

Texas A&M University-Central Texas
HIST 4364-115: The Vietnam War
Fall 2019, First Session
203 Founder's Hall
TR 2:30 – 5:15 p.m.

Instructor: Luke A. Nichter, Ph.D.
Professor of History

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Website: <http://lukenichter.com>

Office Hours:

I am in my office on days I teach. Otherwise, please email me for an appointment. Your message will be returned promptly even during weekends, evenings, holidays, and university break periods.

Mode of Instruction and Course Access:

This course will meet approximately 50% of the time – see Complete Course Calendar for more information – and uses TAMUCT's Canvas system (<https://tamuct.instructure.com/>).

Course Description (from the TAMUCT course catalog):

Topics in National Histories. 3 Semester Credit Hours. Examine the history of a particular state or region in depth. May be repeated for credit when the topics vary. Prerequisite(s): 6 hours HIST or permission of department chair.

Course Overview:

This course includes an overview of the American experience in Vietnam from several perspectives including the period of French colonization, origins of the Vietnam War and U.S. military escalation, media coverage, domestic public opinion and anti-war movements, U.S. withdrawal and communist victory, the war in retrospect as seen in American popular culture, political debates, and foreign policy.

This course will also serve to prepare those interested in taking part in the May 2020 Texas A&M University – Central Texas study abroad trip to Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon), tentatively scheduled for May 20-29. The trip will focus on the theme of "Americans in 1960s Saigon," and will be led by Drs. Luke A. Nichter and Allen Redmon and open to all undergraduate and graduate students at the university. If you are interested or have questions, please let your instructor know.

Learning Objectives of Course:

Knowledge:

- Students will improve their ability to identify connections between historical issues and life outside the classroom

Comprehension:

- Students will demonstrate how to think historically about the past by identifying and critiquing historical interpretation and analyzing issues in historical context

Application:

- Students will select and use evidence from a variety of sources, including primary sources

Analysis:

- Students will examine current issues from a historical perspective

Synthesis:

- Students will compare the historical development of their own and other cultures

Evaluation:

- Students will complete assignments that prompt them to argue effectively and critically

Course Unit Learning Objectives:

- Week 1: Identify how Indochina became an American concern
- Week 2: Examine the U.S. response to the Tonkin Gulf incident
- Week 3: Debate whether American bombing achieved the desired objectives
- Week 4: Assess why some war architects turned against the war
- Week 5: Evaluate the “peace with honor” approach of the Nixon White House
- Week 6: Critique whether Nixon was sincere about ending the war
- Week 7: Explain whether the ceasefire was intended as a peaceful resolution
- Week 8: Distinguish the impact of the war on the United States

Instructor Responsibilities:

- Select and present course content;
- Identify themes to be emphasized;
- Evaluate student historical understanding and skills;
- Communicate evaluations to students in a timely manner;
- Assist students in improving their skills.

Student Responsibilities:

- Complete all required readings;
- Attend class regularly;
- Participate in all class activities and discussions;
- Communicate with instructor (using office hours, and email);
- Complete all assignments on time.

Required Reading and Textbook(s):

Max Hastings, *Vietnam: An Epic Tragedy, 1945-1975*. New York: Harper, 2018.

- ISBN: 978-0-06-240566-1

Additional readings may be assigned and distributed at the discretion of the instructor.

Course Requirements:

The course grade will be determined by Quizzes (20%), Discussion Board Questions (DBQs) (20%), Film Responses (20%), Attendance (10%), and a Final Exam (30%).

Grading Criteria Rubric and Conversion:

Quizzes:	20%
DBQs:	20%
Film Responses:	20%
Attendance:	10%
<u>Final Exam:</u>	<u>30%</u>
	100%

Final grades will be computed according to the following scale:

- A = 90-100%
- B = 80-89%
- C = 70-79%
- D = 60-69%
- F = 59-0%

Posting of Grades:

All grades will be posted in the Canvas grade book. Students should regularly monitor their grades and address any questions or concerns promptly to the instructor. Throughout the course, the grade book will be updated at the end of each week to include all work completed up to that point in the course.

Late Policy:

Any assignment submitted after the due date and time will be subject to a penalty of ten percent per twenty-four hour period late. If a specific assignment carries its own late policy, the specific assignment's late policy takes precedence over this general late policy.

