

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, LOS ANGELES

UCLA

BERKELEY · DAVIS · IRVINE · LOS ANGELES · RIVERSIDE · SAN DIEGO · SAN FRANCISCO



SANTA BARBARA · SANTA CRUZ

DEPARTMENT OF ASIAN LANGUAGES & CULTURES
 290 ROYCE HALL
 Box 951540
 LOS ANGELES, CA 90095-1540

September 15, 2015

To: Joseph Nagy, Chair
 General Education Governance Committee

Attention: Myrna Dee F. Castillo, Program Representative

From: Professor William M. Bodiford, Chair
 Department of Asian Languages and Cultures

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "William M. Bodiford".

Re: VIET 40, "Topics in Vietnamese Popular Culture"

Dear Professor Nagy,

The Department of Asian Languages and Cultures requests a reconsideration of our newly developed course to be designated as meeting the criteria as a General Education offering. The course "Topics in Vietnamese Popular Culture" (VIET 40) will complement existing offerings on literary and other kinds of cultural production taught in ALC. It will serve students in the Asian Humanities major, and as a comparative course for those majoring in one of the East Asian area majors. The course reflects growing interest in Vietnam, the Vietnamese diaspora, and popular cultural productions, including film, cartoons, and various genres of literature.

The course is a variable topic course on popular culture produced and consumed by, or about, people in Vietnam and the diasporas. It could be organized around themes such as modernity, coloniality and post-coloniality, globalization, mass or youth culture, and others. Each of these thematic foci should allow students to learn about popular cultural production in relation to the history, culture, society, and politics of Vietnam and the diaspora as situated in broad contexts of global significance. Materials will include theoretical and other scholarly texts, as well as literature, music, visual art, films, and comics. Students learn to read scholarly writings for argument, data, and methods, and to apply theoretical frameworks in readings and lectures to the analysis of popular cultural productions.

First taught as "War in Vietnamese Popular Culture," the course will ask questions about what imaginaries war enables within modern ways of governing life, and how we represent war as private

memory or public commemoration. War and its retellings in pop culture create senses of time that configure the past, present, and future in imperial or nationalist projects. Memory of war, on the other hand, can haunt and undo temporal imaginaries that war seeks to create for empire or nation. War and its pop cultural retellings also create spaces that cross national borders even while war is fought in the name of the nation. The particular wars that we will situate historically are the initial colonial conquest and local Vietnamese responses of the 19th century, and the three Indochina Wars of the 20th century, the second of which is more commonly known in the US as the Vietnam War.

The course will allow students to read or view selections of literature, film, music, the visual arts from the late nineteenth to the contemporary moment. Students learn the relationship between global or regional contexts of wars with their politics and economy, and artistic production for mass consumption. They will be exposed to interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary theories and concepts, as well as issues pertaining to epistemology and knowledge production. Students will have opportunities to explore various grounds for critical thinking and ethical evaluation as they pertain to different and contentious locations occupied by diverse groups. Since your last reviews, this course has been taught in 2014 with good results, and the syllabus has been revised to make it more teachable, addressing some of your earlier concerns about accessibility and the inclusion of more historical investigations. Through readings, well aided by lectures, students would gradually be introduced to ideas and concepts, as well as relevant historical discussions. Any abstract theories or concepts addressed in the course would be well-explained in lectures to help students engage with authors whose works are foundational to inquiries in the Humanities. The course begins by introducing students to opposing ideas about popular culture in relation to society, as well as how war comes with certain ways of looking either analogous to or countered in film and other media. Students would then be introduced to Vietnamese modern history through lectures and works by historians such as George Dutton, Mark Bradley, Ho-Tai Hue-Tam, and political scientist Tuong Vu. Such preparations should allow student to engage examinations of Vietnamese popular cultural works situated within contexts of empire, nation, and now the transpacific in terms of conditions of production and viewing. With these revisions, we hope you find this course a good fit for the General Education designation, and that it is accepted for the program.

Thank you for your consideration of this proposal.

