**HUMANITIES CORE**

**Professor Linda Vo**

**WEEK 5a: Imperialism, Interventions & Vietnam**

**WEEK 5b: Constructing Refugee Narratives**

**Spring 2017**

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FROM LECTURES AND READINGS**

1. What are some similarities and differences between how the U.S. became involved in shaping the history of the Philippines and Vietnam?
2. What is the historiography of the Vietnam War and its aftermath? Consider who gets to write history and who is the intended audience.
3. Consider the ideological, political, and economic reasons for U.S. involvement in other countries? What are the justifications for these imperialist interventions? How do these policies impact colonized or decolonizing nations seeking independence?
4. How is the Cold War linked to the Vietnam War? How is this related to the domino theory and the policy of containment of communism?
5. How can geopolitical tensions lead to war and what does it mean for nations regarded as “superpowers” to fight proxy wars. Who pays the price for these proxy wars, especially civil wars?
6. Discuss the concept of iconography and how the images produced during the Vietnam War by the US media and military impacted the perceptions of war? In what ways have photographs or photo journalists shaped public and political perceptions about the Vietnam war?
7. During the Vietnam War, how did television technology change how the war was presented to the public and what does the expression “living room war” mean? What does it mean to present a censored or uncensored war?
8. What power do photographs have in capturing reality and what cautions should we take when thinking about how photographs capture the truth? How can photographs be manipulated, intentionally or unintentionally?
9. Why and how did the perspective on the Vietnam War change over time? What were some of the views of those who were anti-war and how might they contrast with those who were supportive of the war? How did different U.S. racial groups perceive the war and how did these anti-war activist groups connect U.S. imperialism to their treatment within America?
10. What are the conditions that led to the displacement of the Vietnamese and how did this impact their migration within Vietnam and later outside the country?
11. Why did Vietnamese refugees choose to come to the U.S.? Consider the U.S. economic, political, and cultural presence in Vietnam and how this impacted the ways in which the refugees were received and treated in America.
12. What is the difference between a displaced or stateless person seeking asylum and a person who is officially classified as a “refugee”? Why is this categorization significant and how can political factors shape these decisions?
13. What is “compassion fatigue” in regards to refugees and the sponsorship or admissions of refugees? What are the ethical and moral debates about refugee resettlement? How are moral responsibilities or humanitarian considerations involved in these policies?
14. Using the materials presented in lectures and in the Nhi Lieu reading, analyze the interconnections between the perceptions of Vietnamese during the war and how this affected the perception or reception of Vietnamese refugees? What does Lieu mean by racial logic of U.S. imperialism (p. 12)?
15. According to Nhi Lieu, what are some of the internal differences within the refugee population that are overlooked in the resettlement process? Why are the refugees positioned as model minorities or as good subjects, and in some cases, how and why do Vietnamese Americans adopt these perceptions of themselves?
16. What is the significance of capturing the life stories of Vietnamese refugees and immigrants? What are some of the complexities or challenges of collecting these oral histories or memories, especially if their lives are affected by a civil war, violence, trauma, and displacement?