

**RARITAN VALLEY COMMUNITY COLLEGE
ACADEMIC COURSE OUTLINE**

HUMN 260: The History and Literature of Recent American Wars

I. Basic Course Information

A. Course Number and Title: HUMN 260: The History and Literature of Recent American Wars

B. New or Modified Course: New

C. Date of Proposal: Semester: Spring Year: 2019

D. Effective Term: Spring 2020

E. Sponsoring Departments: Humanities, Social Science, Social Work, and Education

F. Semester Credit Hours: 3

G. Weekly Contact Hours: 3 Lecture: 3
 Laboratory: 0
 Out of class student work per week: 6

H. Corequisites: Placement into ENGL111 English Composition I with ENGL070 English Composition I Workshop, or higher

I. Laboratory Fees: none

J. Name and Telephone Number or E-Mail Address of Department Chair and Divisional Dean at time of approval: Brandyn Heppard, brandyn.heppard@raritanval.edu; Patrice Marks, Patrice.marks@raritanval.edu

II. Catalog Description

Corequisites: Placement into ENGL111 English Composition I with ENGL070 English Composition I Workshop, or higher.

This interdisciplinary, team-taught course will examine both the history and literature of recent American wars. It will begin with an examination of the Vietnam war: its underlying causes, the attitudes and practices with which it was fought, and the changes it wrought in American society. It will then explore how the policies and practices of the

Vietnam War became the paradigm for subsequent wars, particularly those in Iraq and Afghanistan. It will study the literature born out of these wars and the relationship between this literature and the history of the wars. Through a side-by-side examination of literature and historical sources, both primary and secondary, students will consider how literature has been shaped by war, how literature has shaped culture and politics in periods of war, and how it can help us understand the past. Finally it will consider the legacy of the Vietnam war and how and why this legacy is alive in the wars in which the United States is presently engaged.

III. Statement of Course Need

A. The History and Literature of Recent American Wars allows students to better understand their world by exploring the origins of the United States' current wars in the Middle East and its global War on Terror. It provides essential historical context for today's conflicts by facilitating a careful examination of the way in which the Vietnam War endures as a force shaping U.S. foreign policy and American attitudes toward war. Through its interdisciplinary, team-taught approach, this course also teaches students to consider the connections between literature and history, offering them a unique opportunity to explore some of the most critical issues of our day in an interdisciplinary setting and providing a valuable addition to the humanities and liberal arts curriculum.

B.

1. This course generally transfers as a Humanities, Historical Perspective, and Global and Cultural Awareness general education course (*pending*).
2. This course generally transfers as a liberal arts program elective.

IV. Place of Course in College Curriculum

A. Free Elective

B. This course serves as a General Education course Humanities, Historical Perspective, and Global and Cultural Awareness (*pending*).

C. This course meets a program option for liberal arts, A.A.

D. To see course transferability: a) for New Jersey schools, go to the NJ Transfer website, www.njtransfer.org; b) for all other colleges and universities, go to the individual websites.

V. Outline of Course Content

A. Vietnam War: historical background and origins

B. Vietnam War: fighting, negotiations; conclusion

C. The literature of the Vietnam War

- D. The new paradigm the Vietnam war provides and its legacy
- E. Brief examination of America's "dirty" wars in Latin America
- F. The Afghanistan war: origins and fighting up to the present
- G. The literature of the Afghanistan war
- H. The Iraq wars, I, II, and III: origins, rationale for war, strategies
- I. The literature of the Iraq wars
- J. Brief examination of present "war on terror" with emphasis on Africa: Somalia, Yemen, Niger
- K. Conclusion with emphasis on how the Vietnam paradigm and legacy have left the U.S. in a state of perpetual war.

VI. General Education and Course Learning Outcomes

A. General Education Learning Outcomes:

At the completion of the course, students will be able to:

1. Analyze literary texts within the historical and social context in which they were produced (GE-NJ 1, 6, 7, 8 *)
2. Analyze historical evidence in order to evaluate historical events and their connection to the present. (GE-NJ 1, 7 *)
3. Demonstrate and assess the relevance of U.S. wars to other parts of the world and to peoples of other time and place. (GE-NJ 1, 7, 8 *)
4. Evaluate the ethical implications of war and conflict (GE-NJ ER*)

*Embedded critical thinking

B. Course Learning Outcomes:

SAME AS ABOVE

C. Assessment Instruments

1. lecture/discussion
2. small-group work
3. guest speakers
4. student oral presentations
5. student collaboration
6. independent study

VII. Grade Determinants

1. essays
2. research papers and projects (required)
3. exams
4. presentations
5. response papers
6. in-class discussion and debate
7. reading quizzes

VIII. Texts and Materials

Samples of specific texts:

- A. George C. Herring, *America's Longest War: The United States and Vietnam, 1950-1975*
- B. Tim O'Brien, *The Things They Carried*
- C. Scott Anderson, *Fractured Lands: How the Arab World Came Apart*
- D. Phil Klay, *Redeployment*
- E. Greg Grandin, *Empire's Workshop: Latin America, the United States, and the Rise of the New Imperialism*
- F. Khaled Hosseini, *The Kite Runner*
- G. Robert K. Brigham, *Is Iraq Another Vietnam?*
- H. Le Ly Hayslip, *When Heaven and Earth Changed Places: A Vietnamese Woman's Journey from War to Peace*
- I. Frederick Logevall, *Embers of War: The Fall of an Empire and the Making of America's Vietnam*
- J. Andrew Bacevich, *America's War for the Greater Middle East*
- K. Robert Fisk, *The Great War for Civilization: the Conquest of the Middle East*
- L. Viet Thanh Nguyen, *Nothing Ever Dies: Vietnam and the Memory of War*
- M. Jeremy Scahill, *Dirty Wars: The World is a Battlefield*
- N. Richard Engel, *And Then All Hell Broke Loose: Two Decades in the Middle East*
- O. Christian Appy, *American Reckoning: The Vietnam War and Our National Identity*
- P. Nick Turse, *Kill Anything That Moves: the Real American War in Vietnam*
- Q. Bao Ninh, *The Sorrow of War: A Novel of North Vietnam*
- R. Karl Marlantes, *Matterhorn: A Novel of the Vietnam War*
- S. Tim Spofford, *Lynch Street: The May 1970 Slayings at Jackson State, Mississippi*

Please Note: The course outline is intended only as a guide to course content and resources. Do not purchase textbooks based on this outline. The RVCC Bookstore is the sole resource for the most up-to-date information about textbooks.

IX. Resources

- A. Students will use library databases and resources and other online sources and databases to access sources and to conduct research.

X. Honors Option: N/A

