

Vietnam and the United States, 1945-1975

Political Science 341^{6D} - Chaminade University (cross listed History and Political Science)

Instructor: Blair Craig, 395-2003

Meetings: Every Monday, 1645-2050 hours

Text: *Vietnam and the United States* by Gary R. Hess

Philosophy: This is your course. You're paying for the opportunity to be exposed to something. I'm here to help you achieve that goal.

Required: Each person will conduct research during the semester on a topic of interest to them, AND approved by the instructor. You will make two presentations during the course and submit a final paper. The final exam will be a regional situation involving Vietnam

Grading: Class participation 10%, Quizzes 10%, Presentations 20%, Paper 30%, Final Exam 30%

Focus: "Nothing is more precious than independence and freedom."

What happened in the years 1945-75 between the United States and Vietnam is history. In order to learn from history we should also look at the forces in effect at that time which influenced the actions / decisions then made. No decision is made in a vacuum. External forces cause that action. Some are positive - many are not. History records. Political science analyzes. Your mission this semester is to view the era of our Vietnam involvement as a regional event, part of a whole continuum of events worldwide, shaping the decisions and actions of national leaders - and a part of the "Cold War".

I ask, for the next 10 weeks, that we focus on the conflict between the United States and Vietnam as part of the Cold War and a learning experience for the future.

WHERE WE'RE GOING - AND HOW WE'LL GET THERE

"You cannot teach a (person) anything. You can only help (them) to discover it within (themselves)." ----- Galileo

If we focus on the "what" -- rather than the "why" -- we miss the opportunity to see the forest rather than the tree. ----- Craig

- Class 1 Course overview: philosophy, focus, requirements. What is the legitimate role of government? Pick a topic as your research topic. Then a video which brings the region into focus historically, from the days of the French domination. (For next week, read ch.1,2 and 3)
- Class 2 Establish a common ground: terms and definitions. Political philosophy: communism vs. capitalism. The impact of WW II (1945-54). The "Cold War". (Have read ch. 1-3).
- Class 3 Political Leaders -- The reality of fear / Communism. The "domino theory" and the "quicksand of Asia". Examine 1954-64. (Have read ch.4) (QUIZ)
- Class 4 Escalation. Presidential War Powers. The Johnson era. Examine 1964-68. (Have read Ch. 5)
- Class 5 **Presentation #1**
- Class 6 Nixon years: Kissinger, negotiations and linkage. The War at Home. Kent State. Conscious of America. (Have read ch.6). (QUIZ)
- Class 7 Vietnam -- why do we care. (Have read Ch.7 and epilogue)
- Class 8 **Presentation #2. (Papers are due today).**
- Class 9 **Presentation #2 completion. Closing Issues**
- Class 10 **Final Exam - you may bring any course material.**