Attendance:

Due the focus on in-class discussion, attendance is very important. If you miss a class, regardless of the reason, the attendance portion of your final grade in this will be deducted appropriately. To document your attendance, a sign-in sheet will be distributed towards the beginning of each class session.

Quizzes:

There will be four quizzes as indicated on the course calendar. The purpose of the quizzes is to give you an example of the types of questions you will encounter on the final exam, as well as to make sure you are keeping up on the reading.

Film Responses:

See page 10 for more information.

Final Exam:

Information about the Final Exam will be distributed separately. The Final Exam will be a take home essay assignment, and you will have the entire final week of the course to complete it.

Social Media Policy:

Due to the proliferation of social media and the need to keep professional distance between vocation and avocation, no Facebook friend requests will be accepted from current students. However, you are welcome to follow me on Twitter (@lukenic).

Canvas Access and Course Participation:

The most important prerequisite is that you have access to TAMUCT's Canvas portal, at <https://tamuct.instructure.com/>. If you are logging in the first time, your username is your MyCT username and password. If you have forgotten your username or password, follow the link provided on the login page.

If you do not have login credentials for Canvas (i.e. a username and password) you must resolve this immediately. No one—including your instructor—can do this for you. Failure to do so will result in failure of the course, since assignments are due beginning at the end of the first week of the course. While many of you are already familiar with Canvas, because such a large percentage of your final grade depends on Canvas participation these details bear repeating.

Be sure to look around the Canvas course shell. Perhaps you have used Canvas before, but not this version. If this is your first time using Canvas, or if you need a refresher, visit the Help section. There, you will find a variety of tutorials and other types of assistance.

The following are the Canvas modules used:

- “Announcements” is where you will find instructor announcements, which will also be emailed to you when they are posted.
- “Discussions” is where you will post your answers to the Discussion Board Questions (DBQs). As a reminder, when you post your answers to the DBQs, for each question you are required to submit three posts. The first should be a longer post—in a new “thread”—that thoroughly answers the question and demonstrates that you mastered the reading for that week. The second and third posts are shorter comments on your classmates’ posts.
- “Grades” is where you can monitor your course grades.
- “Assignments” is where you will find information about upcoming assignments.

At any point during the semester, if you need technical assistance related to Canvas, contact:

Help Desk Central
Online Chat: <https://www.tamuct.edu/help>
Phone: (254) 519-4266

Complete Course Calendar

Week One: A French Colony No More

Objective: Identify how Indochina became an American concern

- 8/27: **Class Meeting**
Read Hastings: Introduction, Chs. 1-2
8/29: **Class Meeting**
Quiz 1

Week Two: From Military Advisors to Combat Deployments

Objective: Examine the U.S. response to the Tonkin Gulf incident

- 9/2: Read Hastings: Chs. 3-5
9/7: **DBQs 1 due by 11:59 p.m.**

Week Three: An American War

Objective: Debate whether American bombing achieved the desired objectives

- 9/10: **Class Meeting** Listen to Week 3 Podcast
Read Hastings: Chs. 6-8
9/12: **Class Meeting**
Quiz 2

Week Four: A Commitment without End?

Objective: Assess why some war architects turned against the war

- 9/16: Read Hastings: Chs. 9-12
9/21: **DBQs 2 due by 11:59 p.m.**

Week Five: From LBJ to Nixon-Kissinger

Objective: Evaluate the "peace with honor" approach of the Nixon White House

- 9/24: **Class Meeting**
Read Hastings: Chs. 13-16
9/26: **Class Meeting**
Quiz 3

Week Six: Both Expansion and Contraction of the American Commitment

Objective: Critique whether Nixon was sincere about ending the war

- 9/30: Read Hastings: Chs. 17-20
10/5: **DBQs 3 due by 11:59 p.m.**
Film Response 1 due by 11:59 p.m. (by Microsoft Word email attachment to luke_nichter@tamuct.edu)

Week Seven: A Flawed Coda

Objective: Explain whether the ceasefire was intended as a peaceful resolution

10/7: Read Hastings: Chs. 21-24

10/12: **DBQs 4 due by 11:59 p.m.**

Film Response 2 due by 11:59 p.m. (by Microsoft Word email attachment to luke_nichter@tamuct.edu)

Week Eight: The Long-term Legacy of the Vietnam War

Objective: Distinguish the impact of the war on the United States

10/15: **Class Meeting**

Read Hastings: Chs. 25-28

Work on Final Exam

10/17: **Class Meeting**

Quiz 4

10/19: **Final Exam due by 11:59 p.m.** (by Microsoft Word email attachment to luke_nichter@tamuct.edu)

911 Cellular:

Emergency Warning System for Texas A&M University – Central Texas

911Cellular is an emergency notification service that gives Texas A&M University-Central Texas the ability to communicate health and safety emergency information quickly via email, text message, and social media. All students are automatically enrolled in 911 Cellular through their myCT email account.