General Education Course Information Sheet

Please submit this sheet for each proposed course

Department & Course Number ALC VIET 40
 Course Title Topics in Vietnamese Pop Culture: War in Vietnamese Pop Culture
 Indicate if Seminar and/or Writing II course _____

1 Check the recommended GE foundation area(s) and subgroups(s) for this course

Foundations of the Arts and Humanities

- Literary and Cultural Analysis X
- Philosophic and Linguistic Analysis _____
- Visual and Performance Arts Analysis and Practice X

Foundations of Society and Culture

- Historical Analysis _____
- Social Analysis X

Foundations of Scientific Inquiry

- Physical Science _____
With Laboratory or Demonstration Component must be 5 units (or more) _____
- Life Science _____
With Laboratory or Demonstration Component must be 5 units (or more) _____

2. Briefly describe the rationale for assignment to foundation area(s) and subgroup(s) chosen.

-Literary and Cultural Analysis: Students will read scholarly writings for argument, data, and methods, and learn to apply theoretical frameworks as well as historical and social contextualization in readings and lectures to the analysis of popular cultural productions.

-Visual and Performance Arts Analysis: Materials will include also include music, visual art, films, comics, etc

3. "List faculty member(s) who will serve as instructor (give academic rank):

Thu-huong Nguyen-vo (Associate Professor)

Do you intend to use graduate student instructors (TAs) in this course? Yes X No _____
 If yes, please indicate the number of TAs 1-2

4. Indicate when do you anticipate teaching this course over the next three years:

2013-2014	Fall	_____	Winter	_____	Spring	<u>X</u>
	Enrollment	_____	Enrollment	_____	Enrollment	_____
2014-2015	Fall	_____	Winter	_____	Spring	_____
	Enrollment	_____	Enrollment	_____	Enrollment	_____
2015-2016	Fall	_____	Winter	<u>X</u>	Spring	_____
	Enrollment	_____	Enrollment	_____	Enrollment	_____

5. GE Course Units

Is this an **existing** course that has been modified for inclusion in the new GE? Yes _____ No X

If yes, provide a brief explanation of what has changed. _____

Present Number of Units: _____ Proposed Number of Units: _____

6. Please present concise arguments for the GE principles applicable to this course.

❑ General Knowledge	Students learn history, humanities, and art through discussion of pop cultural representations of colonial war, anti-colonial war, civil war, and proxy war in Vietnam. Vietnamese history will be covered in both lectures and readings that familiarize students with historical methods. Students will also learn theories and concepts, as well as issues pertaining to epistemology and knowledge production.
❑ Integrative Learning	Students will be exposed to interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary scholarly materials.
❑ Ethical Implications	Learning about war and its memorialization will give students better grounds for ethical evaluation of political acts that result in destruction and mass death.
❑ Cultural Diversity	The course contextualizes relations between European colonizers and the people of Indochina, between Americans and Vietnamese, and between Vietnamese Americans and those belonging to either the majority or other minoritized groups in the US.
❑ Critical Thinking	Students learn to assess arguments and evidence in scholarly works, as well as ideas raised in textual and visual cultural productions.
❑ Rhetorical Effectiveness	Through writing assignments, students learn to use analytical concepts and data to deliver a persuasive argument.
❑ Problem-solving	For their assignments, students will learn to determine the relevant data and theories.
❑ Library & Information Literacy	Students will be learn how to access, select, and manage library and digital resources

(A) STUDENT CONTACT PER WEEK (if not applicable write N/A)

1. Lecture:	<u>3</u>	(hours)
2. Discussion Section:	<u>1</u>	(hours)
3. Labs:	<u>0</u>	(hours)
4. Experiential (service learning, internships, other):	<u>0</u>	(hours)
5. Field Trips:	<u>0</u>	(hours)

(A) TOTAL Student Contact Per Week 4 **(HOURS)**

(B) OUT-OF-CLASS HOURS PER WEEK (if not applicable write N/A)

1. General Review & Preparation:	<u>1</u>	(hours)
2. Reading	<u>5</u>	(hours)
3. Group Projects:	<u>0</u>	(hours)
4. Preparation for Quizzes & Exams:	<u>1</u>	(hours)
5. Information Literacy Exercises:	<u>1</u>	(hours)
6. Written Assignments:	<u>2</u>	(hours)
7. Research Activity:	<u>2</u>	(hours)

(B) TOTAL Out-of-class time per week 12 **(HOURS)**

GRAND TOTAL (A) + (B) must equal at least 15 hours/week

16

(HOURS)

VIET 40

War in Vietnamese Popular Culture

Thu-huong Nguyen-vo

Office: Royce Hall 248B

Email: nguyenvo@humnet.ucla.edu

Office Hrs.: W 1-2pm in 3229 Campbell; R 2-4pm in 248B Royce, and by apt.

