



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the National Initiative  
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## **Interpreting Vietnam: War Stories and Film**

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- Stories are for joining the past to the future. Stories are for those late hours in the
- night when you can't remember how you got from where you were to where you
- are. Stories are for eternity, when memory is erased, when there is nothing to
- remember except the story. — Tim O'Brienn

### **Introduction**

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Wars are stories of a kind, sequenced action driven by plot and character however misguided or profoundly mistaken. Therefore war stories - the personal accounts of soldiers and civilians - are a small part of the overarching, and often all-consuming, narrative of a war itself.

It is also important to recognize that war stories occupy a unique position between fiction and history. War stories and history are not the same, though they are deeply related. There is a tension here between what can be told - the story - and what is recorded - which becomes over time the history.

The battles, offenses, strategies and lasting effects of war are among the most documented events in human history. In epics and histories we read about the generals, rulers, and tactics that defined nations, fortified religions and drew the boundaries of our world. Martial tales fill the pages of many of the most enduring ancient texts - The Iliad, the Mahabharata, the works of Thucydides and Sun Tzu. Even the Sundjata of Mali was the oral account of a military leader. These war stories, like the war stories of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century serve a critical cultural purpose. The stories of a war move from personal narrative into history, and in many ways serve a foundational purpose for peoples and nations. Yet despite all that is written of war, we so often hear that the experience of war - especially recent wars - is somehow unspeakable.

So what are war stories then, if not the telling of the untellable? What kinds of stories are these? Why are they told? How do they relate to the making, writing, revising of history?

Though addressing these general questions of war and historicity, this unit of study will focus specifically on the Vietnam War. In film and in fiction, the stories of Vietnam tell us volumes about both stories and history.

The stories of Vietnam have been told many times in many ways, and often they are told in films. For war stories are not just the stuff of tale and text, they are often taken up by screenwriters and directors as compelling narrative material fit for the big screen. In the case of Vietnam, film has long been a powerful vehicle for us to recount, sanitize, celebrate, witness, and reckon with the events of the war.

## Overview

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I teach at the School of the Future in West Philadelphia. The school is a comprehensive (or neighborhood-based), non-magnet public high school that was formed in a partnership between the School District of Philadelphia and the Microsoft Corporation. The unique circumstances of my school include a one-to-one laptop learning environment, dual-certified educators, a student-centered pedagogy, and a project-based curriculum. The school opened in September 2006 and will both reach four full grades and graduate our first class in the 2009-2010 school year. I year.

This unit will be taught in the English half of an integrated English and Social Studies class for third-year or 11<sup>th</sup> grade students. I am dual-certified in English and Social Studies and I will also be partnered with a Social Studies and Special Education Educator. We will share the same group of students (and be scheduled with overlapping classes) so that we can plan an integrated curriculum that will include thematic links and opportunities for co-teaching. The curriculum is a project-based version of our district's Core Curriculum and combines the traditional 11 11<sup>th</sup> grade courses of English 3 and American History.

I plan to teach this unit in the third quarter, when we are studying 20<sup>th</sup> century American History. 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. 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. I have included other possible texts about the Vietnam War in my annotated bibliography, so that teachers can choose the material that best fits the needs of their class..

## Rationale

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Vietnam was the war of my parents' generation. Decades removed, the Vietnam War is a historical event, but for me it lacks the weighty remembrance of a violent culture clash or painful personal experience which it is to so many. I recognize then that if Vietnam is the stuff of legacy to me, it is likely to be less memorable or meaningful to my students. Some may know that a war took place with a country somewhere in Asia in the 1960s and 1970s, but their knowledge would end there. Few would know what a draft card was, or why someone would want to burn it. Even fewer would be able to make the connection between the images they may have seen of protests or peace signs and an actual war. Almost none of them would understand what the war had to do with Communism and the Cold War. Therefore, the first critical need this unit must meet is teaching my students about the Vietnam War and its historical and cultural significance.

This unit is also about stories and films. There is an abundance of material - short stories, oral histories, images, comic strips, documentaries and feature films - that could be used in a study of the Vietnam War. I chose *The Things They Carried* by Tim O'Brien as our central text because I find it rich with war stories and questions about war stories. The book will help us chart our course through the genre and the war itself. 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.

I am aware that while I find this material compelling in and of itself; my students may not be so immediately engaged. It is therefore necessary for me step back and ask myself, as my students will surely ask me, why are we learning this? The most apparent answers are curricular - as a Humanities educator I am duty-bound to instruct my students in interpreting history and interpreting texts. Teaching interpretative strategies is a challenge all its own. I find my students, even as far along into high school as they are, struggle to make their own interpretations of material. They look to others - usually teachers and textbooks - for the the "right answer." It is one of the goals of my student-centered classroom to give my students tools and strategies to come to figure out what things mean for themselves.

This unit is also about how we read and watch stories. So our study of text and film will include some explicit teaching of literary and cinematic elements. I want my students to be able to identify plot, character, setting, theme, tone and mood in literature. I want them to be able to tease apart the pacing and structures of plot from exposition to complication to climax to denouement. In film, the narrative language may be similar but the technical vocabulary is different. This unit will be one of the first times in which we learn from and with films, so I will explicitly introduce film terms to my students. In their purest forms war stories and films lend themselves to this technical and formal analysis; this is a genre that relies on conventions. Yet focusing on the Vietnam War complicates the predictability and formulaic aspects of genre. Many writers and directors choose to play with narrative structures in order to comment on the senseless or disorder of war. Writers and filmmakers manipulate formal elements to destabilize the reader and viewer.

It is my opinion that the tension between clean narratives and disconcerting asynchronous stories makes my selected films (and *The Things They Carried*) a useful window into the conflict in Southeast Asia. The very things that are challenging about some of these films and texts are indicative of both the ambivalence and the deeply-held beliefs embedded in our conflicted national consciousness when we deal with Vietnam. I find that sociopolitical complexity doesn't mean much to my students when they read about it in the parsed chronologies of a history textbook. Allowing my students to get mired in the confusing aspects of the stories and films would be an instructive experience. I can anticipate my students asking, "Why don't they just tell me what happened?" or "Who am I supposed to root for?" I imagine the conversations these questions would lead into would teach us more about the complexity of the war than any summary analysis or point-counterpoint review of "sides."

