

## SOUTHEAST ASIAN REFUGEES OF THE COLD WAR

History 246, LCA 246, Asian American Stds 246  
Semester: Spring 2016  
Lectures: 1101 Humanities; 9:30-10:45am

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T 11am-1pm



Between 1975 and 1995, over a million and a half Southeast Asians migrated to the United States from the three former French colonies frequently referred to collectively as Indochina: Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam. Most of these migrants came as refugees and added four new major ethnic groups to American society: Hmong, Khmer, Lao, and Vietnamese, including among them ethnic Chinese and the children of American military personnel, generally referred to as "Amerasians." This course is intended to provide a better understanding of the conditions that led these people to flee their homelands in Southeast Asia and eventually take refuge and start new lives in the US, as well as in the other countries that offered them asylum (including, among others, Canada, Australia, and France).

The course will be divided into four parts and will emphasize the Cold War conflicts and wars that devastated these three countries and resulted in the migration and resettlement of the refugees fleeing from the disruptive conditions, especially between 1975 and 1990. **Part 1, *Peoples of the Indochina Countries***, will introduce the themes of the course and provide basic information on the histories, cultures, and social organizational systems of the four ethnic groups that are the focus of the course: Hmong, Khmer, Lao, and Vietnamese. **Part 2, *Colonial Origins of Conflicts in Indochina***, will concentrate on the modern history and changing societies of Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos, with emphasis on the last decades of French colonial rule, the

Japanese occupation during the Pacific War, and the nationalist, revolutionary, and global (Cold War) struggles and upheavals that took place in these three colonies, especially from the 1920s through the 1950s. In addition to discussing the larger contexts of the Cold War, this section will emphasize the significant social, economic, political, and geopolitical developments that took place in French Indochina during the first half of the 20th century. **Part 3, 'Cold' Wars in Indochina**, will survey the violent conflicts of the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s, with emphasis on the wars in Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos, the political alignments (international and domestic) that these wars created, the traumatic aftermath of US withdrawal and Communist victories, and the post-1975 developments and continuing conflicts that further devastated all three countries. **Part 4, *Disorderly Departures: Refugees and Migrants***, will concentrate on the flight of thousands of people from Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos from 1975 to 1990. It will attempt to describe and analyze the mass exodus of the refugees and migrants and the global efforts to facilitate their survival and resettlement. Lectures and readings will concentrate on the reasons for seeking asylum (or continued resistance), the chaos and hardship of the escape, the difficult realities of camp life, and the mechanisms of resettlement in the US. This section will also explore some aspects of the early resettlement experiences of refugees and migrants in US, with particular attention to the period up to the early 1990s.

The content of the course will be presented through lectures, electronically-accessible readings, and film/video documentaries. All the course readings, as indicated, will be made available as an electronic reader through Learn@UW. & Library e-reserves. All films will be viewed on Wednesday evenings (starting at 6:00pm) in Room 1111 Humanities Bldg. (see attached description of film/video series). The films will also be available in the Reserve Reading Room for viewing.

Students will also be required to read and submit a written report on one memoir, family history or refugee narrative to be selected from the list of choices provided in class. These books can be purchased at the Rainbow Bookstore (426 W. Gilman); copies will also be made available at the Reserve Reading Room, College Library, H.C. White Building.

Grades in this course will be based on the following criteria (see attached sheet for explanation of examinations and the writing project):

- 1) 60%: three unit examinations (10%, 25%, 25%):
  - \* first two unit exams will be take-home exams (see schedule on the course outline)
  - \* third exam will be the final exam: May 13th, 2:45pm (room: TBA)
- 2) 20%: report on memoir/family history; due: April 27th (in lecture)
- 3) 20%: attendance and participation in discussion section (criteria defined in section)



**SOUTHEAST ASIAN REFUGEES OF THE COLD WAR**  
**COURSE SYLLABUS AND READING ASSIGNMENTS**

**INTRODUCTION**

*January 19*

**Clarifying Some Terms and Mapping the Road Ahead**

Hank Hill bids farewell to the Souphanousinphon family:  
"Ya'll come back now: that's Texan for *sayonara!*"  
-- the view from *King of the Hill*

*January 21 and 26*

**What Was the Cold War Anyway?**

**REQUIRED READING:** \*M.P. Leffler, "Assuming Hegemony, 1947-1950" in *The Specter of Communism* (New York, 1994): 64-96.

