

SPRING 2006 SYLLABUS

INTRODUCTION TO VIETNAMESE CULTURE, VALUES,

AND LITERATURE in TRANSLATION

VIET 220b

(Group I or II Tr)

Instructor: Quang Phu Van

Day/Time: Tuesday & Thursday, 1:00 PM to 2:15 PM TTh

GROUP I or II(0) Tr

Place: LUCE HALL, Room 202

Office hour: Mondays, 1-2 (311 Luce Hall, 34 Hillhouse Avenue) or by appointment

Phone number: 432-5097

Email address: quang.van@yale.edu

A-A BRIEF DESCRIPTION:

A brief introduction to Vietnamese culture, values, and literature. Topics include cultural and national identity, aesthetics, meaning of life, war, and death. Selected readings from Zen poems, folklore, autobiographies, and religious and philosophical writings. It also offers students an alternative to Western perspectives.

B-PRINCIPLE READINGS:

Besides a reading packet prepared by the instructor with selected readings from Vietnamese Zen poems, verse narratives, prose fictions, folktales, autobiographies, and religious and philosophical writings, essays, etc., students will also enjoy Vietnamese films and music. Selected core readings relevant to the thematic topics will be provided every week. Included in the weekly reading assignments is a list of guiding questions relevant to the focus of the week. Students are encouraged to read as much as possible from the list of recommended books to familiar themselves with Vietnamese history and literature.

MAIN TEXTS:

1-Huynh Sanh Thong. **The Tale of Kieu**, New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1983.

2-Andrew Lam, *Perfume Dreams: Reflections on the Vietnamese Diaspora*, Berkeley, Heyday Book, 2005.

3-Duong Thu Huong, *Paradise of the Blind*, Perennial, 2002.

4-Andrew Xuan Pham, *Catfish and Mandela*, New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1999.

5-Le Thi Diem Thuy, *The Gangster We Are All Looking For*, New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 2003.

6-Uyen Nicole Duong, *Daughters of the River Huong-A Vietnamese Royal Concubine and Her Descendants*, Ravens Yard Publishing, Ltd., 2005.

7-Pham Van Ky, *Blood Brother*, Council on Southeast Asia Studies, Yale University, Lac Viet Series # 7.

8-**Course Packet** (to be picked up at Tyco Copy Shop)

OPTIONALS:

1-Keith Weller Taylor. *The Birth of Vietnam*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991.

2-Robert Templer, *Shadows and Wind—A View of Modern Vietnam*, Penguin Books, 1999.

3-Neil L. Jamieson, *Understanding Vietnam*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1993

C- SPECIAL ASPECTS OF THE FORMAT:

This course includes short lectures and discussions based on selected thematic themes and topics. All texts are in English translation and knowledge of Vietnamese is not required. The class meetings are divided between intensive lecture and discussion. Grades are based on class attendance and participation, weekly informal reflection papers (1 to 2 pages) and a final term paper (10-12 pages) or project. A paper topic or project must be approved by week 11th of the course. For the most part, reading assignments will be made on a daily basis. Since the readings will serve as the primary springboard for discussion, it's important that students are prepared before each class. Weekly reading assignments will be handed out every Thursday.

D-GRADES:

Attendance	10%
Participation	10%
Weekly reflection papers	30%
Proposal/Outline	10%
A Final Paper/Project	40%

TOTAL	100%

E-SCHEDULE:

WEEK I INTRODUCTION

Jan. 10 Introduction

Movie: *Heaven and Earth*

Jan. 12 A Chronology of Vietnamese History

WEEK II MAGIC AND FOLKLORE

Jan. 17 Myths and Legends (packet)

Jan. 19 Vietnamese Folk Poetry (hand-out)

WEEK III CONFUCIAN VISION AND CONFUCIAN STRAITJACKET

Jan. 24 Guest Speaker: Mr. Dan Duffy, Former Editor of Yale VN
Forum, University of North Carolina

Jan. 26 Classical Poetry (Poet/Scholar Nguyen Cong Tru's Confucian Vision of Being Human)

WEEK IV LIFE AND DEATH

Jan. 31 Buddhist Ethos and Zen Meditation (Zen Poems, packet)

Feb 2 Video: *There is a Village*

WEEK V KIEU AND NATIONAL IDENTITY

Feb. 7 Reading: *The Tale of Kieu*

Feb. 9 Reading: *The Tale of Kieu*

WEEK VI LANGUAGE OF RESISTANCE

Feb. 14 *Female Poet Ho Xuan Huong*

Feb. 16 Movie: *The Wharf of Widows*

WEEK VII THE WIND OF CHANGE

Feb. 21 Reading: *The Blood Brother*

Feb. 23 *The Blood Brother*

WEEK VIII WAR AND DISPLACEMENT

Feb. 28 MOVIE: *The Green Dragon*

Mar 2 Reading: Poets in Exile (packet)