Connect at [911Cellular](https://portal.publicsafetycloud.net/Texas-AM-Central/alert-management) [https://portal.publicsafetycloud.net/Texas-AM-Central/alert-management] to change where you receive your alerts or to opt out. By staying enrolled in 911Cellular, university officials can quickly pass on safety-related information, regardless of your location.

Drop Policy:

If you discover that you need to drop this class, you must complete a [Drop Request Form](https://www.tamuct.edu/registrar/docs/Drop_Request_Form.pdf) [https://www.tamuct.edu/registrar/docs/Drop_Request_Form.pdf]. Professors cannot drop students; this is always the responsibility of the student. The Registrar's Office will provide a deadline on the University Calendar for which the form must be completed, signed and returned. Once you return the signed form to the Registrar's Office, you must go into Warrior Web and confirm that you are no longer enrolled. If you still show as enrolled, FOLLOW-UP with the Registrar's Office immediately. You are to attend class until the procedure is complete to avoid penalty for absence. Should you miss the drop deadline or fail to follow the procedure, you will receive an F in the course, which may affect your financial aid and/or VA educational benefits.

Academic Integrity:

Texas A&M University -Central Texas values the integrity of the academic enterprise and strives for the highest standards of academic conduct. A&M-Central Texas expects its students, faculty, and staff to support the adherence to high standards of personal

and scholarly conduct to preserve the honor and integrity of the creative community. Academic integrity is defined as a commitment to honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. Any deviation by students from this expectation may result in a failing grade for the assignment and potentially a failing grade for the course. Academic misconduct is any act that improperly affects a true and honest evaluation of a student's academic performance and includes, but is not limited to, cheating on an examination or other academic work, plagiarism and improper citation of sources, using another student's work, collusion, and the abuse of resource materials. All academic misconduct concerns will be reported to the university's Office of Student Conduct. Ignorance of the university's standards and expectations is never an excuse to act with a lack of integrity. When in doubt on collaboration, citation, or any issue, please contact your instructor before taking a course of action.

Academic Accommodations:

At Texas A&M University-Central Texas, we value an inclusive learning environment where every student has an equal chance to succeed and has the right to a barrier free education. The Department of Access and Inclusion is responsible for ensuring that students with a disability receive equal access to the University's programs, services and activities. If you believe you have a disability requiring reasonable accommodations please contact the Department of Access and Inclusion at (254) 501-5831. Any information you provide is private and confidential and will be treated as such. For more information please visit our [Access & Inclusion](https://www.tamuct.edu/student-affairs/access-inclusion.html) webpage [https://www.tamuct.edu/student-affairs/access-inclusion.html].

Texas A&M University-Central Texas supports students who are pregnant and/or parenting. In accordance with requirements of Title IX and guidance from US Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights, the Dean of Student Affairs' Office can assist students who are pregnant and/or parenting in seeking accommodations related to pregnancy and/or parenting. For more information, please visit <https://www.tamuct.departments/index.php>. Students may also contact the institution's Title IX Coordinator. If you would like to read more about these [requirements and guidelines online](http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/pregnancy.pdf), please visit the website [http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/pregnancy.pdf].

Tutoring:

Tutoring is available to all A&M-Central Texas students, both on-campus and online. On-campus subjects tutored include Accounting, Advanced Math, Biology, Finance, Statistics, Mathematics, and Study Skills. Tutors are available at the Tutoring Center in Warrior Hall, Suite 111. If you have a question regarding tutor schedules, need to schedule a tutoring session, are interested in becoming a tutor, or any other question, contact Academic Support Programs at 254-519-5796, or by emailing Larry Davis at lldavis@tamuct.edu.