\*O.A. Westad, "Introduction" and "Creating the Third World" in *The Global Cold War* (Cambridge, 2005): 1-3, 110-119; 152-157.

*January 28*

**PART 1. PEOPLES OF THE INDOCHINA COUNTRIES**

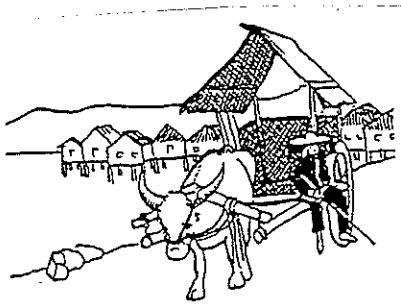
**Viet Nam and Its People: The Vietnamese**

**REQUIRED READING:** \*F.M. LeBar, et al., "Viet-Muong: Vietnamese" in *Ethnic Groups in Mainland Southeast Asia* (New Haven: HRAF, 1964): 161-171.

\*N. Kibria, *Family Tightrope: The Changing Lives of Vietnamese Americans* (Princeton, 1993): 38-64



Cold war: Communism.



February 2

### Cambodia and Its People: The Khmer

**REQUIRED READING:** \*M. Ebihara, "Mon-Khmer" and "Lowland Groups: Khmer" in *Ethnic Groups in Mainland Southeast Asia*, by F.M. LeBar, et al. (New Haven: HRAF, 1964): 94-95, 98-105.

\*J. Hein, "Peoples: Khmer" in *Ethnic Origins: The Adaptation of Cambodian and Hmong Refugees in Four American Cities* (New York, 2006): 45-59.

### February 3: WEDNESDAY EVENING AT THE MOVIES

*Miao Year* (required viewing: see film schedule for content)

February 4 and 9

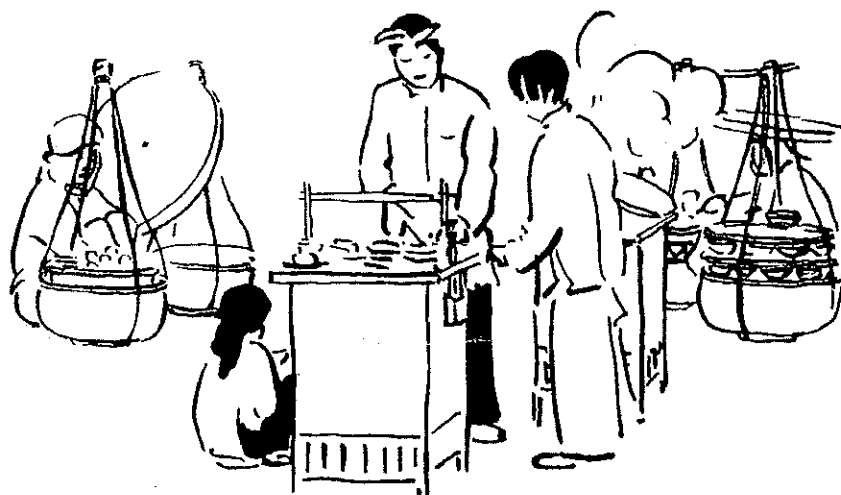
### Laos and Its People: The Lao and the Hmong

**REQUIRED READING:** \*"Social Systems" and "Lao" in *Laos: A Country Study*, ed. by D.P. Whitaker (Washington DC, 1971, 1985 edition): 39-50.

\*"Laotian Tai" [Lao] and "Miao Yao" [Hmong] in *Ethnic Groups in Mainland Southeast Asia*, by F.M. LeBar, et al. (New Haven: HRAF, 1964): Hmong: 63-64, 72-77; Lao: 215-220.

\*J. Hein, "Peoples: Hmong" in *Ethnic Origins: The Adaptation of Cambodian and Hmong Refugees in Four American Cities* (New York, 2006): 60-75.

**FIRST EXAM (10%):** Handed out in lecture on Feb 9th; due back in lecture by Feb 11th; coverage: all lectures, readings & film for the Introduction and Part 1: *Introduction and Peoples of the Indochina Countries (1/19-2/9)*.



