

**Imperial Valley College
Jack J. Little**

Fall 2013

History 121

United States History - 1877 to present

[Course #10605] Tuesday & Thursday 4:45-6:10 / [Course # 10601] Wednesday 6:30-9:40

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is a survey of American history from the end of Reconstruction to the present. This course will cover the major political, economic, social, gender, racial, cultural, and intellectual transformations of the modern American eras with special examination of America's rise to global power. At the completion of this course students will have a broad understanding of the most important ideas, personalities, movements, and events in the modern period.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOK

Enduring Vision: A History of the American People V.II Since 1965 7th Edition

OFFICE HOURS

There are no office hours or an office.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will be able to:

- 1) Identify and recall key information from a historical text and/or a documentary film.
- 2) Describe the causes and/or impact of a historical event.
- 3) Explain and analyze the key information contained in a primary source document by the end of the course.

TEACHING METHODS

The majority of information will be delivered in the form of lecture. It is strongly recommended that the students attend all classes and take notes diligently. Ninety percent of exam questions will be based on lectures. Supplemental material from videos will be used for emphasis and be included on the exams.

Completing the assigned readings before you come to class will greatly increase your understanding and success in this class.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Exams [100 points]: There will be three exams totaling 100 points. There will be no make-up exams, unless you make arrangements with the instructor BEFORE the exam. Any missed exam without prior consent will result in a score of “0”. **Bluebook(s), a scantron (100), and a No. 2 pencil must be brought to each exam.** Bluebooks and scantrons can be purchased in the college bookstore. Do not wait until the last minute to buy your test supplies.

Written Assignments [25 points]: For a research assignment, you are going to write a critique review on a historical book of your choice. There will be some books on reserve at the library for your selection. A critique review is not a book report. Students are to review a book by examining the writer’s objective. What is the writer’s point of view in their studies? Why was the book written? Was the writer bias or impartial? Does the writer prove the stated thesis to your satisfaction? Does the author provide a convincing argument? It is recommended that you use sources such as JSTOR and H-Net to read reviews on your book of choice prior to reading and critiquing. **Requirements: 3 to 5 pages. Typed with single-space for paragraphs and double-space between paragraphs.**

Late Assignments: Late assignments are not accepted. **You DO NOT get extra time to turn in assignments just because you are absent.** Students should make arrangements to turn in the assignment by a fellow classmate or in the instructor’s mailbox. In an extreme emergency, you should make every effort to turn in the assignment in the instructor’s mailbox before the next class.

COURSE GRADE

The course grade is based on total points accumulated during the semester. **There is a possible total of 125 points.** Midterm I (25pts), Midterm II (25pts), Final (50pts), Critique (25pts). No **extra credit** points may be available. Class participation and attendance is expected. Final grades are calculated as follows: 90-100% (A), 80-89% (B), 70-79% (C), 60-69% (D), below 60% (F).

ATTENDANCE

Students are expected to attend every class session. Any student who misses the first class will be dropped. Attendance is taken every class period. **Students are responsible to insure their signature is on the Sign-in Sheet before leaving class** or you will be counted as absent. Leaving class early is considered a tardy. Students who stay for less than two-thirds of the class are considered absent. Students are responsible for all materials, assignments, or information given in class, regardless of whether you were in class. **Students may be dropped at instructor discretion if they miss more than a week of class hours continuously.** However, it doesn’t mean you will be dropped. **Students are responsible for officially withdrawing from the class through Webstar. If you are in class anytime during the semester and do not withdraw officially, you will receive an F.**

ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS

I am happy to work with all students so that each can achieve his/her educational objectives. Any student with a documented disability who may need educational

accommodations should notify the instructor and the Disabled Student Programs and Services (DSP&S) office as soon as possible (DSP&S, Room 2117, Health Sciences Bldg., 760-355-6312).

CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE AND ACADEMIC HONESTY

No electronic equipment is allowed to be used in the classroom, including cell phones and computers, without permission of instructor. Disruptive or disrespectful behavior will not be tolerated. It is NOT OK to be late, sleep, talk, whisper, or do homework for another class. Class will end on time, so don't pack up early and disrupt the class. Leaving any time during class is considered a tardy. Anyone who engages in this kind of behavior can be asked to leave class and told to meet with the college disciplinary officer.

