The issues of war and violence are shrouded in mystery, misunderstanding, and isolation. Wars give rise to war, yet each war is often portrayed as the war to end all wars. In addition, the justification to engage in violence or fight a war is often portrayed as an unfortunate but necessary response to a threat, of something done to “us” by “them.” Over thirty years after the war in Vietnam ended, the issues surrounding that war are becoming more and more present in speeches by policy makers, and in newspaper editorials. Also, in the public mind, the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have been frequently associated with the war in Vietnam. Yet already in 1995, former Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara wrote in his book *In Retrospect*, “The wounds (of the Vietnam War) remain unhealed and its lessons unlearned.”

*HGPS 415 “Vietnam: Conflict and Consequences”* will address the issues of the war in Vietnam from a historical, cultural, socioeconomic, ethical and psychological point of view. The course will also address some consequences of this conflict by focusing on the current wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Specifically, the course will address issues such as the following: dehumanization of the enemy; fear mongering; glorification of sacrifice; blind deference to authority; notions of a “just war;” conditioning of children to violence through video games; induction centers and warfare preparations; “black box of combat” mentality; chemical warfare; nuclear terrorism; torture; war crimes; Post-traumatic Stress Disorder; socioeconomic and human cost of war; alternatives to war and violence: diplomacy, civil disobedience, and principled direct action. *HGPS 415* challenges students to question and critically examine established assumptions. Thus *HGPS 415* will help develop within our UNR students’ minds a new manner of thinking needed to live as informed 21st century citizens.

**Prerequisites**

Prerequisites for Capstone courses are junior or senior standing and completion of all General Education courses that build Core Objectives 1-3 and satisfy Core Objectives 4-8.

**Course Objectives**

*HGPS 415 “Vietnam: Conflict and Consequences”* is designed to 1) appeal to students from a variety of disciplinary backgrounds. The course is broadly focused and 2) enables students to bring to bear their own points of view from knowledge and insights from previous courses taken
within their academic major or minor, from courses within the Core Curriculum, or from their lives’ experiences. The course requires students to integrate the themes of “war, violence, and peace” from a variety of perspectives. The five required book-length texts present the issues of the war in Vietnam from the point of view of the British novelist Graham Greene; Ron Kovic, a former US Marine and paraplegic veteran, now working as an advocate for peace; Le Ly Hayslip, a former child in war-torn Vietnam who, as an adult, is helping US veterans deal with their battlefield trauma (for summer, the book is not required); Bao Ninh, describes the impact of the war from the perspective of a North Vietnamese soldier; and Jeremy Scahill discusses present consequences of the Vietnam war in terms of the creation of outsourcing 50% the war effort in Iraq to private military companies. Especially during the class discussions, students are encouraged to 3) consider important ethical and moral issues that affect them as well as society at large.

Core Curriculum

This course satisfies Core Objective 13 (Capstone) of the Silver Core Curriculum. In addition, the course integrates the knowledge and skills gained from CO1, CO3, and CO 12 (Ethics), as described below.

CO1 This course integrates Effective Composition and Communication. Students will be able to effectively compose written, oral, and multimedia texts for a variety of scholarly, professional, and creative purposes.

CO3 This course integrates Critical Analysis and Use of Information. Students will be able to be critical consumers of information, able to engage in systematic research processes, frame questions, read critically, and apply observational and experimental approaches to obtain information.

Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)

Students will be able to:

1. critically analyze different types of primary and secondary materials including novels, autobiographical accounts, select government records, scholarly articles, internet sources, maps, music, and photographic images. (CO3)

2. effectively compose written, oral, and multimedia texts for a variety of scholarly, professional, and creative purposes. (CO1)

3. demonstrate understanding of the ethical principles, to ultimately be able to identify and explain the conditions for ethical decision-making. (CO12)

4. evaluate and apply methods to resolve conflict.
5. synthesize and integrate the themes of “war, violence, and peace” in relationship to the Vietnam War from a variety of perspectives on an individual and global level. (CO13)