## PART 2. COLONIAL ORIGINS OF CONFLICT IN INDOCHINA

### FOCUS ON INDOCHINE: From French Colonialism to Cold War Decolonization

(1850s-1950s: French Conquest and Colonial Rule; Nationalism and Communism: Struggles for Liberation; Japanese Occupation; Toward Decolonization and the Start of Cold War Conflicts)

February 11 and 16

### VIET NAM

**REQUIRED READING:** \*W. Duiker. "Roots of Revolution" in *Vietnam: Nation and Revolution* (Boulder, CO, 1983): 28-48.

\*N.G. Owen, ed. "Vietnam, 1885-1975: Colonialism, Communism, and Wars" in *The Emergence of Modern Southeast Asia* (Honolulu, 2005): 335-349.

### February 17: WEDNESDAY EVENING AT THE MOVIES

*The Roots of War* (required viewing: see film schedule for content)

February 18

### CAMBODIA

**REQUIRED READING:** \*N.G. Owen, ed. "Cambodia, 1884-1975" in *The Emergence of Modern Southeast Asia* (Honolulu, 2005): 361-370.

February 23 and 25

### LAOS

**REQUIRED READING:** \*N.G. Owen, ed. "Laos to 1975" *The Emergence of Modern Southeast Asia* (Honolulu, 2005): 371-375.

\*G. Evans, *A Short History of Laos* (Crows Nest, NSW, 2002): 42-59, 70-92.

\*Barney, G.L. "The Meo of Xieng Khouang Province, Laos" in *Southeast Asian Tribes, Minorities, and Nations*, ed. by P. Kunstadter (Princeton, 1967): 271-294.



## PART 3. 'COLD' WARS IN INDOCHINA

### FOCUS ON THE WARS IN VIET NAM, CAMBODIA, AND LAOS

(1950s-1975: Communist-Led Revolutions for Independence; US, USSR, and PRC Involvements; Internal Political Upheavals; and Final Resolutions)

*March 1 and 3*

#### Vietnam War -- American War

**REQUIRED READING:** \*W. Duiker. "A Nation Divided" in *Vietnam: Nation and Revolution* (Boulder, CO, 1983): 49-70.

\*W.S. Turley, "Of Lessons and Their Price" in *The Second Indochina War* (Lanham, MD, 2009): 237-263.

#### March 2: WEDNESDAY EVENING AT THE MOVIES

*America's Mandarin* (required viewing, see film schedule for content)

*March 8*

#### Drawn Reluctantly Into War: The Cambodian "Sideshow"

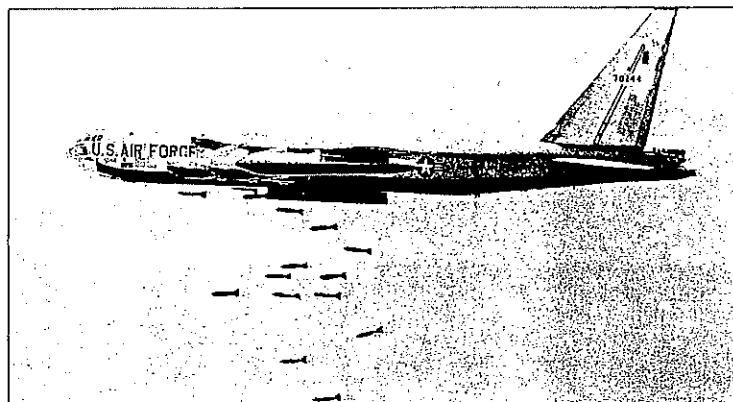
**REQUIRED READINGS:** \*D. Chandler, *A History of Cambodia* (Boulder, CO, 1996 edition): 191-208.

\*N. Sihanouk, "Organizing Treachery" in *My War with the CIA* (New York, 1973): 36-48.

\*W. Shawcross, "The Coup" in *Sideshow: Kissinger, Nixon and the Destruction of Cambodia* (New York, 1979): 112-127.

#### March 9: WEDNESDAY EVENING AT THE MOVIES

*Cambodia and Laos* (required viewing, see film schedule for content)



March 10 and 15

### The Not So "Secret" War in Laos

**REQUIRED READING:** \*G. Evans, *A Short History of Laos* (Crow's Nest, NSW, 2002): 98-112; 120-133; 146-150; 165-175.

\*K. Quincy, "A Hmong War" and "Resistance" in *Hmong: History of a People* (Cheney, WA, 1995 edition): 189-215.

