

# *The Quiet American and The Ugly American* Syllabus

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**Instructor**

Jennifer A. Lind

**Quarter:** Autumn 2024

**Start – end date:** October 3 – November 21

**Session day/time:** Wednesdays, 1:30 – 4:00 pm

**Course Code and Section:** HUAS90950 24A2

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**Course Overview**

In this course we will read two of the most highly influential political novels of the 20<sup>th</sup> century: *The Quiet American* and *The Ugly American*. Both novels examine the early years of the U.S. war in Vietnam. Given the tremendous consequences of the war, both on the home front and around the world, and that the U.S. clearly lost the war, our course aim is to answer the question: how did this happen? Close reading of two classic novels will provide insight into both past U.S. foreign policy and lessons for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

**Modality**

[In Person at the Gleacher Center](#)

British author Graham Greene’s 1955 account of the breakdown of French colonialism in Vietnam and the early U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War implicitly questions the foundations of U.S. foreign policy in Southeast Asia during the Cold War era. Greene’s literary exploration of the relationship of the novel’s three protagonists intertwines the human tale with the international political story. With uncanny political prescience, *The Quiet American* predicted the quagmire the U.S. was about to find itself in which had catastrophic results for everyone involved.

Eugene Burdick and William Lederer 1958 short novel *The Ugly American* became an instant bestseller when then-Senator John F. Kennedy publicly endorsed the novel and sent a copy to every member of the U.S. Senate. An iconic Cold War text and influential political novel, the authors draw on their experience serving in the U.S. Navy to depict the failures of the U.S. diplomatic corps in Southeast Asia.

Very much a product of their era and historical context, both novels offer readers a window to examine the foundations of U.S. foreign policy and international relations. Through imagined characters and events, we will examine time-honored themes of balance of power, imperialism, colonialism and nationalism. Join us!

**Note to students**

In addition to the two novels, we will frame our course with short scholarly articles from a reader *Nationalism*. This will give our discussions both theoretical and historic framework to discuss the novels in the context of U.S. foreign policy and international relations theories. We will read approximately 75 pages each week.

### Required texts

Graham Greene, *The Quiet American*. Penguin Classics. Graham Greene Centennial Edition. 2004. ISBN: 978-0-14-303902-0

William J. Lederer and Eugene Burdick, *The Ugly American*. W. W. Norton & Company, Inc. 2019. ISBN: 9780393356724.

John Hutchinson & Anthony D. Smith, *Nationalism*. Oxford University Press, 1994. ISBN: 0-19-289260-6.

Books can be purchased online through the [University of Chicago Bookstore](#).

### Course readings

Week	Author	Reading Assignment
Week 1	Hutchinson & Smith Definitions of Nationalism	Max Weber, "The Nation". P. 21-25. Ellie Kedourie, "Nationalism and Self-Determination" P. 49-55. Ernest Gellner, "Nationalism and Modernization" P. 55-63. Benedict Anderson, "Imagined Communities" P. 89-96.
Week 2	Greene	Part One. Pages 3 – 59.
Week 3	Greene	Part Two. Pages 63 – 125.
Week 4	Greene	Part Three. Pages 129 – 180. Reading F
Week 5	Lederer & Burdick	Chapters 1 – 7. Pages 11 – 74.

<b>Week</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Reading Assignment</b>
Week 6	Lederer & Burdick	Chapters 8 – 15. Pages 75 – 161.
Week 7	Lederer & Burdick	Chapters 9 – 22. Pages 162 – 240.
Week 8	Hutchinson & Smith, Legacies of Nationalism. Conclusion. Legacies of U.S. War in Vietnam.	Edward H. Carr, “Three Phases of Nationalism” P. 243-245. Michael Howard, “War and Nation” P. 254-258.

### **Accessing remote courses**

Remote courses are taught through our Canvas platform. Approximately two weeks before your class begins, we will add you to your canvas site using the email address you provided at the time of registration. An invitation will then be sent to that email. Click the “Get Started” button in the email to begin the Canvas login process. For step-by-step instructions, please visit <https://grahamschool.uchicago.edu/academic-programs/online/learning-resources/liberal-arts>. Once you’ve created your Canvas account, you can access any Graham School canvas course for which you are registered at: <https://canvas.uchicago.edu>.

### **Accessibility information**

Student Disability Services (SDS) works to provide resources, support and accommodations for all students with disabilities and works to remove physical and attitudinal barriers, which may prevent their full participation in the University community. Students that would like to request accommodations should contact SDS in advance of the first class session at 773.702.6000 or [disabilities@uchicago.edu](mailto:disabilities@uchicago.edu).

### **UChicago CARES Statement:**

The University and its faculty are committed to creating a safer and more inclusive learning environment for all students. At the University, all faculty, staff, graduate student instructors, and teaching assistants are considered “Individuals with Reporting Responsibilities” and are required to let the University’s Title IX Coordinator know about any disclosures they receive from students about experiences of sexual misconduct (including sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, stalking, and sexual harassment). This includes disclosures of experiences that happened before their time at the University. This is to ensure that all students who have experienced sexual misconduct receive support, options, and information about their rights and resources. Students are not obligated to respond to this outreach, and this will not generate a report to law enforcement.

For more information, please see [this handout for students](#) as well as the [University’s Policy on Harassment, Discrimination and Sexual Misconduct](#) and [Policy on Title IX Sexual Harassment](#). You can also reach out

directly for services and support from the Office for Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Support by emailing [titleix@uchicago.edu](mailto:titleix@uchicago.edu).

If you, or another student you know, wishes to speak to a confidential resource who does not have this reporting responsibility, please contact the Sexual Assault Dean on Call through the UChicago Safe App or at 773.834-HELP.

Questions? Contact Zoë Eisenman at [zmel@uchicago.edu](mailto:zmel@uchicago.edu).