

Homepage



EWRT 2, Sec 68Z(De Anza), CRN 34065: *Critical Thinking about Viet Nam and its Culture.* Winter 2025

as seen through the lens of three women: (1) a young Vietnamese woman who was refugeeed with her parrot, (2) a mythological woman who is the central figure in Vietnamese lore, and (3) a real doctor, killed in combat, who idolizes the fictional woman, and one man, Bao Ninh, an NVA soldier for seven years whose fictional memoir was banned in his home country. (Or you may substitute San Jose's own Pulitzer Prize winner, Viet Thanh Nguyen, for Bao Ninh)

DEDICATION: This fall in honor of the late Joe Galloway, a dear friend, America's foremost War Correspondent for 40 years. He also co-wrote the classic *WE WERE SOLDIERS ONCE AND YOUNG* which became the Mel Gibson movie *WE WERE SOLDIERS*. Joe came to this class on three occasions, one of which is memorialized on YOUTUBE. Also in memory of the late SP5 Paul DeCillis, 4th Inf Div soldier, teacher, and donor with Paula of the DeCillis Viet Nam Conflict Collection in our Library. Died of Agent Orange-presumptive cancer from Viet Nam. Peace, our friend. And thanks also to the late SGT Thomas Binion who died saving my life on the field of battle, 1966. And we also honor Diane Carlson Evans, a Nurse who, despite her PTSD, created the Viet Nam Women's Memorial in Washington, DC.

Contact Info:

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Location And Time

This is an asynchronous class. The instructor reserves the right to vary the schedule as needed for pedagogical purposes. Office Hour and weekly Lecturette will normally be 0900-1000 on ZOOM 4085903473 on Tuesdays, and by appointment. You will receive extra credit by attending the lecturettes in the ZOOM Office Hours which I will then circulate to the class. I live near the school so can come in to my office in Forum 6A any time convenient for you. We will have one optional, extra credit field trip to the Viet Nam Museum in Kelley Park in San Jose. All writing assignments will be submitted through CANVAS.

Philosophy

Students learn best when they teach. You did not pay tuition for me to get smart. So I encourage collaboration throughout and **require** peer editing BY AT LEAST ONE MEMBER OF THE CLASS (See Unit 9 of the Writing Guide for some suggestions of how to easily peer edit using ALL CAPS.) Reach out to your classmates through the Bio Board, and make use of the Online Tutoring through NET Tutor which is a part of Canvas (link in the left navigation). The Writing Center on campus (AT 309) will be open from week two to week eleven. I give credit to folks who use these facilities--and work with each other. And be tough on one another. If someone writes a weak draft, say so, and suggest fixes; take some risks. You will learn more and have some fun in the process. I also encourage participation in Cross Cultural Partners, CCP, and , if you have a GPA of 3.5 or higher, I encourage you to join PTK.

Course Text(s)—

Swensson, John K. **ENGLISH FOR ARGUMENTATIVE WRITING, 2nd Edition.**; ISBN 978-0-9967820-1-2 Bookstore carries which will save you money--or order direct on Kindle or on paper from Amazon.com. Do not buy the first edition. I will make most of this available soft copy at no cost

- Du, Nguyen. **THE TALE OF KIEU**, trans. Huynh Sanh Thong. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987. ISBN 978-0-300-04051-7
- Tram, Dr. Dang Thuy, **LAST NIGHT I DREAMED OF PEACE**. Trans. Andrew X. Pham. New York: Three Rivers Press, 2008. (Note: These are the diaries of Dr. Tram.) ISBN 978-0307347381
- Ninh, Bao..**THE SORROW OF WAR: A NOVEL OF NORTH VIET NAM**. trans. Phan Thanh Hao. New York: Riverhead Books, 1996. ISBN 978-0525562849 OR
- in place of Bao Ninh: Nguyen, Viet Thanh. **A MAN OF TWO FACES** , 2024: Grove Press ISBN 978-0802163769. Viet is a native of San Jose and won the Pulitzer for his novel **THE SYMPATHIZER**. **TWO FACES** is about being an immigrant, a refugee. Very powerful!
- Note: GREAT Students may read Bao AND Nguyen for Extra Credit. It is YOUR education; pls do not be held back by my low standards :-)
- and fair use Internet material. including my webpage at <https://www.deanza.edu/faculty/swenssonjohn/kieu/index.html>
- [Links to an external site.](#) which includes a lecture and summary of THE TALE OF KIEU as well a link to the first short story in the course, "Mr. Green," by Robert Olen Butler

Navigating This Course

This course is organized around twelve modules, one for each week of the course. Click on "Modules" in the list the immediate left. All relevant files and assignments and supporting materials including a lot of PPTs are within the modules.

Winter 2025 Student Learning Outcomes

- To learn to write effectively, well-organized argumentative themes, a short research-type paper, and a variety of paragraph forms.
- To learn and practice a variety of Critical Thinking strategies, using Vietnamese Culture as a subject matter.
- To learn and appreciate Logic and how we use it in critical thought: **Induction, Deduction, and Fallacies**
- To examine the relationship between the Vietnamese culture and the Vietnamese experience in the early 1960s, and American culture and the American experience.
- To critically examine a work of fiction, the classic Vietnamese folk tale, **THE TALE OF KIEU**--see <http://www.deanza.edu/faculty/swensson/kieu.html>

🔗 [Links to an external site.](#)

🔗 To critically examine a wonderful memoir of a Vietnamese soldier, Bao Ninh, **THE SORROW OF WAR**. My students met with Bao in Hanoi. in 2018. Or Vlet Thanh Nguyen's A MAN OF TWO FACES

🔗 See Joe Galloway in our class reading "The Prologue" at : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NeFlv6PYLNM&t=255s>

- [Links to an external site.](#)
- And the Thomas Pilsch Research Site:

<http://www.cc.gatech.edu/fac/Thomas.Pilsch/Vietnam.html>