This unit will also use films that are not part of the traditional canon of Vietnam War Films. The decision to include international films (*The Abandoned Field* from Vietnam and *White Badge* from Korea) in my unit was informed by the work in my seminar, which focused on global storytelling traditions. In our seminar, we often discussed the many benefits of exposing our students to other cultures and perspectives in films and stories. Not only are these films themselves a glimpse into Vietnamese and Korean filmmaking and storytelling traditions, but they also problematize the American narrative(s) of the Vietnam War. These films enter directly into conversation with a text and two films that conceive of Vietnam as a purely American venture, which is by

no means the case. It is one of my larger goals for my students to see themselves and this country as part of a larger global community. It would be a disservice to them to study the Vietnam War from only an American perspective.

The final reason for focusing this unit on stories of the Vietnam War is by no means an afterthought. There are important thematic and strategic connections between our discussion of the Vietnam War and my students' understanding of current international conflicts - most notably the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. I am therefore interested in giving my students opportunities to think critically about the country's current wars and the stories that are and will be told about them..

## Objectives

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The learning in this unit is framed by what current educational theorists call "Enduring Understandings."<sup>1</sup> These broad and deep concepts underscore the learning in this unit and will lead to the "Essential Questions" that frame our study. I expect students to understand that there are many stories or versions of what is true in historical events. Students will also understand that storytelling serves a social and cultural purpose and helps us make meaning of and organize historical events and personal experiences. Students must also understand that writers, filmmakers, and other storytellers make conscious choices about how to tell their stories and what to include, amplify, or disregard. These understandings are targeted in the questions: Why do we tell war stories? What makes war stories different from other kinds of stories and from each other? What is authorial intent? How do a storyteller's choices affect his or her audience? I am also interested in the related question of how stories relate to history and history-making, which I think will be underscored by our study of the text and films as historical documents.

These deeper understandings are tied to students developing their comprehension and interpretation abilities. We will build reading comprehension skills, focusing on identifying literary elements, genre conventions, and indicators of authorial intent. These skills can also be drawn on in our work with films. I am hoping to have students use prior knowledge of war stories and films to generate their own lists of genre conventions: stock characters, props, themes, and very specific pacing and foreshadowing techniques that drive plots forward to conclusions that often seem inevitable.

Many of the films about Vietnam and *The Things They Carried* are violent and profane. The films (if they are rated) are rated R and the book, while often taught in high schools, is full of language that is sure to raise eyebrows in more conservative settings. The very presence of this "questionable" material is instructive. I hope my students can come to conclusions for themselves about why war stories are often gritty and at times shocking. This takes us directly into conversations about authorial and artistic choices and the intended effect on audience.

I also want to increase my students' familiarity with the historical period of the 1960s and 1970s and raise their awareness about the social and cultural issues surrounding the Vietnam War. I would like to give them a frame of reference within the pop cultural material on the war, particularly films like *Platoon* and *Full Metal Jacket*, *Apocalypse Now*, *Born on the Fourth of July*, and others which live large in our cultural legacy. My students may have seen some of these films or parts of these films, but they probably cannot connect them back to the Vietnam War. I would want to fill in the background and give my students more critical tools to

understand the material. This content and contextual knowledge is something that my students can capitalize on to make stronger interpretations of film and text.

From comprehension and content-knowledge, my students will construct their own informed interpretations of the material. By the end of the unit I want students to encounter images, oral histories, texts, as well as documentary and feature films and make sense of them. I want them to be able to interrogate these accounts and their creators, asking questions of intention and technique.

It is my hope that equipped with newly honed comprehension and interpretation abilities, my students will be able to demonstrate their understanding of war stories and story/history-making in the writing and telling of their own "war stories." The culminating project or Performance of Understanding for this unit will draw on the skills and strategies developed as we work through the text and films.

## Background

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The texts and films in this unit require a certain amount of prior knowledge about the Vietnam War and America in the 1960s and 1970s. This is not prior knowledge that I can assume my students possess, but much of this material will be covered in the American History side of my integrated course. I expect that students will become familiar with causes and effects of the war, social issues of the time period, geopolitical issues around Communism and the Cold War, as well as geographical and historical context for Southeast Asia. In my course, I will draw on and reinforce this content knowledge as we work through *The Things They Carried* and the films, but I will not explicitly include this material in my unit.

Cultural critics and historians have a lot to say about the ways in which Americans do and do not discuss the Vietnam War. The legacy of the war is bound up in feelings about ideology, national politics, foreign policy, and personal experience. Some critics, like Sharon Downey, lump these conflicting perspectives into a narrative whole, "a mass-mediated struggle over the meaning of Vietnam [that] seems remarkably unified - almost a generic Vietnam War Narrative.e."2 It can be useful for students to recognize the unifying principles and generalizable aspects of the stories about Vietnam. It is for this reason that we will spend class time looking at genre conventions and seeking points of comparison among films and text. Still, it seems dangerous to conflate too many different points of view in the attempt to hear Vietnam as a single storyline.

In this unit I choose to emphasize the plurality of perspectives in the Vietnam narrative. I have chosen a few voices in the crowd to hear reinvent, and grapple with the war. These selected pieces represent some, but by no means all, of the possible stories of Vietnam. I will delve more deeply into these works to better serve educators looking to replicate this unit, but I have also included other supplemental or alternative texts which I have outlined in the Annotated Bibliography section of this unit plan.

### **The Things They Carried**

Tim O'Brien classifies *The Things They Carried* as "a work of fiction." This collection of stories which share common motifs and characters can be (and often are) read linearly, almost like a novel. It is worth noting that O'Brien did serve as an infantryman in Vietnam from 1969 to 1970; other biographical facts about his education and family which are introduced throughout *The Things They Carried* also appear to be true. Our

main narrator, Tim, tells his stories with a descriptive urgency and a strong first person perspective. But O'Brien's decision to insist upon the "fictional" characterization of the work raises important questions about truth and perspective, which are central to this unit.

Throughout the book, O'Brien makes bold claims about the nature of war stories. He tells his reader:

- A true war story is never moral. It does not instruct, nor encourage virtue, nor suggest models of proper human behavior, nor restrain men from doing the things they have always done. If a story seems moral, do not believe it. If at the end of a war story you feel uplifted, or if you feel that some small bit of rectitude has been salvaged from the larger waste, then you have been made the victim of a very old and terrible lie.<sup>3</sup>

This quote appears in the story or chapter titled "How to Tell a True War Story." In many ways this piece, which is often reprinted on its own as a short story, is central to O'Brien's project and this unit. This section is rich with plays on the idea of stories, listening, and telling. Even the title is a pun. One can "tell" a story in a way by speaking or writing it, but the chapter is also prescriptive- itself a guide for how to "tell" or "identify" a *true* war story as opposed to a falsified one. In continuing to play with the auditory theme, one of the war stories told with embellishments in this chapter is about a listening patrol that hears things that might not be there.

