



# REFERENCE SLIP

TO (Name or title-Mail routing symbol)	INITIALS-DATE
1. Walter	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	

REASON FOR REFERENCE

- AS REQUESTED
- COMMENTS
- CONCURRENCE

- FOR YOUR FILES
- INFORMATION
- NECESSARY ACTION

- NOTE AND RETURN
- PER CONVERSATION
- SIGNATURE

REMARKS

You made the front page of the "METRO" section in the S.F. EXAMINER !! Big time SOR one who deserves it .. It's a good article.

Sorry about the dates for your trip to the orient - conflict with what time I had planned for my mother's visit. (last week in March) take care + say Hi to Lois for me + your daughter

FROM

Rose

DATE

3/2

TEL. EXT.



# Students talking Vietnam

The war is hot topic on campuses again

By Annie Nakao  
OF THE EXAMINER STAFF

Some say you can hear a pin drop when Religious Studies 165 meets in UC-Santa Barbara's Campbell Hall.

"A 1,000-person amphitheater goes silent when a vet gets up to talk," said Jennifer Priestley, a junior. "It's unbelievable."

Priestley, 20, and 925 UC-Santa Barbara students are enrolled in Professor Walter Capps' course, "Impact of Vietnam War on American Culture."

It's the largest of more than 400 such courses — 159 of them created in the last year alone — being taught on the nation's campuses, according to the Center for the Study of the Vietnam Generation, based in Washington, D.C.

About 1,400 students enrolled in Capps' class this quarter, almost half again as many as could be accommodated.

"If we advertised, we would have easily gotten 2,000 students," said Capps, whose class visited the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C.

Student interest in Vietnam is high for the same reasons the recently released film "Platoon" is a blockbuster, Capps said.

"It's in the air right now," he said. "Both the class and the movie are reflections of what is happening in our society. It takes about 10 years for the impact of the war to be felt."

Sandie Fauriol, executive director of the center — a non-profit clearinghouse for research on the war era — says the memorial's opening in Washington in 1982 and the 10th anniversary of the 1975 fall of Saigon are fueling the interest in Vietnam.

"What you're finding is that attitudes are changing about veterans and the war in general," she said. "More books have been written, and now those books are being used in courses."

Clark Smith, a lecturer at the University of San Francisco, said there has always been a "subterranean" interest in the war. The recent upsurge, he said, is the result of a slowly developing complex social phenomenon.

"I don't think any one thing — the memorial or 'Platoon' — does



# VIETNAM

From B-1

Smith said. "They're stepping stones along the way to open people's minds again."

Fauriol said although college courses have gained popularity, high schools still need to bring the war into their classrooms: "There are a lot of college courses, but these professors are getting freshman who don't know who won the war or which side Charlie was on."

The general ignorance of today's college generation is hardly surprising, given that they were "either prenatal or preliterate" while the war was being fought, said Barton Bernstein, history professor at Stanford University.

"They know there was a war, they know there was brutality, they know there was upheaval at home," Bernstein said. "But the Vietnam war is no closer to them than World War II."

Jay William Gibson, professor at Southern Methodist University in Dallas — who has taught Vietnam War courses at Yale, UCLA and UC Irvine — said the reason is simple math: "If you're 20 years old in 1987, you were 8 in 1975. Is an 8-year-old going to remember the fall of Saigon? Not likely."

Still, Capps and others said many students today have personal links to the war.

"Many have had fathers or uncles who fought in the war or were lost in the war, or had parents who were protesters," Capps said.

"There's a real curiosity on their part about the previous generation and learning about their parents."

He said for many students, the course "reaches dimensions of their emotional lives that perhaps they don't remember education had anything to do with."

"Regardless of their political persuasion, I think they realize that war scars people indelibly: what it was like to kill, to lose best friends."

For Eric Morley, UC-Santa Barbara sophomore, the Capps class led him to interview his stepuncle, who was a Marine in Vietnam.

"I'd never really talked to him on a real deep level," said Morley, a native of Los Gatos.

"I had a very limited understanding of the war or of veterans. What I learned was that for him, the hardest thing was coming back. It was like turning a switch — one day, you're in the combat zone and 12 hours later, you're on the streets of San Diego."

Classmate Kevin Crum remembered watching the Vietnam news coverage: "I grew up with it on TV, in color — Walter Cronkite, the

the war, but I never really knew why we were there."