Chat live with a tutor 24/7 for almost any subject on your computer! Tutor.com is an online tutoring platform that enables A&M-Central Texas students to log-in and receive

FREE online tutoring and writing support. This tool provides tutoring in over forty subject areas. Access Tutor.com through Canvas.

University Writing Center:

Located in 416 Warrior Hall, the University Writing Center (UWC) at Texas A&M University-Central Texas is a free workspace open to all TAMUCT students with satellite hours in the University Library. Students may arrange a one-on-one session with a trained and experienced writing tutor by visiting the UWC during normal operating hours (both half-hour and hour sessions are available) or by making an appointment via [WCOOnline](https://tamuct.mywconline.com/) [https://tamuct.mywconline.com/]. In addition, you can email Dr. Bruce Bowles Jr. at bruce.bowles@tamuct.edu to schedule an online tutoring session. Tutors are prepared to help writers of all levels and abilities at any stage of the writing process.

While tutors will not write, edit, or grade papers, they will assist students in developing more effective composing practices. By providing a practice audience for students' ideas and writing, our tutors highlight the ways in which they read and interpret students' texts, offering guidance and support throughout the various stages of the writing process. In addition, students may work independently in the UWC by checking out a laptop that runs the Microsoft Office suite and connects to WIFI, or by consulting our resources on writing, including all of the relevant style guides. Whether you need help brainstorming ideas, organizing an essay, proofreading, understanding proper citation practices, or just want a quiet place to work, the University Writing Center is here to help! If you have any questions about the University Writing Center, please do not hesitate to contact Dr. Bruce Bowles Jr. at bruce.bowles@tamuct.edu.

Library Services:

The University Library provides many services in support of research across campus and at a distance. We offer over 200 electronic databases containing approximately 250,000 eBooks and 82,000 journals, in addition to the 72,000 items in our print collection, which can be mailed to students who live more than 50 miles from campus. Research guides for each subject taught at A&M-Central Texas are available through our website to help students navigate these resources. On-campus, the library offers technology including cameras, laptops, microphones, webcams, and digital sound recorders.

Research assistance from a librarian is also available twenty-four hours a day through our online chat service, and at the reference desk when the library is open. Research sessions can be scheduled for more comprehensive assistance, and may take place on Skype or in-person at the library. Assistance may cover many topics, including how to find articles in peer-reviewed journals, how to cite resources, and how to piece together research for written assignments.

Our 27,000-square-foot facility on the A&M-Central Texas main campus includes student lounges, private study rooms, group work spaces, computer labs, family areas suitable for all ages, and many other features. Services such as interlibrary loan, TexShare, binding, and laminating are available. The library frequently offers

workshops, tours, readings, and other events. For more information, please visit our [Library website](https://tamuct.libguides.com/) [https://tamuct.libguides.com/].

Instructor reserves the right to amend this syllabus at any time.

Film Response Instructions

You are required to watch two feature-length films or documentaries related to the Vietnam War. The following films are on reserve at the Library. Unless approved in advance by your instructor, you must choose films from this list:

- *Hearts and Minds* (Sweden, 1974)
- *Frontline* (USA, 1981)
- *Platoon* (USA, 1986)
- *Good Morning, Vietnam* (USA, 1987)
- *Dear America: Letters Home from Vietnam* (USA, 1987)
- *Indochine* (France, 1992)
- *Daughter from Danang* (USA, 2002)
- *The Fog of War* (USA, 2003)
- *The Most Dangerous Man in America: Daniel Ellsberg and the Pentagon Papers* (USA, 2009)
- *Kissinger* (UK, 2011)

Following each film, you are required to write a Film Response based on what you saw and how you reflected upon the themes presented in the film:

- How did the film change your impressions of the Vietnam War?
- How was the film related to what you read in our course readings?
- How was the subject matter presented — lighthearted, dark, serious, etc.?
- What were the values presented in the film, either overtly or more subtly?
- Who were the heroes and the villains, and how were they presented?
- What was the struggle or issue presented in the film, and how was it resolved?
- What do you think the filmmakers wanted viewers to remember about the film?
- Did you enjoy the film? Why or why not?

A few other notes:

- The length should be 500 words (+/- 10% is an acceptable margin).
- No bibliography or works cited page is necessary, and no outside sources are needed. *Any papers based on internet sources will receive a zero.*
- Email completed Film Responses to luke_nichter@tamuct.edu as a Microsoft Word email attachment by the due date/time indicated on the syllabus.