

## THE POLITICS OF WAR FROM VIETNAM TO AFGHANISTAN

Email: [lvietri.umd.edu](mailto:lvietri.umd.edu)  
office: 3140 Tydings; office telephone: 301-405-4152; mobile: 609-675-5998  
office hours: Monday, Tuesday 5-6pm and also by appointment Monday-Wednesday

### OVERVIEW OF THE SEMINAR

This course explores the politics of Americas wars since 1945 with prime emphasis on her three most controversial wars: *Vietnam Wars (1945-197)*, *The Afghanistan War (2001-)* and *the Iraq War (2003-)*. We examine *the politics of war* using a level of analysis approach. The levels are: **global/ regional; state/national** (e.g. political culture, national security bureaucracy; presidential-congressional, media, universities, religious organizations; **local/community**(e.g. homefront, electorate); and **individual** (e.g. citizen, citizen-soldier, policymaker).

The approach is also comparative in nature, examining the similarities and differences between the three defining wars of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries and the characteristics of ‘post-cold-war Wars’. The course design is multidisciplinary in nature, features multimedia (**bolded videos required**) and guest speakers, and requires extensive critical reading and writing of each learning community member. Special attention will be paid to ‘**the politics of reconciliation**’ which involves all the levels of analysis.

### GRADING AND ASSIGNMENT EXPECTATIONS

The course will be challenging and demanding but will be rewarding if you are committed. There will be substantial reading, writing, and in class and outside classroom viewing assignment. It is *imperative* that you attend each weekly seminar in its entirety since the nature of the course is cumulative and the class meets only once per week. If you plan to miss class, it is expected that you give advance notice. Grading will be based on a *1000 point system with choicet* built into the grading system.

**Course grades are calculated on the basis of 1000 points.**

250 points = midterm

250 points = final exam

300 points = 6 reaction papers; length varies from 2-5 pages

200 points = attendance and participation

Course grades are calculated, as follows: *900-1000 = A, 800-899=B, 700-799=C*

### REQUIRED READING AND VIEWING

Andrew Bacevich, *The Limits of Power: The End of American Exceptionalism*. New York: Henry Holt, 2008.

Lloyd C. Gardner and Marilyn B. Young (eds), *Iraq and the Lessons of Vietnam*. New York: The New Press, 2007.

Bao Ninh, *The Sorrow of War*.

GVPT 309A course website [www.elms.umd.edu](http://www.elms.umd.edu) for additional reading and seminar themes

**Videos that are bold-faced**

**Stay current with the Afghanistan and Iraq wars using politically and internationally diverse**

## GROUND RULES AND SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS

Please familiarize yourself with the University of Maryland's *Code of Academic Integrity* (<http://www.inform.umd.edu/jpo>). It is expected that you will prepare your research project and take home midterm following "the letter and the spirit of the code". Kindly turn off your cell phones and pagers during class. Any student needing special accommodations for disabilities or religious observance, speak with me so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

## COURSE EVALUATION FALL 2009

Your participation in the evaluation of this course through CourseEvalUM is a responsibility you hold as a student member of our academic community. Your feedback is confidential and important to the improvement of teaching and learning at UMCP. CourseEvalUM will be open to you to complete your evaluations for this and other fall courses between Tuesday, December 1 and Sunday, December 13. Please go directly to the website ([www.courseevalum.umd.edu](http://www.courseevalum.umd.edu)) to complete the evaluation.

## WEEKLY SEMINAR TOPICS, READING, AND ASSIGNMENTS (subject to change)

- September 1            Course overview and introductions  
**Recommended and playing locally:** *In the Loop; The Hurt Locker*
- September 8        Frameworks for studying the 'politics of war'  
**Reading** Gardner and Young: introduction  
Bacevich, introduction and chapter 1  
[www.elms.umd.edu](http://www.elms.umd.edu)  
**View**        *Why We Fight* ([www.video.google.com](http://www.video.google.com))(1h38m)
- September 15      Global level analysis: the geopolitics of containment to pre-emption  
**Reading:** Gardner and Young: Danchev, Mausbach, LaFeber, Porter, Kolko  
Chapters  
[www.elms.umd.edu](http://www.elms.umd.edu)  
**View**        *Charlie Rose: The Fog of War* ([www.video.google.com](http://www.video.google.com))
- September 22        Presidential Politics and Vietnam  
**Reading:** Gardner and Young: Prados, pp. 116-122  
[www.elms.umd.edu](http://www.elms.umd.edu)  
**View:**        *A Look at the Vietnam War* ([www.c-span.org/Classroom/vietnamasap](http://www.c-span.org/Classroom/vietnamasap))  
*Reaction paper 1 due*
- September 29        Presidential Politics: Vietnam Syndrome to the Gulf War  
**Reading:** [www.elms.umd.edu](http://www.elms.umd.edu)  
John Prados, *Afghanistan: Lessons from a Lost War*,  
[www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB57](http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB57)



*In the Loop*

*The War Abroad: The International Perspective (HBK P96.T47)*

***Reaction paper 5 due***

December 1

Gender Politics and War

**Reading:** Gardner and Young: Hillman article

[www.elms.umd.edu](http://www.elms.umd.edu)

**View:** *The Battle of Algiers (www.video.google.com)*  
*urqas and Beliefs (HBK HQ1735.6)*

**GVPT 309A**

**Fall 2009**

December 8

The Politics of Nationbuilding

**Reading:** [www.elms.umd.edu](http://www.elms.umd.edu) (Kaufman)

**View:**

***Reaction paper 6 due***

December 15

**FINAL EXAMINATION, 6:30-8:30 pm**