"It's really a time of new discovery for us," said Steven McGrath, another UC-Santa Barbara student and former Millbrae resident.

"The war was something that was kind of swept under the covers for us."

Some older students, with their own vivid memories of the war era, enroll, too.

Elaine Orlando, 42, belonged to the radical anti-war group Students for a Democratic Society in the 1960s.

"I understood it from a very different perspective," said Orlando, who took Smith's class at USF.

"But looking at it objectively this time made me realize that we (SDS members) were in fact right."

While most courses cover a chronology of the war and its political and cultural context, many explore the deeper meaning of the war and its impact on U.S. society.

"I think we're dealing with the impact of the war as a moral and spiritual matter," Capps said.

## 'It takes about 10 years for the impact of the war to be felt'

— Professor Walter Capps, UC-Santa Barbara

had a real effect on the American spirit and how we see ourselves as Americans."

Capps has invited veterans, Army nurses and Vietnamese refugees to talk to his class. This quarter it's being co-taught by Bob Kerrey, former Nebraska governor and Vietnam veteran.

One key reason for the upsurge in courses is the evolution of Vietnam-era literature, experts said.

Douglas Pike, director of UC-Berkeley's Indochina Studies program, estimated that the number of books published on Vietnam has roughly doubled every year since 1975.

The material has given faculty new confidence.

"Many people teaching in this area themselves may have been young adults in the Vietnam years," Bernstein said. "There has been a sense of unsureness of what to use, what to teach."

Academia's interest in the war has not always been warm.

"Vietnam never found a comfortable place in academia," said

professor who was active in the anti-war movement.

"It's an academic conservatism. I think that part of the world has been overlooked. It came to the fore rather suddenly for academia and never really found its niche."

Gibson, the SMU professor, said Vietnam "was almost taboo until the mid-1980s — it was just too close."

"I used to tell academics I was studying Vietnam, and people would walk away."

Some scholars, like Pike, who manages UC-Berkeley's Vietnam archives, said progress is still slow. He called it a "scandal" that Berkeley offers no regular course on Vietnam, although he blamed department politics and the lack of money more than institutional bias.

UC-Berkeley history department Chairman Sheldon Rothblatt said the department offers no such course because "faculty positions are very tight at UC."

"We don't even have enough positions in Asian history in general," he said.

Most scholars, though, hope the trend will continue. "It's not a fad," said USF's Smith.

"The Vietnam War took up pretty much a whole generation of people. It covered 10 years or more of American policy and American interest. People will continue to be interested in its history and its veterans, who will have their own impact on society."



Professor Walter Capps lectures about Vietnam at UC-Santa Barbara



# VIETNAM

—From B-1

It," Smith said. "They're stepping-stones along the way to open people's minds again."

Fauriol said although college courses have gained popularity, high schools still need to bring the war into their classrooms: "There are a lot of college courses, but these professors are getting freshman who don't know who won the war or which side Charlie was on."

The general ignorance of today's college generation is hardly surprising, given that they were "either prenatal or preliterate" while the war was being fought, said Barton Bernstein, history professor at Stanford University.

"They know there was a war, they know there was brutality, they know there was upheaval at home," Bernstein said. "But the Vietnam War is no closer to them than World War II."

Jay William Gibson, professor at Southern Methodist University in Dallas — who has taught Vietnam War courses at Yale, UCLA and UC-Irvine — said the reason is simple math: "If you're 20 years old in 1987, you were 8 in 1975. Is an 8-year-old going to remember the fall of Saigon? Not likely."

Still, Capps and others said many students today have personal links to the war.

"Many have had fathers or uncles who fought in the war or were lost in the war, or had parents who were protesters," Capps said.

"There's a real curiosity on their part about the previous generation and learning about their parents."

He said for many students, the course "reaches dimensions of their emotional lives that perhaps they can't understand education had anything to do with."

"Regardless of their political persuasion, I think they realize that war scars people indelibly: what it was like to kill, to lose best friends."

For Eric Morley, UC-Santa Barbara sophomore, the Capps class led him to interview his stepuncle, who was a Marine in Vietnam.

"I'd never really talked to him on a real deep level," said Morley, a native of Los Gatos.

"I had a very limited understanding of the war or of veterans. What I learned was that for him, the hardest thing was coming back. It was like turning a switch — one day, you're in the combat zone and 12 hours later, you're on the streets of San Diego."