\*M.N. Lee, "Epilogue" in *Dreams of the Hmong Kingdom*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2015: 302-312.

### March 16: WEDNESDAY EVENING AT THE MOVIES

*A Brief History of the Hmong and the Secret War in Laos*  
(required viewing, see film schedule for content)

March 17 & 29 and 31

### Post-War Wars: Continuing Conflict in Indochina, 1975-1990

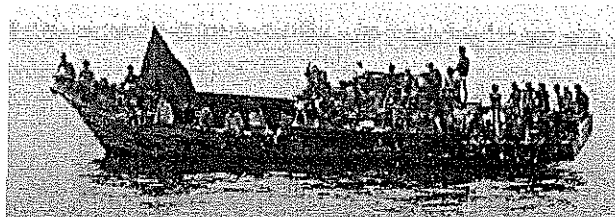
**REQUIRED READING:** \*D. Elliott, *The Third Indochina Conflict* (Boulder, CO, 1981): 1-19.

\*D. Chandler, *A History of Cambodia* (Boulder, CO, 1996 edition): 209-235.

\*G. Evans, *A Short History of Laos* (Crow's Nest, NSW, 2002): 176-191.

\*\*\* SPRING BREAK: March 19 through March 27 \*\*\*

**SECOND EXAM (25%):** Handed out in lecture on March 31st; due back in lecture on April 5th; coverage: all lectures, readings, and films for the Part 2: *Colonial Origins of Conflict in Indochina* (2/11-2/25); and Part 3: *'Cold' Wars in Indochina* (3/1-3/31).



## **PART 4. DISORDERLY DEPARTURES: REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS**

*April 5 and 7*

### **Managing Refugees: Global Responses to Regional Crisis**

**REQUIRED READING:** \*C.J. Bon Tempo, *Americans at the Gate* (Princeton, 2008), 133-140; 145-166.

\*W.C. Robinson, *Terms of Refuge* (London, 1998), 10-38.

\*J. Hein, *From Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia* (New York, 1995): 11-25.

*April 12 and 14*

### **Disorderly Departures from VIETNAM: From Escape to Camps**

**REQUIRED READING:** \*J.M. Freeman, *Changing Identities: Vietnamese Americans, 1975-1995* (Boston, 1995): 29-42.

\*U.S. Committee for Refugees. *Vietnamese Boat People: Pirates' Vulnerable Prey* (1984): 18-page pamphlet.

\*J.M. Freeman, "Flight to Freedom" in *Hearts of Sorrow: Vietnamese-American Lives* (Stanford, 1989): 291-302, 313-319, 343-349.

### **April 13: WEDNESDAY EVENING AT THE MOVIES**

*Oh, Saigon* (required viewing, see film schedule for content)

*April 19 and 21*

### **Disorderly Departures from CAMBODIA: From Escape to Camps**

**REQUIRED READING:** \*N.J. Smith-Hefner, *Khmer Americans* (Berkeley, 1999): 1-12.

\*S. Chan, *Survivors: Cambodian Refugees in the United States* (Urbana, IL, 2004): 39-80.

\*U. Welaratna, *Beyond the Killing Fields* (Stanford, 1993): 165-195.

### **April 20: WEDNESDAY EVENING AT THE MOVIES**

*Refugee* (required viewing, see film schedule for content)



April 26 and 28

**Disorderly Departures from LAOS: From Escape to Camps**

**REQUIRED READING:** \*U.S. Committee for Refugees. *Refugees from Laos: In Harm's Way* (July 1986): 24-page pamphlet.

\*P. Van Esterik, *Taking Refuge: Lao Buddhists in North America* (Tempe, AZ, 1992): 11-32.

\*A. Fadiman, "Flight" in *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down* (New York, 1997), 154-170.

\*S. Chan, *Hmong Means Free: Life in Laos and America* (Philadelphia, 1994): 42-60.

