

USU 1320 Civilization: Humanities

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The theme selected for this course, **war**, certainly meets the requirement of USU 1320, a theme which persists everywhere and throughout time. Wars have plagued humankind, past and present. The main war of concern is the Indochina conflict (often known as the Vietnamese conflict): the French phase: off and on from the 1870s-1954; American phase: 1954-73; the Vietnamese phase, 1973-75. To understand this war (and also the Korean War, 1950-53), one must examine other events and many national groups: the world wars (the Great War and World War II) and the imperialist/colonial experiences of the Americans, French, Chinese, Russians, Japanese, as well as the Koreans and Vietnamese.

Textbook

Hess, Gary. *Vietnam and the United States; Presidential Decisions for War*

Select your own book (to write a 3-4 page response, utilizing the insights from your book to address an issue covered in class--population growth, modernity issues, war, nationalism, tribalism, etc.

Course Description: Through the vehicle of war (in Vietnam mainly, and Korea, to a lesser extent), this course will examine the complex interaction between traditional-oriented colonial subjects and modern-oriented imperialists. Also brought into perspective is the clash between Eastern and Western culture in the 20th century, aided by the collision and chaos caused by two global wars (World War I, 1914-1918 and World War II, 1937/39-45). The emerging Cold War between the US-led capitalist, “democratic” approach and the USSR- and Chinese-led communist, “totalitarian” approach added yet another layer of complexity to the interaction of “mature” and “developing” countries. Common points in both the Korean and Vietnamese conflicts are the US-USSR rivalry, the decolonization process in the post-1945 world, and the cultural misunderstandings on both sides. Different approaches to war by the Americans, especially in terms of technology and cultural attitude, and by the Asians, add another dimension to understanding the dynamics of the Korean and Vietnam conflicts. Thus, at one level, this course has a cultural focus; at another, it has a military history dimension.

***Tentative Topic Class Schedule**

First Week: Issues of Modernity
Second Week: World War I-Impact on Nationalism
Third Week: WWII (Hess pg. 16-20): Impact on Imperialism
Fourth Week: Korean and Vietnam Wars (both Hess books on Vietnam, Presidential Decisions for Korean War, Vietnam War)
Fifth Week: Clash of Traditional and Modern-Middle East and Afghanistan

Sixth Week: Technology and Terror

Seventh Week: UN-US war in Persian Gulf vs. UN-US war in Korea

Eighth Week: Jihad vs. McWorld; Environmental Concerns

Requirements:

Weekly quizzes on material covered in class

3-4 page book response

Final exam (Fri. August 4) on two text books