

Evaluating Post-War Change

Assignment Sequence Two

Postwar Vietnam

Wednesday February 6th-Wednesday March 5th

How might we evaluate Vietnam's post-war transformation? On the one hand, we have seen how full-scale socialism and collectivization seemed to produce economic contradictions that hindered Vietnam's economic development. On the other hand, *đổi mới* reforms and structural adjustments to the economy seem to have fostered increased social differentiation between the "haves" and the "have-nots". As we have seen in the diverse array of approaches to Vietnam's post-war history, even authors who agree on objective historical facts often disagree on how to interpret those facts. While this disagreement may prove troubling for the way it reveals the politicized and subjective nature of social analysis, it also offers an exciting opportunity to jump into ongoing debates. In this essay, you will pick, interpret, and fashion an academic argument about a key set of events or social phenomena that you feel best highlight the dramatic transformations Vietnam has experienced since 1975.

This assignment will begin with a group brainstorming exercise using a course "wiki" designed to help us highlight key sites of potential inquiry together as a class. Building from this, each student will choose a topic to explore and write about in greater depth. And finally, at the end of the assignment, we will link these pieces together to the original course wiki, creating the foundation for a comprehensive, detailed resource guide to post-war change in Vietnam.

Each individual student will write a 5-6 page stand-alone essay on a topic of their choice. These individual contributions will be expected to:

- 1) Be written in authoritative, yet clear, language intelligible to an educated layperson;
- 2) Present clear background information on the topic under consideration;
- 3) Outline the parameters of debate that have emerged about the topic;
- 4) Develop a clear and original position within the existing debate; and,
- 5) Support this position with evidence and logical reasoning.



Assignment Schedule:**Assignment 2A: Wiki Outline of Vietnam Since 1975**

Due in-class on Monday, February 11th

Using the new Duke wiki technology, we will begin as a class by creating a detailed timeline and outline of key events and social changes in Vietnamese society since 1975. This is a collaborative group project. Everyone is required to participate. As Benedict Kerkvliet reminds us, "if common-use agrarian organizations fail to meet conditions regarding trust, commitment, monitoring, and governance, they will not be durable" (Kerkvliet 2005: 242). Fortunately, this wiki is not an agricultural collective, and the Duke Community Standard ensures we have trust and commitment. Chairman Harms will ensure that governance is solid, enforced by secret monitoring and the heavy handed withholding of work-points (grades) for non-compliance and other reactionary forms of "everyday politics" that threaten to undermine our collective endeavor. In this wiki we will:

- Outline key events and social changes in Vietnamese society since 1975.
- Create a historical time-line of Vietnam since 1975.
- Work together as a class so that everyone adds to the wiki in order to make this a truly comprehensive list of events and changes.

The wiki can be accessed at [//wiki.duke.edu](http://wiki.duke.edu)

Remember to login, and click on "[UWP Writing 20 - Postwar Vietnam \(UWPWPV\)](#)"

Assignment 2B: Case Study of Post-War Change

Due in class on Wednesday, February 13th

Building from the wiki, each student will choose an event or set of events to write about in further detail. To begin this, you will choose your event and prepare an outline of key issues you wish to explore in your essay. This preliminary outline will be due in class on Wednesday, Feb. 13th.

For this assignment:

- Each student chooses an event from the list to write about. (It's OK if more than one of you choose the same event or issue)
- By class on Wednesday, the student will write a one paragraph summary of the social change they are interested in and outline all of the key features of this issue.

Assignment 2C: Contested Visions of Social Change

Due in class on Monday, February 18th

Building from your initial outline of the event or issue you have chosen to study, you will start fleshing out various component parts of your argument in an effort to highlight the contested interpretations of social change in Vietnam. This will entail writing up summaries of key texts we have encountered in class, searching for further background information about your particular topic, and describing some of the conflicting arguments different scholars (and, if relevant, members of the public at large) have about the events or issues in question.

- Building from your previous outline, you should further outline the contested visions of this change. What are the different positions and arguments held about your issue? What kind of evidence do they use?
- As you lay out the existing arguments in the field, you should also start developing your own position within this debate. What do you find convincing? Why? What seems left out of the debate? Do you have a novel contribution to the ongoing academic or public discussion?
- In addition to your outline, you should develop several preliminary paragraphs that begin to lay out the contours of these contested versions of social change. You might ask yourself questions such as the following: What are the effects of memory, history, and politicized ways of remembering and forgetting? How might economic reality intersect with utopian economic ideals? Is economic development the only true criteria for “development” or “progress?” What other criteria might you look at? How does “what people say” correspond to “what’s really going on?” Who benefits from development, and who seems left out? And how do certain selected voices make it into or fail to make it into scholarship about your topic?

Assignment 2D: Outline Draft of Essay

Due in class on Wednesday, February 20th:

For Wednesday, build from in-class discussions about your outlines to create a fully fleshed out outline draft of your essay. This should be a “text-heavy” outline that includes fully cited quotes and references from sources you might use, and even includes full sentences and partially developed paragraphs you might include in your final essay. As you prepare your outline, you should be anticipating the work you will do in writing your first draft of this paper. For this outline, keep in mind the following guidelines:

- Ultimately, your essay should include a clear and concise description of the historical event or social issue being discussed, and it should detail the contrasting interpretations of the event that have surfaced in Vietnamese society and in the secondary literature.
- It should show some of the debates that have formed around how one might interpret this issue or event.
- It should present some of the different arguments different authors present in fair, yet concise fashion. Even if you will ultimately disagree with them, you need to be honest about the authors’ positions.
- It should give a sense of how you as an author will intervene in this debate.
- You should write a full introduction that introduces an original thesis or argument.
- The outline should include some relevant quotations you will use in your essay.
- In short, the reader of the outline should be able to come away with a good sense of what your paper will be about, how it will be structured, the kinds of evidence you will use, and how you plan to use the evidence to argue your points.

2E: 1st Draft of Essay 2

Due in-class and on Blackboard on Wednesday, February 27th:

Building from your detailed outline, write your first 5 page draft for Wednesday.

2F: In-class Peer-Review of Project 2 Draft

In-class peer-review conducted on Wednesday, February 27th:

These peer-review comments will be graded.

2G: Second Draft of Essay 2

Due in class on Monday March 3rd

Building from your first peer review, study your peer’s comments and revise your essay accordingly. Bring 2 copies of the second 5-6 page draft of your paper to class for further in-class peer review on Monday.

2H: In-class peer-review

Conducted in-class on Monday, March 3rd

PROJECT 2 FINAL DRAFT

5-6 pages. DUE IN CLASS AND ON BLACKBOARD ON WEDNESDAY, MARCH 5TH