Course Requirements and Grade Distribution

I will provide details for all assignments at the time I assign them. Your overall score will be calculated based upon **1000 points possible**, broken down per the following table. I reserve the right to modify or change the assignments and points possible. Your overall course grade will be assigned according to the Grading Scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Participation and Attendance</td>
<td>150 (10pts per class/15 meetings)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance Incentive (based upon number of absences)</td>
<td>50 (10pts per week: 0=10; 1=5; 2+ = 0 )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Heaven and Earth</em> Online Discussion</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power of a Song</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essay #1</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essay #2</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflection Presentation</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Video Commentary</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm Examination</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Examination</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Grading Scale**

THE ENTIRE CLASS IS WORTH 1,000 POINTS. **I DO NOT ROUND GRADES UP OR DOWN.** The grade scale will follow the normal percentage pattern of 100-93.4 = A, 93.3-90.0 = A-; 89.9-86.7 = B+; 86.6-83.4 = B; 83.3-80.0 = B-; 79.9-76.7 = C+; 76.6-73.4 = C; 73.3-70.0 = C-, 69.9-60.0 = D, and 59.9 and below is an F. All written work must be original. Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated and are grounds for dismissal from class. * A plus/minus grading system will be used for this course.

**List of movies or documentaries to be watched outside class**

Students need to watch **one** of these movies or documentaries outside class. Many of these films are on reserve in the UNR film library: Movies to choose from include the following:

Forrest Gump; Coming Home; Platoon; Apocalypse Now; Full Metal Jacket; Rambo I; The Killing Fields; The Quiet American; The Battle of Algiers; The Deer Hunter; Dr. Strangelove; Regret to Inform; Casualties of War; Hearts and Minds; Vietnam: A Television History; Bobby; Stop Loss; Winter Soldier 2008 Investigations; Hurt Locker; Taking Chance; Jarhead; In the Valley of Elah; Black Hawk Down; Three Kings; Sir, no Sir; Tigerland; Fog of War; We were Soldiers; Good morning Vietnam.; Restrepo; The Most Dangerous Man in America; A Few Good Men; Rules of Engagement; Lord of War.
Finally, the Vietnam War produced a lot of songs (pro or against the war). Everyone in class is to find 1-2 songs, find the lyrics, print them out, and bring the music to class on a CD. One may instead have the songs accessible to the class through a free and public online site such as YouTube.

**Required Texts**

Students need to print out selected materials from the internet that are listed in the syllabus. Additional journal articles and book chapters will be on “electronic reserve” through the UNR library website. It is the students’ responsibility to read all assigned texts before each class meeting. The following texts need to be purchased either through the UNR bookstore or through other means such as Amazon.com:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>ISBN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Greene, Graham</td>
<td><em>The Quiet American</em></td>
<td>0143039024</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kovic, Ron</td>
<td><em>Born on the Fourth of July</em></td>
<td>978-1-888451-78-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ninh, Bao</td>
<td><em>The Sorrow of War</em></td>
<td>1-57322-543-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scahill, Jeremy</td>
<td><em>Blackwater: the rise of the world’s most powerful mercenary army</em></td>
<td>9781568583945</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**University Policies**

The University of Nevada, Reno is committed to equal opportunity in education for all students. Any student with a disability needing academic adjustments or accommodations is requested to speak with the instructor or the Disability Resource Center (Thompson Building, Suite 101), as soon as possible to arrange for appropriate accommodations.

Surreptitious or covert video-taping of class or unauthorized audio recording of class is prohibited by law and by Board of Regents policy. This class may be videotaped or audio recorded only with the written permission of the instructor. In order to accommodate students with disabilities, some students may have been given permission to record class lectures and discussions. Therefore, students should understand that their comments during class may be recorded.

**Term Schedule**

Each class meeting will have the following general structure:

- Discuss Administrative Issues.
- Deepen Understanding of the Readings through a combination of instructor lecture, small-group discussion, sharing of your selected images, unstructured and structured collective discussions.
- View audio-video material as appropriate.
- Discuss Assignment for next Meeting.
--- Week 1 ---

Meeting 1 (Mon 6/9):
- Course introduction & explanation of syllabus. Brief bio of instructor.
- Quick class survey: Your name; your major; why you are taking this class; what are some of your academic strengths and weaknesses; what would you like to accomplish in this class; do you have a family member who was part of the Vietnam War? If so, what do you know about his/her experiences?