A college education is supposed to be challenging. This class will require hard work. **Students must do their own work.** Looking on someone else's scantron or paper during a quiz or exam, handing in a paper you did not write (or with significant portions written by someone else), not properly citing the source of your ideas, quotes, or facts in a paper, talking or passing notes during exams, are all examples of cheating. I will meet individually with anyone I suspect of cheating. Any student found to have cheated on any assignment or exam will receive a zero for the assignment or exam and sent to the college disciplinary officer. Repeated acts of cheating may lead to an "F" for the final course grade and/or college administrative disciplinary action. For a complete discussion of disciplinary procedures for academic dishonesty or other student misconduct, please refer to the current IVC General School Catalog.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Readings should be completed by the date assigned.

August 20-22	Introduction and The first Lecture-
August 27-29	Chapter 17 The Transformation of the Trans-Mississippi West 1886-1900
September 3-5	Chapter 18 The Rise of Industrial America, 1865-1900
September 10-12	Chapter 19 Immigration, Urbanization, and Everyday Life 1860-1900
September 17-19	Mid-Term I- Blue book and two good pens needed. Chapter 20 Politics and Expansion in an Industrializing Age 1877-1900
September 24-26	Chapter 21 The Progressive Era 1900-1917

October 1-3	Paper Due Chapter 22 Global Involvements and World War I 1902-1920
October 8-10	Chapter 23 Coping with Change 1920-1929
October 15-17	Chapter 24 The Great Depression and the New Deal 1929-1939
October 22-24	Mid-Term II- Blue Book two good pens needed Chapter 25 Americans and a World in Crisis 1933-1945
October 29-31	Chapter 26 The Cold War Abroad and at Home 1945-1960
November 5-7	Chapter 27 America at Midcentury 1945-1961
November 12-14	Chapter 28 Liberalism, Civil Rights, and War in Vietnam 1960-1975
November 19-21	Chapter 29 A Time of Upheaval 1961-1980
November 26-27	Lecture
December 3-5	Final Exam- Scantron & three number 2 pencils needed.

LECTURE TOPICS

The following topic schedule will overlap and some will be longer and specific while others will be short and general. Stick with the reading schedule and keep with detail notes from the lectures.

The Gilded Age
1869-1889

Industrial Age
186-1900

Moving to the City and Rise of Urbanization
1865-1900

The West and Agriculture Needs

**Imperialism
1890-1899**

Moving Beyond the Home Land

**Progressive Era
1901-1912**

**Home and Abroad
TR, Taft, Wilson**

World War One and America

Life in the Roaring 1920's

**Great Depression and FDR New Deal
1929-1939**

**The Road to the Second World War and the War itself
1933, 1939-1945**

**Truman and the Cold War
1945**

Ike- The 1950's

**The 1960's
Space, the Final Frontier
Vietnam War
Presidents**

Andreas W. Daum, Lloyd Gardner, Wilfried Mausbach. *America, the Vietnam War, and the World: Comparative and International Perspectives*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003. x + 356 pp. Index. \$65 (cloth), ISBN 0-521-81048-5; \$22 (paper), ISBN 0-521-00876-X.

Reviewed for H-1960s by Edmund F. Wehrle, Department of History, Eastern Illinois University.

Vietnam: Too Many Wars?

Over a decade after the first President Bush declared an end to "Vietnam Syndrome," the painful after-effects of the war appear as alive as ever. Twice in the past year, Vietnam-related stories have graced the cover of Newsweek magazine. Persistent charges that Iraq is or is becoming "another Vietnam" surface almost daily in the media, dogging the administration of the second President Bush. With all its might, the American war in Vietnam resists slipping into the past.