Course Description:

The course examines war in modern popular cultural productions produced and consumed by, or about, the people in Vietnam and the diasporas. We will ask questions about what imaginaries war enables within modern biopolitical technologies of governing life; and how we represent war as private memory or public commemoration. War and its retellings in pop culture create temporalities that configure the past, present, and future in imperial or nationalist projects. Memory of war, on the other hand, can haunt and undo temporal imaginaries that war seeks to create for empire or nation. War and its pop cultural retellings also create spaces that cross national borders even while war is fought in the name of the nation. The particular wars that we will situate historically are the initial colonial conquest and local Vietnamese responses of the 19th century, and the three Indochina Wars of the 20th century, the second of which is more commonly known in the US as the Vietnam War.

Materials will include theoretical and other scholarly texts, as well as literature, music, visual art, films, comics, etc. Materials will have English translations. Although we will discuss language issues, students are not required to know Vietnamese. Students will read scholarly writings for argument, data, and methods, and learn to apply theoretical frameworks in readings and lectures to the analysis of popular cultural productions.

Course Requirements:

Students will be expected to come to class prepared for productive discussion of reading materials.

There will be an essay-midterm. In addition, you will be asked to carry out one research project resulting in a 10-page analytic paper in which you apply theoretical frameworks and concepts learned in class to an analysis of cultural productions. There will be a short-answer final exam. At the end of the quarter, students will be expected to have an understanding of, and capacity to write **critically** about, topics mentioned in the course description above.

Your grade distribution is as follows:

Class assignments	10%
Essay Midterm	30%
Research paper	40%
Final Exam	20%

Course Materials:

- Readings will be available on private course website.
- There may be additional reading materials given out in class, as well as class viewing of films, and other visual images.
- Additional film viewing times to be arranged.

Course Schedule:

I. Intro: War and Popular Culture

Wk 1

T Course Introduction

R **Lectures:** What is pop culture? Production, commodification, consumption, ideology
Readings: Adorno and Horkheimer, "Culture Industry;" Stuart Hall, "Notes on Deconstructing the Popular"

Wk 2

T **Lectures:** War and representation as technology of death within biopolitics/necropolitics—Foucault and Mbembe.

Readings: Chapter I in Rey Chow, "The Age of the World Target;"

R **Lecture:** war (con't), and begin Vietnam historical background lecture.
Readings: Tina Chen, "Introduction: Thinking through Embeddedness"
Video clips: footages of targeted bombings smart bombs, drones, and Vietnam bomb runs.

II. Vietnam in Empire and Post-Empire

Wk 3 **Lectures:** Vietnamese historical background. French colonialism in Vietnam and popular culture—the first modern novel; post-imperial pop

T **Readings:** Nguyen-vo, "Vietnam/Vietnamese" entry in The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Race, Ethnicity and Nationalism; George Dutton, "Ly Toet in the City: Coming to Terms with the Modern in 1930s Vietnam";
Visuals: colonial postcards, early American Indochina-based comic.

R **Readings:** "Mark McKinney, "The Fall of French Indochina" from *Redrawing the French Empire in Comics*; Panivong Norindr, "Filmic Memorials and Colonial Blues" from *Phantasmatic Indochina*
Film: *Indochine* (1992), dir. Régis Wariier

- Wk 4 Lectures:** the Cold War, the Vietnam War and the American Empire; representation and war technology—domination, failure, and recuperation
- T Readings:** Edward Miller and Tuong Vu, “The Vietnam War as a Vietnamese War: Agency and Society in the Study of the Second Indochina War;” Scott Laderman, “Hollywood’s Vietnam 1929-1964;”
Visual Images: GI Combat comic 1954; iconic photos of the VN War
- R Readings:** Marilyn B. Young “Now Playing: Vietnam”; Gyori, “Mimicry and Hybridity in Stanley Kubrick’s Full Metal Jacket”
Film: *Full Metal Jacket* (1987), dir. Stanley Kubrick

III. Nation

Wk 5

- T Lectures:** Vietnamese nationalism and how war is remembered--Anderson. National Literature and cinema (clips from *Ngã Ba Đồng Lộc*, *Chị Tư Hậu*, etc.)
Readings: Tuong Vu, “Vietnamese Political Studies and Debates on Vietnamese Nationalism”; Jason Gibbs, “The Music of the State: Vietnam’s Quest for a National Anthem”
- R Lecture:** War as technology of projecting the nation as past and future
Readings: Nguyen-vo, “Epitaphic Nation: The Problem of the South and Necropolitics in Early Modern Vietnamese National Literature”; Trần Lực (Ho Chi Minh), “The Ten-year Sleep” (trans from short story *Giấc Ngủ 10 Năm*); Nguyen-vo, “Into Time: Hồ the Futurist...”
Films: clips of South Vietnamese films *Faceless Lover* and *Land of Suffering*

Wk 6

T MIDTERM

- R Readings:** Mark Bradley, “Contests of Memory: Remembering and Forgetting War in Contemporary Vietnamese Cinema”
Film: *When the Tenth Month Comes* (1984), dir. Đặng Nhật Minh

Wk 7 Lectures: war and anti-war as source of nationalist affect. Trinh Cong Son pop music, postwar *Đổi Mới* fiction.