Your assignment for next meeting:
1) Read: Columbia Guide, pp. xi-14. Also read along with these pages the appropriate glossary pages: The Vietnam War from A-Z (starting on page 80). Also refer to the Chronology starting on p.179.
3) Special task: Go to Google.com, images, and select and print 1 image of people, events, situations that are mentioned in your reading assignments. Bring this image and be prepared to discuss its significance.

Meeting 2 (Tue 6/10):
- Review materials on the war covered this far by focusing on Documents # 1-10 (pp. 251-259)

Your assignment for next meeting:
1) Read: Columbia Guide, pp. 15-29. Again, select image and exhibit in next class. Also, read the glossary and the chronology entries only which are related to the reading.
2) Read: Quiet American, (pp. 48-105, 2004), (pp. 57-114, 1973).

Meeting 3 (Wed 6/11):
- Discuss Essay #1 Assignment.
- View excerpts in class from: Vietnam. A Television History

Your assignment for next meeting:
1) Read: Columbia Guide, pp. 30-42. Select image, read glossary and chronology.

Meeting 4 (Thu 6/12):
- View in class excerpts from: The Quiet American. Note. The character of Alden Pyle is based on Edward Lansdale (see: Columbia Guide, pp. 135-56)
- Discuss Essay #1 Assignment.

Your assignment for next meeting:
1) Read: Columbia Guide, pp. 43-54. Select image, read relevant glossary and chronology entries.
3) Essay #1 due next meeting. Topic to be assigned.
--- Week 2 ---

Meeting 5 (Mon 6/16):
- Essay #1 Due Today.
- View in class excerpts from Heaven and Earth.

Your assignment for next meeting:
1) Read: Columbia Guide, pp. 55-77. Select image, read glossary and chronology.
2) Make initial posts for Heaven and Earth Online Discussion.

Meeting 6 (Tue 6/17):
- View in class excerpts from Heaven and Earth.
- Discuss Video Commentary Assignment.

Your assignment for next meeting:
1) Make final posts for Heaven and Earth Online Discussion.
2) Go online and research the Pentagon Papers.
5) Read Born on the Fourth of July, pp. 1-56. (NOT on Midterm Exam)

Meeting 7 (Wed 6/18):
- Heaven and Earth Online Discussion Posts Due Today.
- Discuss in-class Heaven and Earth.
- View in class excerpts from The Most Dangerous Man in America.
- Discuss Midterm Examination (Anderson, Greene, Heaven and Earth, Kerry and Ellsberg, but no Kovic).
- Discuss Kovic’s new preface to his Vietnam memoir. What are his main points? Why does he feel the need to draw connections and parallels between Vietnam and Iraq?

Your assignment for next meeting:
1) Prepare for Midterm Examination: LOCATION Ansari Business 208

Meeting 8 (Thu 6/19):
- Midterm Examination Today. LOCATION Ansari Business 208 1030-1230?

Your assignment for next meeting:
1) Read Born on the Fourth of July, pp. 57-161.
2) Prepare Video Commentary, Due Meeting #12. (watch film over the weekend?)
Meeting 9 (Mon 6/23):
- Discuss Midterm Examination.
- Discuss Power of a Song and Reflection Presentation Assignments.

Your assignment for next meeting:
1) Read Born on the Fourth of July, pp. 162-216. No need to find image.
2) Read Ninh, pp. 1-61. No need to find image.

Meeting 10 (Tue 6/24):
- View excerpts in class from Vietnam. A Television History
- Discuss Power of a Song and Reflection Presentation Assignments.

Your assignment for next meeting:
1) Read Ninh, pp. 61-159.
2) Prepare Video Commentary, Due Meeting #12.

Meeting 11 (Wed 6/25):
- View in class excerpts from Vietnam. A Television History on conscientious objectors.

Your assignment for next meeting:
1) Read Ninh, pp. 159-233.
2) Write Video Commentary, Due Next Class.