In 1998, the German Historical Institute sponsored a conference aimed at Placing the Vietnam War in a broader theoretical and international context. *America, the Vietnam War, and the World* is a collection of papers presented at that conference. These endeavors fit neatly into a larger project now over a decade in process: the globalization of American history, a drive to destroy lingering notions of "American exceptionalism," among the most politically incorrect of politically incorrect historical concepts. The book's editors are ambitious.

They aim to explore the "wider geographical, political, and cultural ramifications" of the war, and to move toward a "full history" or synthesis still regrettably absent, despite tomes written on the war (p. 8). In the end, although generally instructive and occasionally proffering fascinating insights, the essays compiled never break the fresh ground envisioned by the editors. Too often, authors present retreats of previously published material, rarely incorporating new primary research. Instead, one is left with only pieces of what one suspects is a larger, more complex puzzle.

The book is divided into three parts, perhaps a reflection of the overly broad agenda of its editors. The first section, in many ways the most disappointing of the three, aims to illuminate through historical comparison. Drawing such parallels is tricky business: one risks distorting as much as informing. John Prados, a researcher at his best when unraveling the intricacies of U.S.

intelligence and military operations, offers a somewhat strained analogy between the Japanese invasion of China and the American experience in Vietnam.

Both military operations, Prados argues, were "peripheral wars," depleting the attention and resources of Americans and Japanese from greater strategic objectives. While Michael Lind has argued elsewhere that Vietnam was a "necessary" peripheral war, affirming U.S. credibility in Southeast Asia at a dangerous hour, Prados sees only disastrous results, driven by "great-power hubris" and shortsightedness. Prados' analogy surely would have worked better had the United States invaded North Vietnam. The existence of the South Vietnamese government and army is ignored entirely. Likewise, given Japan's geographic proximity to China and its desperate hunger for natural resources, one wonders if the Japanese invasion can be considered a peripheral war in quite the same fashion as U.S. intervention in Vietnam. If anything, one is more struck by the differences between these military operations than by their similarities.

German scholar Fabian Hilfrich builds on the concept of center and periphery in his essay comparing the U.S. experience in Vietnam in the 1960s to the Philippine-American War at the turn of the century. In language often laden with political science jargon, Hilfrich argues that grand discursive "visions" drove both interventions. The comparison, although not without merit, occasionally seems forced, as when Hilfrich insists imperialists such as Alfred T. Mahan "proceeded with perfect, domino-like, step-by-step reasoning" (p. 50).

In another essay, T. Christopher Jespersen compares Vietnam to the eighteenth-century American struggle for independence. Like other pieces in the first section, Jespersen's comparisons are often clever but offer little in the way of crucial insights.

Despite the drumbeat assertions of authors throughout the book's first section that the American War in Vietnam represents no unique phenomenon, one is left only partially convinced. Indeed, after reading Michael Adas' essay centered on the concept of "recolonization"—arguing that the American war differed little from that of the colonial French—one almost wonders if an emphasis on what was unique about the U.S. experience might yield fresher insights than such awkward labors to fit Vietnam into various proposed models.

A second series of essays specifically addressing the resonance of the war beyond the immediate combatants will prove more useful to informed readers eager for new insights. Leopoldo Nuti's essay on the noxious impact of the Vietnam War on U.S. efforts to promote an anticommunist left-center coalition in Italy well illustrates the far-reaching waves set in motion by the Vietnam War. The deleterious effect of the war on the U.S. economy has been explored by historians such as Robert M. Collins, but Hubert Zimmermann places the collapse of the "dollar-gold link" in international (or at least European) context. While the financial repercussions of the U.S. war may have been exaggerated, Zimmermann argues Vietnam "progressively undermined confidence" in a system deeply reliant on the American dollar, and facilitated "attempts at European monetary unification," leading to the euro (p. 173).

