

THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN
Department of History
Semester I, 1984-85

<u>COURSE NO.</u>	<u>COURSE TITLE</u>	<u>INSTRUCTOR</u>
573-2	The Vietnam Wars	Smail

SUBJECT

This colloquium deals with the stupendous upheaval in the former colony of French Indochina which began with the Japanese occupation in 1940 and is still in full swing today in what are now officially the three nations of Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos.

What most Americans think of as "The Vietnam War" (1965-75) was only a phase -- though an exceptionally violent one -- in the much longer time of troubles for the peoples who live in this region. Americans, too, understandably tend to see these events from a vantage point here at home, looking outward across the Pacific at distant and alien lands over there. We also tend, equally understandably, to be more interested in what we were doing over there and whether what we were doing was right or wrong, than in what was happening in and to the societies primarily concerned.

This course will present a longer and wider view of these events. It will take full account of the Chinese, French, Russians and Americans as they enter from the outside to play important roles in the history of Indochina, but it is centered on the story of the Indochinese peoples themselves. It is only by making a serious effort to see the story from a mental vantage point inside Indochina that Americans can gain a full understanding of the terrible events in which we were so deeply involved -- and are still troubled and divided about.

CLASS SESSIONS

The first three sessions will briefly summarize the main themes in the history of the region up to 1940, and will take the form of lectures with interludes of discussion and questions. The rest of the sessions will be devoted mainly to discussion of papers written by student members on questions given in the syllabus; of other questions not chosen for student papers; of required readings; and of issues raised by the class. A small required course kit awaits you at Kinko's.

READING

The schedule of required reading is heavy -- about 2800 pages, amounting to an average of about 185 pages a week. The required texts are Duiker, Herring and Race; optional ones are Greene, Shawcross and Lewy. In the syllabus I have endeavored to supply the fullest possible information about where you can get your hands on the other required & suggested readings.

PAPERS

Each student member will write one paper of 8 to 10 typewritten pages on one of the questions given in the syllabus. These papers will be reproduced in sufficient copies to supply one copy for each class member and two copies for myself. They must be in the course box in the History Dept. lobby no later than noon Mondays, and be carefully read before class on Tuesday. In addition each student will serve as a formal discussant for one of the papers presented.

EXERCISES

Two map exercises & two quizzes. See attached sheet. The exercises do not count in the final grade but students who score below a BC, or who have more than two scores of BC, will do as many makeups as they and I can endure to come up to par.

GRADES

Paper 40%, paper discussant 10%, final exam (with advance list of questions) 35%, general discussion 15%.