This story and the collection as a whole are about the tensions between a "true" war story and the deceit of a moralizing tale of war. O'Brien is interested in intentions; he encourages his reader to distrust the instructive. But O'Brien is tricky, always playing with his audience. His very insistence on the "truth" throughout a book he clearly classifies as a work of fiction makes his commitment to truth suspect. He warns his reader that war stories are necessarily distorted, "in any war story, but especially a true one, it's difficult to separate what happened from what seemed to happen." He implies that the narrative of war has a force and truth of its own: "what seems to happen becomes its own happening and has to be told that way."<sup>4</sup> In the end, many readers (including the students with whom I have read the book in the past) find O'Brien manipulative and didactic in his own right.

Another section of the work, "Good Form," further meditates on the fractured relationship between war stories and truth. This short section appears towards the end of the book and changes the tone. It opens, "it's time to be blunt" and follows with the admission that most of the book is made up. This two-page section then goes on to divide truth into the "story-truth" and "happening-truth."<sup>5</sup> When I read this book with a class of 10<sup>th</sup> graders this was where they turned on O'Brien. My students had been absorbed in the book up until this point. The characters were real to them, the action was compelling. They found the writing - which reads often as speech - fast, crude and gripping. Then suddenly around page 180 the author changes things up and students feel like a rug has been pulled out from underneath their feet. This moment of transparency or meta-analysis is often a new literary tactic for my students. They aren't familiar with this kind of disclosure in storytelling or writing. It makes them uncomfortable. It casts doubt on all that came before - in this book and others.

As a teacher, this disconcerting chapter and the strong reactions it elicits are what make *The Things They Carried* worth teaching. I love that this book makes my students think about stories and telling them in a new way. This is the very goal of this unit. The questions Tim O'Brien raises about war stories and how and why they are told are the essential questions of this unit.



## The Green Berets

John Wayne and Roy Kellogg's *The Green Berets* is widely regarded as a propagandistic piece and is often criticized for its naïve (or worse, callous) simplicity. Released in 1968, it was met with aggressive criticism from the Left and ridicule from servicemen who reportedly laughed at the film's attempts at military accuracy.<sup>6</sup> I do not include it in this unit to mock its shortcomings. Rather, I see this film as a starting place for our study of films about the Vietnam War. I would hope that as we progress through the unit my students will develop the strategies and language to critique the film on their own.

The film is conventional to a fault. One of the heaviest criticisms launched at the film was that it oversimplified the dynamics of the conflict. For the purposes of this unit, the simplicity allows us to clearly outline some component pieces of the War Film genre. The stakes are high, the sides are clear. Aside from the obvious "good guys" and "bad guys," almost all supporting roles are caricatures clearly drummed up to serve narrative purposes - the moralizing Medic, the cushy enlisted man who needs to be taught a lesson, the orphaned Vietnamese child whose future is bound up in the success or failure of the American military mission. As unsatisfying or insulting as these characterizations are, the heavy-handedness actually lends itself to useful analysis of stock characters and provides a framework from which to discuss the other films.

It is also significant that *The Green Berets* is one of the few films about combat in Vietnam that was actually filmed and released during the war. The film's timing and politics raise some urgent questions about why war stories are told. What purpose is served by this kind of a jingoistic, celebratory film? It is significant that John Wayne wrote to Lyndon B. Johnson to request support for the production and to negotiate use of US Military materiel. The Johnson Administration's response is even more telling. Despite his staunch support of Johnson's Republican rivals, John Wayne and his producer (his son Michael Wayne) were granted full cooperation from the Department of Defense. White House Press Secretary, Jack Valenti, justified the arrangement as a matter of common goals, "Wayne's politics are wrong, but in so far as Vietnam is concerned, his views are right. If he made a picture he would be saying the things we want said."<sup>7</sup> There is clearly an intended message in this picture. It is therefore fair to characterize this government sanctioned film as the official popular story of the War and useful to teach the film as such.

## Platoon

If *The Green Berets* is one official narrative of the Vietnam War, Oliver Stone's *Platoon* is the official counter-narrative of the Left. Unlike the relatively benign and banal war of *The Green Berets*, in *Platoon* war is hellish and unreasonable. *Platoon* belongs to a larger cadre of films that treat the stories of Vietnam in big, bold terms. Films like *Apocalypse Now*, *Full Metal Jacket*, *The Deer Hunter*, and others could also have been my counterpoint to *The Green Berets*. However, these films might complicate the comparison. They were not necessarily made to instruct. In the "war as narrative" conceit some of these films do not even tell a coherent story. They are not films which let you get your bearings. You are hurtled through plot and confronted with visual and auditory experiences. You are meant to sense and feel but not necessarily think about or analyze these films. This is not to say that these films lack a narrative argument or are not themselves dogmatic. In many ways the argument is in the slippery and jarring qualities of the films. *Platoon* does both - it attempts to jostle its audience, but it also maintains strong conventional features.

In *Platoon*, the protagonist, Chris Taylor, can be seen as a stand-in for Oliver Stone who wrote the semi-autobiographical original screenplay, *Break*, when he returned from combat in 1968. Chris is situated in an interesting middle ground between a series of binary forces. It seems that if the film has an argument, it is

trying to be more complex than the simplistic Good vs. Evil outlined in *The Green Berets*. Early in the film we learn that Chris chose to enter the narrative of war in Southeast Asia. He voluntarily enlisted as a slap-in-the-face to his privileged parents and a show of support for the he "bottom of the barrel" grunts that got drafted and shipped off against their will. Chris is positioned as both of, but removed from, the American elite whose sympathies seem to guide the film. Over the course of the movie he will find himself similarly sandwiched between dual forces of two sergeants and the attitudes and values they represent. Chris articulates this in the closing narration of the film:

- I think now, looking back, we did not fight the enemy; we fought ourselves. The
- enemy was in us. The war is over for me now, but it will always be there, the rest
- of my days. As I'm sure Elias will be, fighting with Barnes for what Rhah called
- "possession of my soul." There are times since, I've felt like a child, born of those
- two fathers.<sup>8</sup>

This final thought lingers, and I believe is intended to do the work of recasting the narrative. Instead of being concerned with the larger politics of the war, the film attempts to bring the argument down to a personal level - a personal story of conflicted loyalties. The drama is no longer about the warring forces of the American troops and the Viet Cong; it is not about Communism and Democracy. The conflict between Elias and Barnes is about reason and reaction, mercy and madness, ethics and self-preservation. In this reduction, we are supposed to complete the departure from the moralizing and celebratory tone of *The Green Berets*.

