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Curriculum Units by Fellows of the National Initiative
2009 Volume I: Storytelling around the Globe

Interpreting Vietnam: War Stories and Film

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This is a unit on Vietnam War stories and films. The unit will be taught in the English half of an integrated American Literature and American History class for 11th grade students. Our literary study will focus on Tim O'Brien's *The Things They Carried* and will be complemented by a more in-depth historical study of the Vietnam War and America in the 1960s and 1970s. In addition to clips from documentaries, studies of war photography, and examples of oral histories, this unit's other central pieces are films. I have chosen to focus on four films (*The Green Berets*, *Platoon*, *The Abandoned Field*, and *White Badge*) that view the war from a variety of perspectives to both broaden my students' understanding of the war's context and deepen their empathy for others' experiences of these events. The films, texts and activities included in this unit will coincide with our reading of the book. It is my intention that this unit could be adapted to use in a traditional English or American History course.

(Developed for English III and American Literature, grade 11; recommended for English and American History, grades 10-12)

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