Meeting 12 (Thu 6/26):
- Video Commentary Due Today.
- Discuss Video Commentaries.
- Discuss Reflection Presentation Assignment.

Your assignment for next meeting:
1) Read from CR: ‘Ridenhour's Letter about My Lai.’
2) Study from CR: ‘My Lai Readings.’
4) Prepare Power of a Song, due Meeting #14.
5) Prepare Reflection Presentation, due Meeting #14.
6) Optional Read from CR: Frontline Transcript for Soldier's Heart, by Aronson.
--- Week 4 ---

Meeting 13 (Mon 6/30):
- Watch excerpts from the 2005 PBS Frontline Documentary *A Soldier’s Heart*.

Your assignment for next meeting:
2) **Read from WebCT Readings**: ‘Lieutenant Calley.’
3) **Optional Read from CR**: All selections from *Lieutenant Calley: his own story*, by Sack.
4) **Go online and research** the Vietnam War Memorial.
5) **Finalize** Power of a Song and Reflection Presentations.

Meeting 14 (Tue 7/1):
- **Power of a Song Due Today.**
- **Reflection Presentation Due Today.**
- Discuss Power of a Song.
- Discuss Essay #2 Assignment.
- Begin Reflection Oral Presentations.
- Lecture on PTSD.

Your assignment for next meeting:
- **Read from CR**: *Just and Unjust Wars*, Chapter 11: Guerilla War, by Walzer
- **Read from CR**: *Small Corner of Hell: Dispatches from Chechnya, We Survived Again!: A Chronicle of Colonel Mironov's Luck*, by Politkovskaya
- Additional Readings to be announced.

Meeting 15 (Wed 7/2):
- Continue Reflection Oral Presentations.
- Discuss Power of a Song.

Your assignment for next meeting:
1) **Read from CR**: Hallock, Chapter 1, “Lee,” pp. 1–14.

Meeting 16 (Thu 7/3):
- Discuss Essay #2 Assignment.
- Finish Reflection Oral Presentations.
- Visit and discuss the website for the Vietnam War Memorial.

Your assignment for next meeting:
2) **Write** Essay #2 due next meeting.
--- Week 5 ---

Meeting 16 (Mon 7/7):
- Essay #2 Due Today.
- Watch in class, Bill Moyers interview of Jeremy Scahill.

Your assignment for next meeting:
1) **Prepare** for our visitors.
2) **Skim:** Scahill pp. 169-180, 197-230, Chapters “We Will Pacify Fallujah, This is for the Americans, Mr. Prince Goes to Washington.”
3) **Read:** Scahill pp. 181-196, 231-244, 245-274 Chapters “Najaf, Caspian Pipeline Dreams, Blackwater’s Man in Chile.”
4) **Read from CR:** Licensed to Kill: Hired Guns in the War on Terror, Contractor Creed and Prologue by Pelton
5) **OPTIONAL Read from CR:** Hired Guns: Views About Armed Contractors in Operation Iraqi Freedom, Summary by Cotton
6) **OPTIONAL Read:** Shadow Force: Private Security Contractors in Iraq, Conclusions, by Isenberg

Meeting 17 (Tue 7/8):
- Discussion Topics: Lessons from the Vietnam conflict; Consequences: no draft, all volunteer army; mercenaries fighting overseas in the name of the US; accountability and implication for democracy in the US?
- Veterans May visit our class.

Your assignment for next meeting:
1) **Skim:** Scahill pp. 275-364, Chapters “The Whores of War, Crash of Blackwater 61, Cofer Black, Death Squads.”
2) **Read:** Scahill pp. 365-446, Chapters “Christian Soldier, Blackwater Down, Knights of the Round Table.”
3) **Optional Read:** Scahill pp. 447-484, Chapter “Blackwater Beyond Bush.”
4) Additional Readings to be announced.

Meeting 18 (Wed 7/9):
- Discuss Final Examination Study Guide.

Your assignment for next meeting:
1) **Prepare** for Final Exam. **LOCATION Ansari Business 208**

Meeting 19 (Thu 7/10):
- **Final Examination Today. **LOCATION Ansari Business 208

<Course End>