I am not sure that *Platoon* works as a smaller, personal narrative. There are still many stale genre conventions that rear up in the film. I would want my students to be able to address the similarities and differences between this film and *The Green Berets*. After viewing both - two of many sides in the American narrative - I would hope my students would have some probing questions about the war and about these stories' greater context. These questions, which may need to be stimulated by conversations about who and what is s "missing" in these films, would lead us into viewing of the two foreign films I am including in this unit.

### **The Abandoned Field**

The Abandoned Field was made in Vietnam in 1979, by Ngyuen Hong Sen. The film is based in part on the director's experiences as an army-camera man during the war.<sup>9</sup> Like many Vietnamese films it was released to Vietnamese and Soviet audiences but went virtually ignored in the states. In fact, Vietnamese cinema was almost entirely unavailable and unknown in the United States until 1985 when the Vietnam Film Project was undertaken as a cooperative venture between cinema organizations and the American and Vietnamese governments.<sup>10</sup> Even now these films are hard to locate, which I recognize is one of the challenges of using this film in my unit.

[I was unable to find any copy of the film in the States that was available to borrow, rent or purchase, outside of a few university collections. I was fortunate to obtain such a copy. There are some more widely available films (and some equally obscure ones) that could also be included in this unit and I have included some of these in the annotated resources section of this document.]

I have asked myself many questions about why I am including a Vietnamese film and specifically *The Abandoned Field* in this unit. It seems superficial to bring a single Vietnamese voice into what is mostly an American study of Vietnam War stories. I also worry about reducing the entire Vietnamese perspective in this unit to a single film and I want to be very clear when using this film with my students. Still, I want to make



space in this unit for the war stories that are ignored by both the Conservative and the Radical, distinctly American, narratives of *The Green Berets* and *Platoon*. Both of the American films and *The Things They Carried* are concerned with telling soldiers' (and notably a group of soldiers) stories of the war. *The Abandoned Field*, on the other hand, while involved in the military project of local resistance forces, is the war story of a family.

There is much for my students to observe in this film that is indicative of the kind of war story a Vietnamese civilian or even soldier might tell. The narrative is slow at first; the film focuses on the daily interactions and experiences of a husband (Ba Do) and wife (Sau Xoa) living in a marsh with their young son. The couple works as liaisons for local military operations, trafficking in materials and information. Their world is full of the sounds and images of helicopters and gunfire, but it is not until the last scenes of the movie that either of our lead figures picks up or fires a weapon. Much of the film feels remote and understated, especially when compared to films like *The Green Berets* and *Platoon*. *The Abandoned Field* seems more concerned with the interruptions of daily life and the threat of imminent danger than it does with the larger politics of the war.

Another aspect of the film that we will linger on in class is the depictions of Americans in this Vietnamese project. We will contrast this with the depictions of Vietnamese in *The Green Berets* and *Platoon*. Again, it is important to remember that the film was hardly intended for a Western audience. The film was also made in Vietnam at a time when there certainly was not a population of White or Western men to play American soldiers. Instead the film uses Vietnamese actors with some slightly more European or Western features, and then to further indicate their "American" identity they wear their hair long, unbutton shirts and move with a general swagger that must read to Vietnamese audiences as American. This kind of casting should be familiar to American audiences and can even be contrasted with the choices made in casting Native Americans and Mexican actors to play Vietnamese enemy soldiers in John Wayne's *The Green Berets*. Scholar John Charlot reads the depiction of Americans in *The Abandoned Fields* as generous and universalizing. I would not go as far as to say the depiction strives for sympathy, but I do think the film's desire to show actual American soldiers - and not just faceless helicopters or directionless strategies - suggests something about the way this story is being told and an emphasis again on the human dimensions of war.r.

## **White Badge**

Finally, I have chosen to include a Korean film in this unit because it offers up a truly different and yet wholly familiar variation on the war story of Vietnam. In addition to being geographically and culturally distinctive, *White Badge* also occupies a different chronological perspective. *White Badge* is the most recent of the films we will study and it also may appear the most removed from the central narrative. It is a war story told from the perspective of a Korean soldier-turned-writer who fought in the Vietnam War against the Viet Cong. This makes it a kind of Vietnam Vet's story in the tradition of *Taxi Driver* or *Born on the Fourth of July*. It is a film is about memory and aftermath, not about the urgent present of battle.

Those who encounter the film, or the book it is based on, may not even realize that South Koreans fought in Vietnam. In fact from 1965 to 1973, over 300,000 Korean soldiers went to Vietnam.<sup>11</sup> What is more, civilians and industrialists in South Korea were also engaged in Vietnam and saw economic gain as a result of their involvement in the war.<sup>12</sup> But unlike Americans who obsess over the country's conflicted emotions regarding Vietnam, "the Vietnam War is a forgotten, even forcibly suppressed, experience in South Korea."<sup>13</sup>

The variants of this cultural legacy are acknowledged throughout *White Badge*. The film's main character Sergeant Kiju Han is a literary scout working on his own serial novel about his experiences as a sergeant in

Vietnam. When one of the members of his battalion, Pfc. Chinsu Pyon, hears about the book he begins to call and stalk Han until the two actually meet. It immediately becomes clear that while Han suffers the memory of the war, Pyon is worse off - his paranoia, delusions, and manic bouts reflect the kind of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder we come to expect in American films about Vietnam vets.s.

*White Badge* plays with the idea of time and memory. All of the film's battle sequences and images of soldiers in Vietnam come through flashbacks, mostly from Sergeant Han's perspective. There are flashbacks within flashbacks, in which the Korean soldier interacts with a Vietnamese child and during the interaction recalls his own experience of American soldiers in Korea when he was a child in the 50s. The scene seems to draw a positive parallel between Americans and Koreans and their involvement in these wars, but it hints at a more complex relationship between the three parties. The American Vietnam Veteran's experience is also signaled in the film when a troubled Sergeant Han encounters a poster for *The Deer Hunter* after being visibly distressed by children calling him "Uncle Vietnam" and a street vendor singing a song celebrating returning soldiers.