WEEK IX-X SPRING BREAK (March 4-19)

WEEK XI BORDER CROSSING

March 21 Reading: Duong Thu Huong's *Paradise of the Blind*

Mar.23 *Paradise of the Blind*

SUBMIT PAPER TOPIC OR PROJECT PROPOSAL

WEEK XII A JOURNEY HOME

March 28 Reading: *Catfish and Mandela*

March 30 Video: *Daughter from Danang*

WEEK XIII PERSONAL HISTORY

April 4 Reading Vietnamese Diaspora Literature: *Daughters of the River Huong* by Uyen Nicole Duong

April 6 Poetry Reading by Acclaimed Poet Nguyen Chi Thien (*Flower from Hell*)

WEEK XIV VIETNAMESE AMERICAN IDENTITY

April 11 Reading: *Perfume Dreams: Reflections on the Vietnamese Diaspora*

April 13 Panel Discussion: Vietnamese American Experience: War and Exile

(A former Vietnamese General and a former reeducation Camp Prisoner)

WEEK XV LIFE AND AESTHETICS

April 18 Reading: Le Thi Diem Thuy's *The Gangster We Are All
Looking For*

April 20 Performance by Guest Artist Lê Thị Diễm Thúy

WEEK XVI READING WEEK

April 25 **VIETNAMESE FOOD (to be announced)**

April 27

WEEK XVI FINAL WEEK

May 8 LAST DAY TO SUBMIT FINAL PAPER OR PROJECT

F-SUGGESTED READING LIST:

1-*Zen Poems* (12th Century poetry), translated by Nhat Hanh.

2-Trinh Thi Minh Ha, "Surname Viet, Given Name Nam," from *Woman, Native and Other* (written text and film).

3-*The Other Side of Heaven—Post War Fiction* (short stories), edited by Wayn Karlin and Le Minh Khue.

4-*The Song of a Soldier's Wife* (verse narrative), translated by Huynh Sanh Thong.

5-Nguyen Huy Thiep, "General Retires."

6-Huu Ngoc, *Sketches for a Portrait of Vietnamese Culture*.

7-Nhat Hanh, *Call me by My True Names* (poems).

8-Nguyen Hong, "Days of Childhood," translated by Greg Lockhart.

9-Cong Huyen Ton Nu Nha Trang, "Women Writers of South Vietnam (1954-1975)," "Glorification of Women's Self-Sacrifice: Khai Hung's Nua Chung Xuan (In

the Midst of Spring, 1934)," and "Ideal Role Conformity of the Vietnamese Wife Reflected in Folksongs."

10-Maurice Durand, *An Introduction to Vietnamese Literature*.

11-Hue-Tam Ho Tai, "Duong Thu Huong and the Literature of Disenchantment."

12-Neil Jamieson, "Shattered Identities and Contested Images: Reflections of Poetry and History in 20th Century Vietnam."

13-Greg Lackhart, "Nguyen Huy Thiep's Writing: Post-Confucian, Post-Modern?"

14-John Balaban, *Ca Dao Vietnam: A Bilingual Anthology of Vietnamese Folk Poetry*.

15-Neil Jamieson, *Understanding Vietnam*.

16-Nhat Hanh, *A Taste of Earth and Other Legends of Vietnam*.

17-Dang Nhat Minh, *When the Tenth Month Comes* (film).

18-Tony Bui, *Three Seasons* (film).

19-Tran Anh Hung, *Scent of the Green Papaya* (film).

20-John Whitmore, "The Vietnamese Sense of the Past."

21- Alexander Woodside, "Conception of Change and Human Responsibility for Change in Late Traditional Vietnam."

22-Quang Phu Van, "Roaming the World and Wandering at Ease: Nguyen Cong Tru's Poetic Journey Metaphor."

23-Nguyen Binh Khiem, "A Simple Life" (poems).

24-Van Yen, "Nine Views of the Peasants' World."

25-Nguyen Duy Hinh, "Three Legends and Early Buddhism in Vietnam."

26-Tran Dao, "A Work of Art."

27-Thach Lam, "One's Life."

28-Nguyen Quoc Vinh, "Deconstructing the Historical Authorship of Cung Oan Ngam Khuc: Canonical Reading as Dialectical Employment."

29-Tran Anh Hung, *The Vertical Ray of the Sun* (film).

30-Keith Bosley, ed., *The War Wife—Vietnamese Poetry*.

31-Spring Essence: The Poetry of Ho Xuan Huong (Nineteenth Century Feminist Poet), translated by John Balaban, Copper Canyon Press, 2000

32-An Anthology of Vietnamese Poetry, translated by Huynh Sanh Thong, Yale University Press, 1998