

305: Images and Narratives of War Fall 2008

This course will focus on the Vietnam War and the present war in Iraq. We will experience the Vietnam War primarily through novels and memoirs: some time will be spent on the ongoing impact of the war after it was over, not only for veterans but for later generations. Alex Garland's 1997 novel *The Beach*, for example, was inspired by the great Vietnam War movies of the 1970s. The Iraq War has not yet produced "literature." Instead, we will read journalists' commentaries such as Rajiv Chandrasekaran's *Imperial Life in the Emerald City* and Colby Buzzell's *My War: Killing Time in Iraq*, along with articles and chapters from a number of sources. We will also see some documentary films, such as *No End in Sight*.

The Vietnam War, a enormous upheaval in the America of the 1960s and early 70s, has had far-reaching effects on postwar America. The Iraq War can be instructively compared to this earlier struggle, but—as we will see--the overall cultural climate of the early years of the new millennium is radically different from that of the earlier period.