The film's narrative aspects fit well into this unit's understandings about war stories and memories. In many ways *White Badge* engages in storytelling in ways that compare directly to *The Things They Carried*. Both are the accounts of veterans. Both harbor ambivalence about the protagonist's survival, the memory of dead compatriots, and national reactions to veterans. Both works even play with a motif of listening and sound in similar ways. In a war story scene that could come straight out of an O'Brien story, a few Korean soldiers on night watch think they hear an enemy approaching. They grow ever more agitated listening in the dark and eventually open fire. In the morning their commanding officers arrive and witness the carnage - a massacred field of water buffalo. *The Things They Carried* also includes scenes of soldiers killing water buffalo, this time for sport, as well as plays on the dynamics of listening and the anxiety of listening patrols.

There is something about the familiarity of the narrative of *White Badge* that I think will intrigue my students. It is certainly possible that both the author of the novel Junghyo Ahn and the director Ji-yeong Jeong had read and viewed American war stories and films. Keeping the possible effects of these influences in mind, I imagine we can have fruitful class discussions about the narrative similarities and differences between *White Badge* and the other works included in this unit. Like the other films, *White Badge* gives us ample opportunities to look at artistic choices and analyze the intentions in them.

### **Alternate Texts or Films**

It is important for me to acknowledge that the films I have chosen only give voice to some of the multitudes of Vietnam War stories that are out there. There are very few women in the films and text, with the exception perhaps of *The Abandoned Field* which ends with a striking scene in which the wife (Sau Xoa) fights to defend her baby. African-Americans, Latinos, and other minorities play a limited role in the American films about Vietnam, but certainly played a large role in fighting the war. It is therefore important to be mindful and explicit about these and other absences in the films. I have included some possible alternative resources in the annotated bibliography below. I would also encourage other teachers to explore this through films and texts of their choosing.

## Strategies

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### **Student-centered Learning at the School of the Future**

My student-centered classroom is defined in large part by my school's vision of teaching and learning that is continuous, relevant, and adaptive. The goals of continuous learning are facilitated by technology; my students have laptops and are therefore connected to the tools they need to learn at any time and in any place. The insistence on relevancy is both in terms of material and pedagogy; I endeavor to connect the content and the approaches of my classroom to my students' experiences. This does not mean that every text we read or way we write is hip or edgy, but rather that there are accessible points of entry into material and ways of learning for all of my students. The final piece of the puzzle is about working with what we have and what we want - we adapt lessons and learnings to the present needs of my students and the anticipated demands of their futures.

The result of emphasizing the continuous, relevant, and adaptive is what others might call a student-centered classroom. Students have more immediate connection to their learning and as they move through my school they take on more ownership of the learning process. As their teacher, I help my students set goals and scaffolding necessary skills and processes - easing into what one of my fellow educators calls a "guide-on-the-side" position. Since this unit is intended for students who are at the end of their third year, it will include a lot of student-directed discovery and planning. I see it as my role to give them material, framing questions, and reflective assignments that will help them construct their own understanding.

### **Studying Genre**

Genre theorists in both literary and cinematic circles spend their time categorizing media. There is a great deal of thought and scholarship that goes into the taxonomy of genre. Many high school English classes devote time and energy to a careful parsing of genre, for genre's sake. Texts are selected and writing assignments are structured in the service of teaching students to differentiate among the categories.

But outside of high school classrooms, genre plays an interesting role. In a way there is a kind of unspoken conversation between writer and reader inherent in genre. If we accept that genre conventions are somehow universally held, or at least recognized, between auteur and audience, then genre can open up a kind of parallel conversation between a writer or filmmaker and their reader or viewer. (This "correspondence" between audience and filmmaker or producer is expounded upon in Rick Altman's *Film/Genre*).<sup>14</sup> It is genre put in play that is most interesting to me and most useful for my classroom purposes.

Early in the unit, my students will work together to define the conventions of war stories and war films as genres. We will then watch as the texts, films and other materials of this unit push and pull our definition in new directions. It is my goal that at the end of the unit, students will not only to identify elements of and departures from genre, but also analyze the intentions behind genre-related choices made by authors and directors.

### **Do Now Blogs and Reflection Journals**

My students write a great deal in my class and this unit will be no different. At the beginning of class each day I put a "Do Now" prompt on the board and on a class blog. Even without the assistive technology, this kind of

writing is becoming common practice in education. I choose to use a blog because I have the tool at my disposal and it facilitates more immediate collaboration since my students can see each others' responses. It also is naturally organized in a topical and chronological format that allows us to return to these short writings at any time.

My Do Now prompts are intended to open discussion, connect to earlier material, bring in student prior experience, and introduce new ideas. For this unit Do Nows will include statistics about the Vietnam War, quick creative writing tasks related to photos, quotes, film clips, or passages and prompts for personal reflections connecting to our themes. I will also require journal entries, which are larger at-home versions of many of the same kind of writing tasks as Do Nows. I also ask students to find their own prompting materials - images, songs, videos - and write or create response pieces in their reflection journals. s.

Both of these forms of informal writing give students a chance to connect to and grapple with the material. Throughout the unit, I will use the reflection journals and Do Nows to set the tone for the unit. I put the "work" of examining text and film into the students' hands and give them chances to generate their own ideas and questions on our topics. We will also return to the unit's Essential Questions: Why do we tell war stories? What makes war stories different from other kinds of stories and from each other? What is authorial intent? How do a storyteller's choices affect his or her audience?

I will also write prompts for Do Nows and Reflection Journals that begin to bring out the connections to the wars Iraq and Afghanistan. I do anticipate that my students will generate questions and ideas that link the current conflicts to the historical ones. If this conversation is slow to start and to support it as it develops I will guide it along. I plan to introduce my students to the war stories being told in the digital videos soldiers are making overseas, as well as news articles, photo stories, and radio and television interviews with returning servicemen (especially those collected by students through the Youth Radio "Reflections On Return" project).<sup>15</sup>

## Using Film

My students associate turning on a movie with turning off their brains. The first task I face in this unit is preparing my students to engage with films as critical material. When we watch *The Green Berets* we will use some very explicit guiding questions and graphic organizers to highlight film elements that students may otherwise ignore. Since we will need to watch the film (which is 141 minutes in its entirety) over the course of a few class periods, we will have natural opportunities to review the film from day-to-day and check for comprehension.

I may also skip certain scenes from some of the films in the interest of instructional time and student attention spans (and in the case of two potentially objectionable scenes in *Platoon* and *White Badge*). I have indicated the scenes I intend to cut below.