Classmate Kevin Crum remembered watching the Vietnam news coverage: "I grew up with it on TV, in color — Walter Cronkite, the bodies. It had a great curiosity about

the war, but I never really I why we were there."

"It's really a time of new discovery for us," said Steven McGee, another UC-Santa Barbara student and former Millbrae resident.

"The war was something that was kind of swept under the rug for us."

Some older students, with their own vivid memories of the war, enroll, too.

Elaine Orlando, 42, belonged to the radical anti-war group that led to a Democratic Society in the 1960s.

"I understood it from a very different perspective," said Orlando, who took Smith's class at USF.

"But looking at it objectively, time made me realize that we (the members) were in fact right."

While most courses cover a chronology of the war and its political and cultural context, many explore the deeper meaning of the war and its impact on U.S. society.

"I think we're dealing with the impact of the war as a moral and spiritual matter," Capps said.

## 'It takes about 10 years for the impact of the war to be felt'

— Professor Walter Capps  
UC-Santa Barbara

had a real effect on the American spirit and how we see ourselves as Americans."

Capps has invited veterans, Army nurses and Vietnamese refugees to talk to his class. This quarter it's being co-taught by Bob Kerrey, former Nebraska governor and Vietnam veteran.

One key reason for the upsurge in courses is the evolution of Vietnam-era literature, experts said.

Douglas Pike, director of UC Berkeley's Indochina Studies program, estimated that the number of books published on Vietnam has roughly doubled every year since 1975.

The material has given faculty new confidence.

"Many people teaching in this area themselves may have been young adults in the Vietnam years," Bernstein said. "There has been a sense of unsureness of what to use, what to teach."

Academia's interest in the war has not always been warm.

"Vietnam never found a comfortable place in academia," said Smith, a former UC-Berkeley pro-



M

e stepping-  
v to open

gh college  
popularity,  
o bring the  
ms: "There  
ourses, but  
tting fresh-  
ho won the  
ie was on."

e of today's  
dly surpris-  
ere "either  
' while the  
said Barton  
ofessor at

was a war,  
utality, they  
al at home,"  
he Vietnam  
them than

professor at  
niversity in  
ght Vietnam

UCLA and  
eason is sim-  
years old in  
975. Is an 8-  
ber the fall

s said many  
rsonal links

hers or un-  
war or were  
parents who  
s said.

sity on their  
s generation  
ir parents."  
tudents, the  
ions of their

the war, but I never really knew why we were there."

"It's really a time of new discovery for us," said Steven McGrath, another UC-Santa Barbara student and former Millbrae resident.

"The war was something that was kind of swept under the covers for us."

Some older students, with their own vivid memories of the war era, enroll, too.

Elaine Orlando, 42, belonged to the radical anti-war group Students for a Democratic Society in the 1960s.

"I understood it from a very different perspective," said Orlando, who took Smith's class at USF.

"But looking at it objectively this time made me realize that we (SDS members) were in fact right."

While most courses cover a chronology of the war and its political and cultural context, many explore the deeper meaning of the war and its impact on U.S. society.

"I think we're dealing with the impact of the war as a moral and spiritual matter," Capps said. "It

**'It takes about 10 years for the impact of the war to be felt'**

— Professor Walter Capps, UC-Santa Barbara

had a real effect on the American spirit and how we see ourselves as Americans."

Capps has invited veterans, Army nurses and Vietnamese refugees to talk to his class. This quarter

fessor who was active in the anti-war movement.

"It's an academic conservatism. I think that part of the world has been overlooked. It came to the fore rather suddenly for academia and never really found its niche."

Gibson, the SMU professor, said Vietnam "was almost taboo up until the mid-1980s — it was just too close."

"I used to tell academics I was studying Vietnam, and people would walk away."

Some scholars, like Pike, who manages UC-Berkeley's Vietnam archives, said progress is still slow. He called it a "scandal" that Berkeley offers no regular course on Vietnam, although he blamed department politics and the lack of money more than institutional bias.

UC-Berkeley history department Chairman Sheldon Rothblatt said the department offers no such course because "faculty positions are very tight at UC."

"We don't even have enough positions in Asian history in general," he said.

Most scholars, though, hope the trend will continue. "It's not a fad," said USF's Smith.

"The Vietnam War took up pretty much a whole generation of people. It covered 10 years or more of American policy and American interest. People will continue to be interested in its history and its veterans, who will have their own impact on society."



**Professor Walter Capps lectures about Vietnam at UC-Santa Barbara**



