R ice Wars in Colonial Vietnam: The Great Famine and the Viet Minh Road to Power*.

Halberstam, David. *The Best and the Brightest.* (New York: Random House, 1969) **ISBN 0-394-46163-0**

Hamilton-Merritt, Jane, *Tragic Mountains: The Hmong, the Americans and the Secret Wars in Laos, 1942-199e*

Hannah, Norman. *The Key to Failure: Laos and the Vietnam War*. (Madison Books, 1987) **ISBN-13:** 978-0819164407

Herring, George C., ed. *The Pentagon Papers: Abridged Edition.* (New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1993) **ISBN** 0-07-028380-X

Hoa Minh Truong. *The Dark Journey: Inside the Reeducation Camps of Vietnam* (Eloquent Books, 2010)

Hoang Van Thai (Gen.) *How South Vietnam Was Liberated.* (Hanoi: Thé Giói Publishers, 1996)

Horowitz, David. *Radical Son* (New York: The Free Press, 1997) ISBN 0-684-82793 X

Hosmer, Stephen T.; Kellen, Konrad; Jenkins, Brian M. *The Fall of South Vietnam: Statements by Vietnamese Military and Civilian Leaders: A Report Prepared for Historian, Office of the Secretary of Defense.* (Rand Corporation Report R-2208-OSD, 1978) **ISBN** 0-8330-0045-4

Jamison, Neil L. *Understanding Vietnam*.

Le Duan. *The Vietnamese Revolution: Fundamental Problems and Essential Tasks* (New York: International Publishers, 1971) **ISBN** 0-7178-0331-7

Le Duan. *Some Present Tasks* (Hanoi*:* Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1974).

McConnell, Scott. *Leftward Journey: The Education of Vietnamese Students in France 1919-1939* (New Brunswick, N.J. and Oxford: Transaction Publishers, 1989) ISBN 0-88738-236 X

Moyar, Mark. *Triumph Forsaken: The Vietnam War, 1954-1965*  (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006) **ISBN** 0-521-86911-0

Nguyen, Lien-Hang T. , *Hanoi’s War*.(Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012( ISBN 978-0-8078-3551-7

McMahon, Robert. *Major problems in the history of the Vietnam War: documents and essays* (1990) ISBN: 0-669-18013-0, 978-0-669-18013-8 ISBN 978-0-7844-0785-9

McMaster, H.R., *Dereliction of Duty: Lyndon Johnson, Robert McNamara, the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the lies that led to Vietnam*. (Harper, 1996) **ISBN-13:** 978-1585660384

Marr, David G., *Vietnam 1945: The Quest for Power*.

Meyerson, Harvey. *Vinh Long.* (1970)

The Military History Institute of Vietnam, *Victory in Vietnam: The Official History of the People’s Army of Vietnam, 1954-1975.* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2002) **ISBN-13:** 978-0700611751

Miller, John Grider. *The Bridge at Dong Ha* (Annapolis, MD: U.S. Naval Institute Press, 1989) **ISBN** 1-55750-587-X

Oberdorfer, Don. *Tet*: *The Turning Point in the Vietnam War* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press; Revised ed. 2001)

**ISBN-13:** 978-0801867033

Parker, Jr., James E. *Codename Mule: Fightinthe Secret War in Laos for the CIA*. (Annapolis, MD.: U.S. Naval Institute Press, 1995) **ISBN** 1-55750-668-X

Patti, Archimedes L.A. *Why Vietnam: Prelude to America’s Albatross*.

Pike, Douglas., *Viet Cong: The Organization and Techniques of the National Liberation Front in South Vietnam.* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1966) **ISBN-13:** 978-0262160148

Quincy, Keith, *Harvesting Pa Chay’s Wheat: The Hmong and America’s Secret War in Laos* (GPJ Books: 2011) **ISBN-13:** 978-0962864841

Race. Jeffery. *War Comes To Long An* (Berkeley and London: University of California Press, 1973) ISBN-13: 978-1780392820

Sander, Robert D. *Invasion of Laos 1971: Lam Son 719.* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2014)ISBN **978-0-8061-4840-3**

Schanberg, Sydney H. “Indochina Without Americans: For Most, A Better Life” *The New York Times*  April 13, 1975 p. 197 [?]

Schanberg, Sydney H. *The Life and Death of Dith Pran* (New York: Penguin, 1985) **ISBN-13:** 978-0140084573

Scott, Peter. *Lost Crusade: America’s Secret Cambodian Mercenaries* ( Annapolis, MD: U.S. Naval Institute Press, 1998) **ISBN** 1-55750-846-1

Shaw, Geoffrey. *The Lost Mandate of Heaven: The American Betrayal of Ngo Dinh Diem, President of Vietnam.* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2015) **ISBN** 978-1-58617-935-9

Shulminson, Jack. *U.S. Marines in Vietnam: The Defining Year 1968*

Snepp, Frank. *A Decent Interval: An Insider’s Account of Saigon’s Indecent End told by the CIA’s Chief Strategy Analyst in Vietnam*. (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2002) ISBN-

13: 978-0700612130

Summers, Jr. Harry G.( Col.) *Historical Atlas of the Vietnam War* (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1995) ISBN: 0-395-72223-3

Tai, Hue-Tam Ho, ef. *The Country of Memory: Remaking the Past in Late Socialist Vietnam* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001) **ISBN** 0-520-22267-9

Tilford, Jr. Earl H.*Setup: What the Air Force Did in Vietnam and Why.* (Air University Press, 1991) **ISBN-13:** 978-1585660384

Tilford, Jr. Earl H. *Crosswinds: The Air Force’s Setup in Vietnam* (College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 1993) **ISBN-13:** 978-0890965313

Truong Nhu Tang, *A Viet Cong Memoir: An Inside Account of the Vietnam War*. (New York: Vintage, 1986) **ISBN-13:** 978-0394743097

US Army Command and Staff College. *The War for the Ho Chi Minh Trail* (Penny Hill Press, 2015) **ISBN-13:** 978-1522759164

Van Tien Dung, *Our Great Spring Victory.* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1977) ISBN 0-85345-409-4

Vo Nguyen Giap (Gen.) *Dien Bien Phu* (Fifth Edition. Hanoi: The Gioi Publishers, 1994)

Warner, Roger. *Shooting at the Moon: The Story of America’s Clandestine War in Laos.* (South Royalton, VT: Steerforth Press,1996) **ISBN** 1-883642-36-1

Webb, Willard J., *The Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Prelude to the War in Vietnam, 1954-1959* (Military Bookshop, 2011) **ISBN-13:** 978-1780392820

Willibanks, James H. *How America Left and Vietnam Lost Its War.*(Lawrence, Kansas: University of Kansas Press, 2008) ISBN 978-0-7006-1623-7.

Windrow, Martin, *The Last Valley: Dien Bien Phu and the French Defeat in Vietnam*. (New York: Da Capo, 2005)

Woodruff, Mark W. *Unheralded Victory: The Defeat of the Viet Cong and the North Vietnamese Army 1961-1973* (Arlington, VA: Vandamere Press, 1999) **ISBN** 0-918339-51-0

Zhai, ,Qiang. *China and the Vietnam Wars, 1950-1975*. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000) **ISBN-13:** 978-0807848425

Zhang, Xiaoming. *Deng Xiaoping’s Long War: The Military Conflict between China and Vietnam, 1979-1991.* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2015) **ISBN** 978-1-4696-2124-1

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