*The Green Berets* - Skip the spy subplot - minutes 105-118 (DVD Disc 2, Chapters 9& 10)<sup>10</sup>

*Platoon* - Skip the party shack scene - minutes 29:33-36:04 (DVD Chapters 8-10)-<sup>10</sup>

*White Badge* - Skip the strip club/prostitute scenes - 61:33-70:37 minutes (DVD did not have numbered chapters)

## Story-writing and storytelling

Students will engage in writing, telling and creating stories throughout the course of the unit and building

towards their final Performance of Understanding. Through these writing activities, students will explore the conventions of war stories and demonstrate mastery of literary elements. We will use clips and trailers from other films, interviews, combat photos, protest songs, comic strips as "story starters." Students may write the stories of scenes, from specific characters or perspectives - focusing on character and description. They will also explore cause-and-effect through writing prologues and epilogues to existing narratives. We will also practice storytelling using some of this same generative material. Students will be prompted to tell stories to partners - with one student telling and the other writing. If my students take interest in it, we may develop this activity into a story-off, since my students love competitive activities.

### **Performance of Understanding**

Every unit I teach ends with a "Performance of Understanding" or POU. To be clear, POU is more than just jargon. Instead of being merely a dressed up final project, this mode of assessment puts learners in a position where they must construct new understanding in the development of a final product. POUs are usually introduced at the beginning of the unit, so that students know what they are working towards. Students typically share their POUs in a showcase, which is open to parents and others throughout the school community.

This unit is the focus of our third marking period and by this point in the academic year my students should be able to work more autonomously on this kind of larger project. So I anticipate that this POU will be more free-form than earlier projects. They will certainly need support with the novel and the film - but the Do Nows and Reflection Journals should help guide their thinking.

For this unit the POU requires students to create their own war stories. The understandings demonstrated will include an analysis war stories' structures and purposes, awareness of creative and strategic writing choices, and empathy for others. Students will have many options and one comprehensive rubric. Possible POUs produced may include mash-up videos, photo diaries, documented oral histories, written short stories, or comic books. Students may choose to base their war stories on material they find from any existing sources or conduct interviews of their own (there are many veterans on my faculty, and countless more in my students' homes and communities).

They will also have the opportunity of telling a story from the Vietnam War, or from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. The choices will be up to the students; however every decision they make for the project will need to be explained. All final POUs will include a reflection and a rationale or statement of purpose in which students clearly articulate what they have learned in the unit and in the process of creating their final product.

## **Classroom Activities**

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### **Lesson 1: "How to Tell a True War Story" Guided Reading**

Goal: Learn to recognize and interpret authorial intent.

Essential Question: Why do we tell stories? What is unique about a war story?

Lesson Objectives: Students will identify descriptive language in the text. Students will recognize explicit

prescriptions (what the author claims war stories *should* be). Students will identify tone and style in a text. Students will draw conclusions about the author's opinions based on their analysis of the writing.

Do Now: What kind of prescriptions (advice or instructions) do authors give readers? Why would an author want to tell you what to do or what to think?

Guided Reading:

1. Students will have read the chapter for homework.
2. In groups of 4-5, students will be assigned 2 page excerpts of the chapter. They will be instructed to read the chapter and identify: 1) Prescriptions = paying attention to what war stories *should* be according to the passage, 2) Descriptions = paying attention to sensory language, 3) Things That Stand Out (at least 3)
3. Groups will share their Prescriptions & Descriptions lists with the class. As groups share, the class will create a complete list of Prescriptions & Descriptions.
4. Reviewing our class list of Prescriptions we will generate a single, comprehensive definition of a True War Story.
5. Check for Understanding: Students will review definitions of literary elements: tone (*the writer's attitude toward his readers and his subject; his mood or moral view. A writer can be formal, informal, playful, ironic, and especially, optimistic or pessimistic.*) and style (*the manner of expression of a particular writer, produced by choice of words, grammatical structures, use of literary devices, and all the possible parts of language use. Some general styles might include scientific, ornate, plain, emotive.*).
6. Reviewing our class list of Descriptions and the "things that stand out," we will note indicators of tone and style in the chapter.
7. Based on our reading and our class lists, the class will discuss the author's goals in this chapter. Questions for reflection include: What senses are emphasized in this chapter? Why would the author emphasize listening (especially in Mitchell Sanders' story about the Listening Patrol)? Are any aspects of what makes a true war story more important than others? Were all (or any) of the war stories O'Brien included in the book "true"? Why does O'Brien care about truth? Why would a reader care? Does it matter to you if these stories are true? Why or why not?

Closing Activity: Reflection Question (for reflection journal; started in class, but can be completed for homework): Did this story/chapter change the way you think or feel about the book so far? Why or why not? Be sure to use at least TWO specific quotes from the book in your reflection.

Extension Activity: After completing the whole book, determine which stories qualify as "true war stories" based on the definition the class generated? You can also apply the class definition to other narratives - films or other texts.

## **Lesson 2 (~3 days): Platoon Viewing Guide and Preview Activities**

Goal: Understand the different perspectives on the Vietnam War and how they are captured in war stories and films.

Essential Question: What is the filmmaker's perspective? How can you tell?

Lesson Objectives: Students will develop a critical vocabulary for viewing and comparing films. Students will compare *Platoon* to *The Green Berets* and to their reading of *The Things They Carried*. Students will



understand choices that directors and screenwriters make when telling stories to an audience.

Do Now: What kind of movie do you think a soldier would make about Vietnam? Be specific.

Before Viewing *Platoon*:

1. Vocabulary Review: With partners students will review their Film Elements Vocabulary terms (in Appendix B). Students will be tested on film vocabulary and will also receive credit for using vocabulary words correctly in class discussions.
2. The class will recap their conclusions about *The Green Berets* and organize (in the *The Green Berets* section of students' Film Comparison Chart- in Appendix B) conclusions about film and plot elements for comparison to *Platoon*.
3. The educator will review the Film Viewing Questions (not included in the unit plan) prior to watching the film.

While Viewing *Platoon*:

1. Students will watch the film over a few (3) class periods.
2. Students will answer Film Viewing Questions independently. Some questions will relate to plot and character development, while other questions focus on film elements from the vocabulary list.
3. When we skip the "party shack" scene we will discuss why we are omitting it in school and why the director may have chosen to include it in the film.

After Viewing *Platoon*:

1. Students will complete the *Platoon* section of the Film Comparison Chart.
2. In small groups students will discuss assigned quadrants of the Film Comparison Chart.
3. As a class we will discuss the similarities and differences between the two films.

Closing Activity: Reflection Question (for reflection journal; started in class, but can be completed for homework): What and who are missing from both *The Green Berets* and *Platoon*? What other stories about Vietnam may be out there?