Fredrik Logevall's multi-archival research and tightly-presented arguments have placed him among the most insightful of the new generation of Vietnam post-revisionists. In this volume, he offers a fascinating essay depicting Lyndon Johnson's stillborn "More Flags" campaign, LBJ's quest to internationalize the conflict in Vietnam or at least present a veneer of international support. In the mid-1960s, not even Great Britain offered substantial support, despite Johnson's persistent arm-twisting. In Logevall's essay, America's current dilemmas resonate loudly. Johnson's awkward and frustrating search for wartime allies, like that of the current president, reminds us that the American Empire—if there is such a thing—hardly dictates its destiny. We are also reminded of the deep roots of Franco-American tension, as Jacques Chirac appears in many ways reprising a role originated by Charles de Gaulle. While fascinating, like so many other essays in the collection, Logevall's contribution is almost directly pulled from his prize-winning book, *Choosing War: The Lost Chance for Peace and the Escalation of the War in Vietnam*.

One country that enthusiastically chose to add its flag to the American war effort was Australia. Fearing communist expansion in Southeast Asia, and eager to ensure American and British commitment to the region, Australia initially charged ahead as America's partner in Vietnam. Peter Edwards' essay, essentially a synopsis of his excellent book on the subject, recounts

not only an early eagerness for war, but the Australian public's growing disenchantment after 1967. Self-interest and pragmatism are also the subject of Canadian scholar Arne Kislenko's study of U.S.-Thai cooperation during the war.

Kislenko credits the not-always-harmonious relationship with protecting a crucial domino and providing "the stability that promoted the economic development on which the motivation for democratic reforms was contingent that surfaced by the mid-1970s" (p. 201).

Of sixteen essays included, only two treat the impact of the war on the communist bloc. As the U.S. struggled with political fallout from the war, so too apparently did its rivals. Eva-Maria Stolberg depicts an intense ideological struggle between China and the Soviet Union over Vietnam. Early on, Mao recognized the Vietnam War might serve "as a vehicle for China to forge a national identity" (p. 243). Eager "to clash with the United States," Mao's support "made guerrilla warfare possible in the South and led, moreover, to a dangerous escalation" (p. 244). Soon, however, the Soviets, the Chinese, and the North Vietnamese were locked in a musical chairs game of rivalries and alliances. By the end, Stolberg concludes, "mutual mistrust and suspicion" ruled the day, and Vietnam hastened the Sino-Soviet break (p. 256). Like the U.S., the "communist powers also failed" in Vietnam (p. 256). Gunter Wernicke's piece on the bumpy history of the East German government-sponsored German Peace Council (which actually appears in section three of the book) echoes Stolberg's depiction of quagmire even among America's foes.

Part three examines the Vietnam War's domestic impact in various countries. In an article on the antiwar movement in West Germany, Wilfried Mausbach contends that student protesters wielding analogies comparing Vietnam to Auschwitz were actually coming to grips with their own nation's ugly recent history. The international antiwar movement, argues Barbara Tischler, provided "organizational, theoretical, and personal lessons" to the emerging feminist movement (p. 321). Although Tischler is largely focused on American women and loses sight of Vietnam entirely when discussing feminism in France, Germany, and Britain, she caps her essay with a brief recitation of the career of Jane Fonda as evidence of the deep interconnection between antiwar activism and feminist consciousness.

The final chapter is offered by veteran scholar Lloyd Gardner, one of the collection's editors. One might have expected Gardner to undertake the daunting job of synthesizing the previous fifteen essays (a task admittedly partly accomplished in a lengthy introduction). Instead Gardner seems to throw up his hands and posit "that Vietnam was not simply one war" (p. 342). He then sticks to his Vietnam War and offers an American-centered, traditional diplomatic history, blasting U.S. policy-makers as the victims of "self-enchantment" (p. 350).

The essays compiled in this book are diverse. For those well versed in the history of the Vietnam War, there will be few major insights—although, no doubt, much of interest. Those less familiar with the literature will come to recognize a more complex, far-reaching war than they might have previously imagined. In the end, while the editors promise to move beyond the "unending debate" towards new perspectives and synthesis, their work falls somewhat short. The conflict remains too fresh and controversial to yield to such synthetic designs. Yet more primary research, especially in challenging foreign archives, is needed in order to produce more solid, straightforward scholarship. Only then may we expect a new generation, unburdened by the immediate legacy of the Vietnam War, to produce works of true context and

synthesis.

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