- T Readings:** John Schafer, “the Trinh Cong Son Phenomenon”; Ho-Tai Hue Tam et al., *The Country of Memory: Remaking the Past in Late Socialist Vietnam*

- R **Readings:** Khai Thu Nguyen, “A Personal Sorrow: *Cải Lương* and the Politics of North and South Vietnam”;
Fiction: selections from Tim O’Brien, Bảo Ninh, Dương Thu Hương, and others
Theater and music: view clips of *Cải Lương* operas; listen to excerpts of TCS pop music.

IV. War and the Transpacific

Wk 8

- T **Lecture:** the Vietnam War and the production of the transAsia; K-wave, K-pop
Readings: Jin-Kyung Lee, “Surrogate Military, Subimperialism, and Masculinity: South Korea in the Vietnam War, 1965–73,” Viet Le, selections from K-pop
- R **Lecture:** War as technology of historiography; war as memory and critique
Readings: Nguyen-vo, “History Interrupted: Life After Matera Death in South Vietnamese and Diasporic Fiction”
Fiction: Selections of diasporic fiction

Wk 9

- T **Lecture:** (continued)
Readings:; Christina Schwenkel, “Exhibiting War, Reconciling Pasts: Photographic Representation and Transnational Commemoration in Contemporary Vietnam”; Yen Le Espiritu, “We Win Even When We Lose”
TV: clips of *South Park* “Vietnam Assignment”:
<http://www.southparkstudios.com/clips/103441/vietnam-assignment>
and “How They Won the War”:
<http://www.southparkstudios.com/clips/103444/how-they-won-the-war>
full episode:
<http://www.southparkstudios.com/full-episodes/s02e06-the-mexican-staring-frog-of-southern-sri-lanka>
- R **Readings:** Chuong-Dai Vo-Hong, on Pipo Nguyen-Duy, Hong-An Truong
Visual Art: Pipo Nguyen-Duy’s and Truong My Le’s photography projects, Hong-An Truong’s Videography

Wk 10

- T **Lecture:** What war enables.
Readings: Christophe Robert, “The Return of the Repressed: Uncanny Spaces of Nostalgia and Loss in Trần Anh Hùng’s *Cyclo*”
Film: *Cyclo* (1995), dir. Trần Anh Hùng
- R **Lecture:** Course wrap-up.
Final Project Paper due

Reading Guide

Please use the following questions to guide your reading of course materials. It is a good idea to keep a reading journal in which you deal with these questions. It would help you not only with in-class discussion, but with the midterm, final project, and final exam as well.

- What is the main argument of this article or chapter?
- What data/evidence does the author use to illustrate and/or to support her/his argument?
- Does the data/evidence support the argument? How or why not?
- What interested you about this reading? Here is where you could think about some aspect of the reading in relation to your thoughts, feelings, experience.
- Are there questions that arise from reading this article/chapter? Your questions could address issues of terminology, methodology, clarity, content; or they could point to contradictions or omissions in the author's argument.
- Think about how separate texts "speak" to one another on an issue (i.e. gender, class, nation, transnational processes; racialization; or tropes, narrative styles, metaphors, images, moods if you're dealing with literature/film).

Sample Mid-term Question

Please write an essay in response to ONE of the questions below. The midterm aims to evaluate your skills in fashioning an argument and supporting it using multiple texts from your readings. Your essay will be evaluated according to the following standards: coherent thesis that is well-supported with illustrations and evidence from your readings, clear explanations of relevant concepts or theories, reference to multiple authors, good writing mechanics such as organization. Although I do not take points off for grammatical or spelling mistakes, too many will interfere with the reader's ability to grasp your argument. So do edit. Please cite your authors in the following format: (author, page number).

Question:

1. Anderson discusses the ways in which those promoting national consciousness would narrate the history and identity of a nation by selectively remembering and forgetting atrocities. What would you say is the relationship between war and the imagined nation? In making your argument, please briefly explain Anderson's argument, show how relevant

course readings may change or extend Anderson's argument in relation to your analysis of one film or literary text.