Extension Activity: "Interview the Director" - If you could ask John Wayne (and Ray Kellogg) or Oliver Stone any 3 questions about making their movies, what would you ask and why??

### **Lesson 3: The Abandoned Field Group Discussion and Reflection Activities**

Goal: Develop empathy for a Vietnamese experience of the War.

Essential Questions: What can we learn about the Vietnamese experience of the War from a Vietnamese film? Why does this movie portray Americans the way it does?

Lesson Objectives: Students will view and understand a foreign film (in black and white and subtitled inconsistently). Students will be able to draw conclusions about the Vietnamese experience of the War while avoid over-generalizing! Students will compare *The Abandoned Field* to the American war films and stories.

Do Now/Free Write: Think back to the village scenes in *The Green Berets* and *Platoon*, describe the scene from

the perspective of a Vietnamese (civilian or soldier) in that village.

Before Viewing *The Abandoned Field*:

1. The educator will explain the context of the film - made by a Vietnamese filmmaker in Vietnam in 1979. The educator will also explain the subtitles, which do not correspond to every line spoken. Students will have to pay close attention to other details about the film.
2. Students will review Film Elements Vocabulary.
3. Students will make predictions about what might be different about the film (both technically and with regards to narrative).

During *The Abandoned Field*:

1. While students watch they will keep track of the Film Elements that they notice in use.
2. Students will also make a list of "Things that Stand Out" and questions that come up while they watch.
3. The educator will pause the film to ensure comprehension.

After Viewing *The Abandoned Field*:

1. With partners, students will discuss the Film Elements they observed.
2. Students will share and try to answer their questions from viewing the film as a class.
3. In small groups learners will answer Comparison Questions. 1) How was the pacing different in this film? 2) What relationships were emphasized in this film and how is that different? 3) How were Americans portrayed in this film? How is that different from the way Vietnamese people were portrayed in the American films?

Closing Activity: Reflection Question (for reflection journal; started in class, but can be completed for homework): Is *The Abandoned Field* a war story? Why or why not? Be sure to justify your answer with specific examples from the film.

## Filmography

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Canh dong hoang or *The Abandoned Field: Free Fire Zone*, VHS. Directed by Nguyen Hong Sen, 1979.

*Hayan chonjaeng* or *White Badge*, DVD. Directed by Ji-yeong Jeong. 1997, [S.I.]: Vanguard Cinema, 2001.

*Platoon*, DVD. Directed by Oliver Stone. 1986, Santa Monica, CA: MGM Home Entertainment Inc., 2001.

*The Green Berets*, DVD. Directed by John Wayne and Ray Kellogg. 1968, Burbank, CA: Warner Home Video, 1997.

## Other Suggested Films

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Many of these films are unrated or rated R. I would suggest using sections of these films and documentaries in class, but not necessarily showing the films in their entirety.

*Apocalypse Now*, DVD. Directed by Francis Ford Coppola. 1979, Hollywood, CA: Paramount, 2001.

*Hearts & Minds*, DVD. Directed by Peter Davis. 1974, Criterion Collection, 2002.

*Winter Soldier*, DVD. Produced by Vietnam Veterans Against the War and the Winterfilm Collective. 1972, New York: NY: New Yorker Video, 2006.

*Tau Ban No Hoi* or *Boat People*. Directed by Ann Hui. Hong Kong: Bluebird Movie Enterprises Ltd, 1982.

*Bao Gio Cho Toi Than Muoi* or *When the Tenth Month Comes*, DVD. Directed by Nhat Minh Dang. 1984, Vietnam Feature Film Studio. Distributed by the Asian Film Archive,

*Full Metal Jacket*, DVD. Directed by Stanley Kubrick. 1987, Burbank, CA: Warner Home Video, 2007.

## Background Resources for Teachers

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Altman, Rick. *Film/Genre*. London: British Film Institute, 1999. In this book Altman explodes the static definition of genre. He presents genre in film as a dynamic concept, influenced by audience and filmmakers alike. The book may give educators a new way to think about and use genre studies in class.

Armstrong, Charles K. "America's Korea, Korea's Vietnam." *Critical Asian Studies* 33, no. 4 (December 2001): 527-540. *Academic Search Premier*, EBSCOhost (accessed July 14, 2009). A comprehensive background resource for those interested in learning more about Korean involvement in Vietnam. Many people know very little about the role the Republic of Korea played during the conflict. Armstrong highlights military and economic factors and discusses the aftermath of the Vietnam War in South Korea.

Charlot, John. "Festival '90 Victims of a Common Tragedy: While Vietnam struggles to recover, its film industry works to heal and humanize those who were once on opposing sides of the war: [Home Edition]." *Los Angeles Times* (pre-1997 Fulltext), August 26, 1990, <http://www.proquest.com/> (accessed July 14, 2009). One of two essays by John Charlot regarding the Vietnam Film Project. This one compares Vietnamese films and their depictions of Americans with the American films of the time. May be a useful point of reference in class.

Charlot, John. "Vietnamese Cinema: First Views," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, Volume 22, Number 1, March 1991, pp. 33-62. I recommend this essay for teachers interested in using *The Abandoned Field* or *When the Tenth Month Comes* in their classrooms. There are not many critical pieces on these Vietnamese films, and this essay is one of the most comprehensive overviews of Vietnamese Cinema that I came across.

Davenport, Robert R. *The Encyclopedia of War Movies: The Authoritative Guide to Movies About Wars of the Twentieth Century (The Facts on File Film Reference Library)*. New York: Facts on File, 2004. This comprehensive encyclopedia includes over 800 films about war. Entries range in level of detail; all include identifying information and a synopsis of the film. Some entries include "interesting

facts," quotes, mistakes, and details about the real life military service of men and women depicted in the films. This resource may be useful for teachers and students seeking more films on a given war or generic information about a given film.

Hunter, Stephen. *Violent Screen: A critic's 13 years on the front lines of movie mayhem*. Baltimore: Bancroft Press, 1995. Stephen Hunter collected his own movie reviews (from The Baltimore Sun) into thematically organized chapters. The chapter on "War: The charisma of brutality" included reviews and a comparative essay on a group of Vietnam War films. Other articles may be interesting for teachers as well, since they are directly about violence and its use in film. Teachers can also use Hunter's reviews as models of critical writing and may choose to design "movie review" or "film critic" writing activities based on the examples here.

Smith, Julian. *Looking Away: Hollywood and Vietnam*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1975. This collection of essays starts with a strong critique of *The Green Berets*. Smith is also interested in the ways in which Hollywood dealt with Vietnam by making movies that were not directly about the war during the 1960s and 1970s. Teachers may use this book to better understand the context and criticism of *The Green Berets* and to discuss other films from the time period.

