

F I N A L   E X A M I N A T I O N

The essay portion of the Final Examination will consist of questions selected from the following. As you formulate answers and response, give indication of the reading you did this quarter, and be as specific as possible.

- ✓ 1. Norman Podhoretz once wrote a book, Why We Were In Vietnam, to explain how it happened that the United States became involved in an undeclared war on the Asian mainland. As you understand it, why were we (the United States) in Vietnam? What were our goals and our military objectives? What was the underlying motivation? In short, why was the war undertaken?
2. It has been said that United States involvement in Vietnam represents a colossal mistake. If this be the case -- feel free to argue it either way -- at what specific point (or points) was the mistake made? Or, if this judgment is incorrect, how do you explain what appears to have gone wrong?
- ✓ 3. Approximately 500,000 men and women who served in Vietnam have been affected by what the clinicians refer to as P.T.S.D. What is P.T.S.D., and how is it characterized? Are there remedies, antidotes, and effective therapy? Explain and discuss.
4. Philip Caputo's A Rumor of War represents, both in structure and in content, a classic Vietnam war story. Describe the sequence of events, and explain why the book has this representational quality. In other words, what is the structure of the narrative, and how is this to be explained?
5. In the 1960s and 1970s, American involvement in the Vietnam War was intermixed with the nation's involvement in a number of other very significant social occurrences and cultural transformations. Identify some of these, choosing your examples carefully, and show interrelationships between them and the war effort.
- ✓ 6. James Fallows, and others, have referred to the Vietnam War as being "a class war," in that black Americans, Hispanics, and the poor were directly involved in much greater proportions than affluent whites. Does this judgment have validity? Who fought the Vietnam War, in this respect? Discuss.
7. John Wheeler, author of Touched With Fire: The Future of the Vietnam Generation, makes much of the question of "leadership" following the war. In Wheeler's judgment, the war experience isn't completely over until those who know of it first-hand seize opportunities to exercise leadership, for example, by taking positions of national authority and responsibility. He notes, for example, that Charles Robb, a Vietnam veteran, became Governor of Virginia. We know that Bob Kerrey, another vet, is Governor of Nebraska, and that John Kerry, a vet, is a Senator from Massachusetts. With Wheeler's help (perhaps), what do you make of the leadership question? Will America be different because certain individuals experienced Vietnam deeply and personally? Explain.

- ✓ 8. What about the religious situation in the United States following the Vietnam War? Can some of the developments be correlated with an ongoing reaction to the war? Or, in your judgment, might such developments have occurred even had the war not occurred? Explain and discuss.
- ✓ 9. Based on what you have heard, read and seen, what, in your judgment, is an appropriate symbol of the Vietnam War? (The symbol might be a nationally-recognized symbol, or it can also be something closer to home, not as prominent, perhaps, which you have encountered or discovered in your own study of the war.) Why is the symbol appropriate? What does it symbolize? Discuss.
10. Summing up, did America lose the war in Vietnam? Explain.

✓ 11. *Lesson*