Sample Research Project

Although you could use secondary data, you are to analyze at least one popular cultural production in your final assignment. These can include literary texts, music, film, documents.

Methods of qualitative analysis of texts, music, documents are interpretive in approach. To guide your interpretation and analysis, it is often necessary to apply certain conceptual tools from your theoretical tool bag. Theories and concepts we learn from class readings will help in devising your research question as well as guiding your analysis. The "data" you work with may also turn around and question the validity or political efficacy of theories. There is here dialogue between theory and "data."

In your 10-page paper, you should explain and discuss relevant issues and concepts, describe the kind of data you have collected, make a case for your analysis of the data, and support your argument with clear examples. The format should follow an analytical/research paper: the intro previews the theoretical framework, the argument, and the data; the body of your paper makes your case by supporting each point with data; and the conclusion pulls together parts of your argument into a summary.

Please use concepts, theories from at least two authors in your paper. Please cite paraphrases or quotes even if they come from our readings. Please use the basic format of (author, work, page number). Please also include a list of sources cited at the end of your paper.

Sample project topics:

1. Data: Films such as *Indochine*, or the TV show *South Park*. You may choose other films or works of fiction having to do with one of the Indochina wars.
Question: In what ways do pop cultural depictions of war reconfigure time into past, present and future? How do these reconfigurations serve projects of empire or nation?
Theoretical/analytical resources: depending on which direction you choose to take with your research question, you could use sets of class readings that deal with empire or nation.
2. Data: Music videos dealing with war memory that are produced in Vietnam and sold here, or those produced here and circulated in Vietnam. Or websites that promote tourism in Vietnam through evocations of war. Or diasporic fiction that deals with war and memory, departure and return.
Question: How does war memory connect countries and regions, or propel globalization? What is involved in this transnational trafficking of war images and/or what are the conditions of production, consumption across national boundaries?

Readings:

Sample Final Exam Question

Please write from one to two-page short answers to each of these questions. You have 10 to 15 minutes each.

1. What is the relationship between biopolitics and necropolitics? Cite authors and give examples/illustrations in your explanation.



UCLA Course Inventory Management System

[Main Menu](#)
[Inventory](#)
[Reports](#)
[Help](#)
[Exit](#)

New Course Proposal

Vietnamese 40

War in Vietnamese Popular Culture

Course Number Vietnamese 40

Title War in Vietnamese Popular Culture

Short Title WAR-VIET POP CULTUR

Units Fixed: 5

Grading Basis Letter grade or Passed/Not Passed

Instructional Format Lecture - 3 hours per week
Discussion - 1 hours per week

TIE Code LECS - Lecture (Plus Supplementary Activity) [T]

GE Requirement Yes

Major or Minor Requirement Yes

Requisites NA

Course Description Lecture, three hours; discussion, one hour. Examination of war in modern popular cultural productions produced and consumed by, or about, people in Vietnam and diasporas. Materials include theoretical and other scholarly texts, as well as literature, music, visual art, films, and comics. Reading of scholarly writings for argument, date, and methods, and learning to apply theoretical frameworks in readings and lectures to analysis of popular cultural productions. P/NP or letter grading.

Justification Our department is looking to add more lower division/GE courses that can be offered during the school year or summer.

Syllabus File [Vietmse40.doc](#) was previously uploaded. You may view the file by clicking on the file name.

Supplemental Information

Grading Structure Section performance 10%
Essay Midterm 30%
Final paper 40%
Final Exam 20%

Effective Date Fall 2013

Instructor	Name	Title
	Thu-huong Nguyen-Vo	Associate Professor

Quarters Taught Fall Winter Spring Summer

Department Asian Languages and Cultures

Contact	Name	E-mail
	LINDSAY DOUNG	ldoung@humnet.ucla.edu

Routing Help

ROUTING STATUS

Role: Registrar's Office

Status: Processing Completed

Role: Registrar's Publications Office - Hennig, Leann Jean (LHENNIG@REGISTRAR.UCLA.EDU) - 56704

Status: Added to SRS on 7/29/2013 1:32:01 PM

Changes: Description

Comments: Reedited course description after looking at syllabus!

[Back to Course List](#)

[Main Menu](#) [Inventory](#) [Reports](#) [Help](#) [Exit](#)
[Registrar's Office](#) [MyUCLA](#) [SRWeb](#)

Comments or questions? Contact the Registrar's Office at
cims@registrar.ucla.edu or (310) 206-7045