

# First Year Seminar – The Memory of War

## Fall 2021 – Prof. Shaya

### Short Paper—Analysis of a Work of Memory from the War in Vietnam

Due: Friday, October 8 at 11:59pm

Your assignment: write a short paper about a “work of memory” devoted to the war in Vietnam, with reference to Viet Thanh Nguyen’s ethics of memory.

You may choose to write about: the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, DC, the Wooster Vietnam War memorial, the Truong Son Martyr’s Cemetery, a film we discuss in week 6, or something else that I approve.

Your paper should present an argument – a larger idea that you develop through examples and explanation. Bring in Nguyen’s ethics of memory either in the introduction, early on in the body of the paper, or in the conclusion. You don’t have to agree with Nguyen. Indeed, you might write a very interesting paper by disagreeing. But you should show that you understand some key aspects of his thinking.

You won’t sit down at your computer and write a strong paper unless you’ve first gone through a few steps. Before you start to compose your paper you should: look closely at the memorial you want to discuss, taking some notes and doing some basic research; reflect on Nguyen and “just memory”; brainstorm ideas for your paper; develop a thesis; work out your argument and the evidence and analysis you will use to deliver it; and outline (even if just in rudimentary form) your paper.

#### **Guidelines**

Your paper should be three to five pages in length. You may write longer if your essay is still interesting, organized and not repetitive.

Follow the writing guidelines of my handout, “Keys to Good Writing.”

Format your paper according to manuscript format of MLA style. See the “Sample Short Paper in MLA Format” on the Handouts page for more details of format.

#### **Criteria of Evaluation**

Does your paper demonstrate a mastery of the work of memory you are discussing?

Does it show a clear engagement with Viet Thanh Nguyens’ ethics of memory?

Does your paper present an interesting thesis?

Does it present relevant evidence and analysis to support your thesis?

Is it well organized (with a clear sense of movement from beginning to end)?

Is it well written (on the levels of paragraph, sentence, word)?

Is it free of errors of grammar or spelling?

Is it formatted correctly?