

6551 Segovia Rd.  
Goleta, CA 93117  
March 15, 1985

Dear Professor Capps,

I just wanted to tell you that Religious Studies 155 has been an experience. Before taking the class, I knew I wanted to find out about the Vietnam War. I knew it had been a very significant and moving event for many people, however I was not sure why. I also knew that the time during the war was a very troubled one. I thought that perhaps I could learn the reasons for these events through your class. That was an understatement--looking back on this quarter I feel that I myself not only have learned the reasons for those events, but have also felt the reasons why the war had such an impact on so many people.

I can remember, as a child of perhaps 2 or 3, in the mid-60's listening to the music of Simon and Garfunkel, Crosby, Stills and Nash, and Peter, Paul and Mary because my mom did. I remember seeing my mother crying sometimes, she seemed sad sometimes, and I remember I didn't understand why. The words to those songs I listened to so many years ago have a different meaning to me now.

Many times after listening to a lecture in your class, I often was at a loss of words to describe to others what had happened in an hour and fifteen minute lecture. I could not describe, in words, the way in which I was moved--the way I felt, or why I felt that way. I was particularly moved when Shad Meshad spoke to our class. The content of his lecture was in itself very moving, **but** it also was the fact that his sister was there. You see, I have two older brothers. And when Shad's sister went up on stage and gave him a hug, a pang of pain shot through me and tears welled up in my eyes, and I suddenly realized, dear God, what if Kelly or Scott were ever sent to war, and I were the one to be giving them a hug on that stage?

My mom told me once, that during the beginning of the draft for the war, both of my brothers' birthdays were picked in that first round of men to be drafted. But they were ages 3 and 4 at the time... She just sat on the couch holding all three of us kids and cried. Now I can understand why... So here I am fifteen years later finding myself weeping at people's experiences and feelings about the Vietnam War, and listening to that same music that my mom did, as sort of a healing process. (Maybe I should have written my paper on this!)

I want to thank you for sharing yourself and your friends with me. But mostly I want to thank you for teaching me about war and about people's feelings and values. I want to thank you and all of the speakers for allowing me to stop and take

a moment to re-examine and think about my values, and what is important to me. A lot of times I think we, as students get so caught up in school, books, midterms and finals that no one ever takes time out to ask what it's all about. Every day seems so superficial and surface-like. Well, that is until you hear of a woman, who on Mother's Day, left that note for her son on the memorial that said that every day is sacred, every moment is sacred...a gift.

A good friend of mine was a close friend of the young man who was killed in that accident at San Miguel dorm. In attempting to console her I said that maybe that's what death is all about; it makes you stop and think about what life is all about, and it brings people together. And perhaps that's what this class and the veterans' programs are all about; bringing people together.

I just want to share with you one more thing and that is the words from a Peter, Paul and Mary song, Day Is Done. I have listened to this song a lot throughout the quarter, especially it seems, after class. I have thought about how it applies to all the things I have learned in the class.

Tell me why you're crying my son, I know you're frightened like everyone. Is it the thunder in the distance you fear? Will it help if I stay very near? I am here.

And if you take my hand my son, all will be well when the day is done. And if you take my hand my son, all will be well when the day is done.

Do you ask why I'm sighing my son? You shall inherit what mankind has done. In a world filled with sorrow and woe if you ask me why this is so, I really don't know.

And if you take my hand my son, all will be well when the day is done. And if you take my hand my son, all will be well when the day is done.

Tell me why you're smiling my son? Is there a secret you can tell everyone. Do you know more than men that are wise? Can you see what we all must disguise through your loving eyes.

This is by far the most meaningful class I have taken at the University and probably the most meaningful class I ever will take here. I have learned about war, but most importantly, I have learned about myself.

Thank you again Professor Capps.

Sincerely,

*Dana Rikimaru*  
Dana Rikimaru