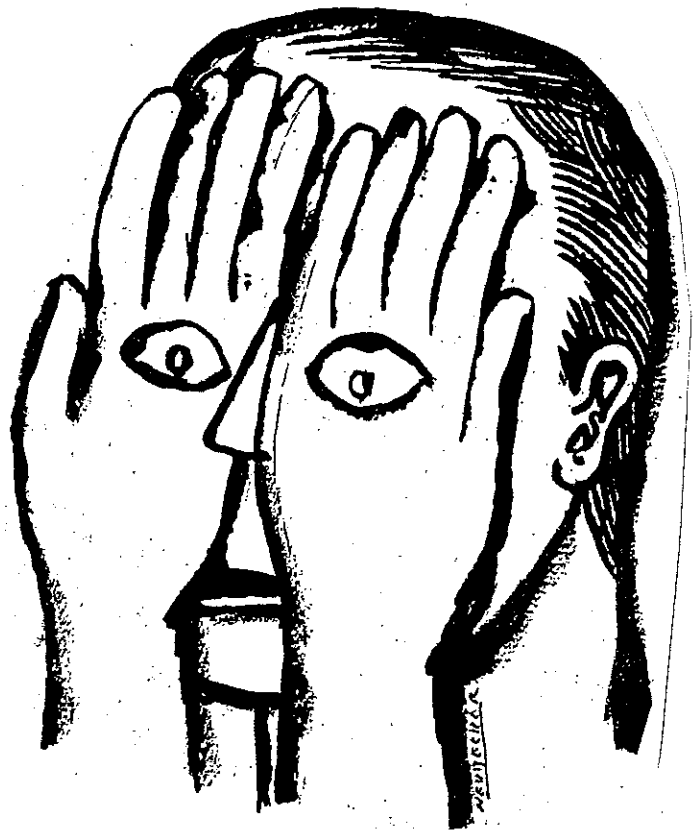
\*T. Pfaff, *Hmong in America: Journey from a Secret War* (Eau Claire, WI, 1995): 49-63.

\*L. Long, *Ban Vinai: The Refugee Camp* (New York, 1993): 31-53, 55-72.

**April 27: WEDNESDAY EVENING AT THE MOVIES**

*Betrayal* (required viewing, see film schedule for content)

**\*\* REPORT ON MEMOIRS DUE: April 28 (Thursday) \*\***



May 3 and 5

**Assessing Early Resettlement in the United States**

**REQUIRED READINGS:** \*W.C. Robinson, *Terms of Refuge* (London, 1988): 127-138.

\*J. Hein, *From Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia* (New York, 1995): 50-68.

\*S. Chan, *Survivors: Cambodian Refugees in the United States* (Urbana, IL, 2004): 81-102; 107-122.

\*S.R. Cowan, "Lao Refugees in Lowell: Reinterpreting the Past, Finding Meaning in the Present" in *Southeast Asian Refugees and Immigrants in the Mill City: Changing Families, Communities, Institutions - Thirty Years Afterward* (Lebanon, NH, 2007): 131-152.

\*A. Fadiman, "The Melting Pot" and "Why Did They Pick Merced?" in *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down* (New York, 1997), 181-209; 225-249.

**May 4: WEDNESDAY EVENING AT THE MOVIES**

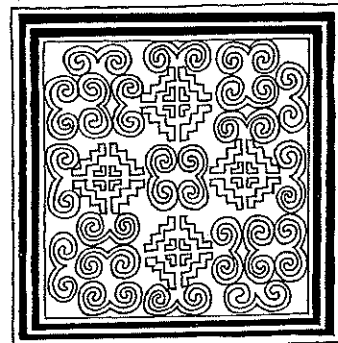
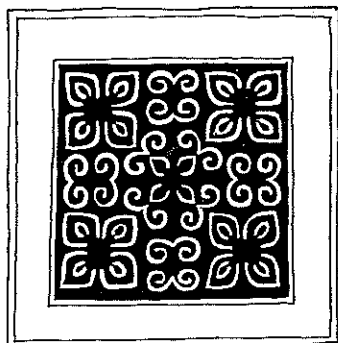
*Becoming American* and *Cambodian Doughnut Dreams* (required viewing, see film schedule for content)

**Changing the Terms: Slowing the Flow in the 1990s**

**RECOMMENDED READINGS:** \*W.C. Robinson, *Terms of Refuge* (London, 1998): 187-230.

**\*\* FINAL EXAM: May 9th (Monday); 7:45-9:45am: Room TBA \*\***

See examination sheet for final exam coverage.