Walker, Mark. *Vietnam Veteran Films*. Lanham, Maryland: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1991. This book concentrates specifically on films about or involving Vietnam Veterans. It covers about 30 years of film history, and highlights the evolution of the Vietvet as a film character. The essays are organized by genre of film and there are many types represented: horror films, biker films, dramas, comedies, and more traditional war films. The book also includes a very useful filmography. Again this kind of critical material may not be directly usable in the classroom but can give interested teachers (or precocious students) a deeper understanding of Vietnam War films and stories, especially those involving veterans.

Matelski, Marilyn J. and Nancy Lynch Street, eds. *War and Film in America: Historical and Critical Essays*. Jefferson, N.C.: Mcfarland & Company, 2003. The essays in this collection focus on the historical events represented and some address films from a critical theory perspective. The collection contains 4 essays that relate directly to Vietnam War films, including one focusing on John Wayne ("John Wayne: American Icon, Patriotic Zealot and Cold War Ideologue" by Bonnie S. Jefferson) and another that I reference in my unit plan, ("Top Guns in Vietnam: The Pilot as Protected War Hero" by Sharon D. Downey).

Mctighe, Jay and Grant Wiggins. *Understanding by Design (2nd Edition) (ASCD)*. Alexandria, VA: Prentice Hall, 2005. This "backwards design" approach to lesson and unit-planning informs my instructional practice. It may be useful to other teachers seeking to replicate all or part of this unit.

Taylor, Philip. "The Green Berets." *History Today* 45, no. 3 (March 1995): 21. *Academic Search Premier*, EBSCOhost (accessed July 13, 2009). An overview of the historical and political context for the film *The Green Berets*.

## Classroom Resources for Students

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Kovic, Ron. *Born on 4th July*. New York: Pocket, 1986. Kovic's memoir may be used as a supplementary or alternate text in this unit. Kovic served in Vietnam from 1965-1968. The book discusses his life before, during, and after the war. The book is also the basis of Oliver Stone's second film in his Vietnam trilogy; Tom Cruise plays Kovic in the film.

O'Brien, Tim. *The Things They Carried*. New York City: Broadway, 1998. This collection of stories is central to this unit. It can be used as a complete text or some teachers may choose to select chapters or stories to illustrate specific literary techniques or emphasize historical details.

Santoli, Al. *Everything We Had: An Oral History of the Vietnam War by Thirty-Three American Soldiers Who Fought It*. New York, New

York: Random House, 1981. This collection of oral histories written by soldiers may be useful in class. Each entry lists the name of the soldier, their rank and position, the branch of the armed services and division they served with, the ship or location of service, and their years of service. The accounts span 13 years, from 1962 to 1975. They are striking texts - full of raw experience and emotion (and profanity) and would surely be a powerful teaching tool as a collection, individually, or in excerpts.

WGBH Educational Foundation. "PBS's American Experience: Vietnam Online." Corporation for Public Broadcasting and the WGBH Educational Foundation. <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/vietnam/index.html> (accessed on July 13, 2009). This website is a companion resource for the American Experience program Vietnam: A Television History. The website includes timelines, photographs, primary sources and other resources for teachers and students.

Youth Radio. "Reflections on Return." Youth Radio. <http://www.youthradio.org/topic/reflections-on-return> (accessed on July 13, 2009). Youth Radio features interviews and editorial radio pieces collected and produced by teenagers. The e "Reflections on Return" series focuses on experiences of soldiers returning from Iraq and may be very useful for students to connect their understanding of Vietnam to the current wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

## **Appendix A - Pennsylvania State Standardss**

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This unit addresses the following Pennsylvania State Standards:

### PA Academic Standards for Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening

- 1.1 Learning to Read Independently
- 1.2 Reading Critically in All Content Areas
- 1.3 Reading, Analyzing and Interpreting Literature
- 1.4 Types of Writing
- 1.5 Quality of Writing
- 1.6 Speaking and Listening

### PA Academic Standards for History

- 8.1 Historical Analysis and Skills Development
- 8.3 United States History
- 8.4 World History

### PA Academic Standards for the Arts and Humanities

- 9.2 Historical and Cultural Contexts
- 9.3. Critical Response
- 9.4. Aesthetic Response

## Appendix B

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### Film Viewing Vocabulary

1. Shot
2. Mise-en-Scenene
3. Setting
4. Framing
5. Montage
6. Motif
7. Close-Upp
8. Medium Shot
9. Long Shot
10. Angle
11. Focus
12. Blocking
13. Take
14. Cut
15. Pan

### Film Comparison Chart

#### *The Green Berets Platoon*

Characters

Portrayal of Vietnamese People

Opinions about the Military

Opinions about Soldiers

Use of Music

Pacing

Visual Elements

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

## Notes

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1. Jay McTighe and Grant Wiggins. *Understanding by Design* (2nd Edition) (ASCD). Alexandria, VA: Prentice Hall, 2005.

2. Sharon Downey. "Top Guns in Vietnam: The Pilot as Protected Warrior Hero," in *War and Film in America: Historical and Critical Essays*, eds. Marilyn J. Matelski and Nancy Lynch Street. (Jefferson, N.C.: Mcfarland & Company, 2003), 114.

3. Tim O'Brien. *The Things They Carried*. (New York City: Broadway, 1998), 68.

4. *Ibid.*, 71.



5. Ibid., 179.
6. Philip Taylor. "The Green Berets." *History Today* 45, no. 3 (March 1995): 21. *Academic Search Premier*.
7. Quoted in Taylor, Philip,
8. *Platoon*. Directed by Oliver Stone.
9. John Charlot. "Vietnamese Cinema: First Views," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, Volume 22, Number 1, March 1991, pp. 33-62.
10. John Charlot. "Festival `90 Victims of a Common Tragedy." *Los Angeles Times (pre-1997 Fulltext)*, August26,1990.
11. Charles K. Armstrong. "America's Korea, Korea's Vietnam." *Critical Asian Studies* 33, no. 4 (December 2001), 527.
12. Se Jin Kim. 1970. "South korea's involvement in Vietnam and its economic and political impact." *Asian Survey* 10, (6) (Jun.), 519-32.
13. Charles K. Armstrong, 530.
14. Rick Altman. *Film/Genre*. (London: British Film Institute, 1999) 16.
15. Youth Radio. "Reflections on Return" Youth Radio. <http://www.youthradio.org/topic/reflections-on-return> n

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