## SOUTHEAST ASIAN REFUGEES OF THE COLD WAR EXAMINATIONS FOR THE COURSE

### Three Unit Exams

Three unit exams will be given in this course, all predominantly essay exams. Two of the exams will be take-home exams and the third will be given during the regularly scheduled final exam time. The exams will be given at the end of Part 1 (February 9th, counting 10%), at the end of Parts 2 & 3 (March 31st), counting 25%), and at the end of Part 4 (as the final exam on May 9th, counting 25%). Each exam should be treated as a short research paper based on the lectures, readings, and required video/film sources for each part. The take-home exams should be five-page papers (double spaced; 12-point font) with references cited as necessary. The final exam will be an in-class exam (with blue books) that will permit a resource (or cheat) sheet, which will be discussed in discussion section. Below is the schedule for the exams and the coverage of each exam.

**First Exam (10%):** Handed out in lecture on Feb 9th; due back in lecture by Feb 11th; coverage: all lectures, readings & film for the Introduction and Part 1: *Introduction and Peoples of the Indochina Countries* (1/19-2/9).

**Second Exam (25%):** Handed out in lecture on March 31st; due back in lecture on April 5th; coverage: all lectures, readings, and films for the Part 2: *Colonial Origins of Conflict in Indochina* (2/11-2/25); and Part 3: *'Cold' Wars in Indochina* (3/1-3/31).

**Third Exam (Final) (25%):** Taken as the final exam on May 9th (7:45-9:45am) in the designated room (TBA); the question(s) will pertain to all the lectures, readings, and films from the Introduction and Parts 2, 3, and 4), with emphasis on Part 4: *Disorderly Departures: Refugees and Migrants* (4/5-5/5). You will be allowed to use a resource (or cheat) sheet for this exam; additional information will be explained in discussion sections regarding the format of this examination.



## SOUTHEAST ASIAN REFUGEES OF THE COLD WAR REPORT ON MEMOIR READING

This report is 20% of your grade. From the list of books below, each student will select ONE memoir or family history. You are encouraged to read to book early in the course to prepare yourself to better understand the impact of the events discussed in the course on the lives of people. Do not try to write this paper until you are more familiar with the subject matter. When you are, you can read it again, this time preparing yourself to write. You will write a 5-page report on the memoir you have selected, emphasizing how the story relates to the subject matter of the course, particularly how the individuals responded to the various developments outlined in the four units treated in the course. Equally important, you should observe how the stories presented different interpretations, and when the stories have omitted critical events and/or relationships that you would have expected to be covered in their memoir. In this sense, you will be interrogating the memoirs based on your understanding of the events as covered in the lectures, readings, & films used for the course. The assignment is intended for you to compare the memoir (as a personal story) to the historical narrative that has been presented in the class, both in terms of where the memoir corresponds to that narrative and where it does not. Your report, therefore, will emphasize the period before resettlement in the US, focusing on the individual's or family's life in their country of origin (before the 1960s), their involvement in the conflicts and wars (1960s and 1970s), their flight from the country, their camp experiences, and the processes that led to their resettlement in the US. This report will be due in lecture on April 28th.

### LIST OF BOOKS FOR MEMOIR REPORT

All the books below can be purchased at the Rainbow Bookstore (426 W. Gilman); copies will also be made available at the Reserve Reading Room, College Library, H.C. White Building. Select and read ONE of these books for your report.

- \* Huynh, Jade Ngoc Quang. *South Wind Changing* (Vietnamese). St. Paul, MN: Graywolf Press, 1994.
- \* Him, Chanrithy. *When Broken Glass Floats: Growing Up under the Khmer Rouge* (Cambodian). NY: W.W. Norton & Co, 2000.
- \* Yang, Kao Kalia. *The Latehomecomer: A Hmong Family Memoir* (Hmong). Minneapolis: Coffee House Press, 2008.
- \* Thavisouk Phrasavath. *Stepped Out of the Womb*. (Lao). Lao Century Media, 2011?

More details on this assignment will be given in your discussion sections.

### Project Specifications:

Format: Typed or Computer Printed; 12-Pt Font; 1" Margins  
Length: 5 pages (about 2,000 words)  
Deadline: April 28, 2016 (in lecture)

