

University of Wisconsin-Madison
Spring 2022 Semester
U.S. Military MIA Research Project
HIS 200-001 Historical Studies – 3 credits
TTH 11-12:15 in Humanities 1221, in-person
Office hours TTh Biotech Center, Rm 3130, 9 am-2pm or in-class
Dr. Vaneesa Cook - vcook@wisc.edu

Syllabus details, dates, and requirements subject to change

Course Description: This course is designed to introduce students to the process of researching, recovering, and identifying military missing in action (MIA) personnel. Students will learn about the history of MIA recovery efforts in the U.S. since World War II. They will gain hands-on, practical research skills and utilize a variety of methodological techniques as they investigate MIA cold cases since 1941. Students will work extensively with primary sources, collect and analyze data, and practice writing battle narratives and individual MIA profiles that synthesize the historical and geographic details of their case research.

This class meets for two, 75-minute class periods each week over the fall/spring semester and carries the expectation that students will work on course learning activities (reading, writing, problem sets, studying, etc) for about 3 hours out of the classroom for every class period. The syllabus includes more information about meeting times and expectations for student work.

Regular and Substantive Student-Instructor Interaction: *including direct instruction, providing feedback on student work, providing information about course content, facilitating discussion of course content, meeting in-person and online to answer student questions or concerns*

Course Expectations: This course is research and writing intensive, intended to introduce and train students in the historical methodology of Missing in Action research. This course will combine lecture format with seminar-style discussion and in-class exercises. Please bring your laptops to each class period.

Required Books (2): *The Ghost Mountain Boys* – James Campbell
What Remains: Bringing America's Missing Home from the Vietnam War – Sarah Wagner

Additional Suggested Book (1): *Spearhead: A Complete History of Merrill's Marauders* – James Hopkins (paperback ed. 2013) (Available at College Library for in-house loan)

Note: Additional readings available on CANVAS or as handouts in class

Reading Schedule:

Ghost Mountain Boys book – read pages 1-161 by February 10.

Ghost Mountain Boys book – read pages 162-297 by March 1.

What Remains book – read pages 1-103 by March 24

What Remains book – read pages 104-221 by April 5.

Assignments: Writing Tips and Grading Guidelines available on CANVAS

Assignment 1 – Paper (3 pages) on “the Challenges of MIA Research and Recoveries,” due **March 1** (15%) – must cite sources including James Campbell book

Assignment 2 – Paper (3 pages) on a military landmark in Wisconsin, due **March 29** (15%)

Assignment 3 - Battle Narrative of Myitkyina – (5-6 pages) – due **April 14** (25%)

Assignment 4 - Final paper (10-15 pages) – Individual Case Summary on Myitkyina MIA, due **May 3** (30%) (including written Battle Narrative of Assignment 3)

Participation (attendance, engagement, and quality contributions to class) (15%)

Extra credit of up to 3% of final grade available. Research summary 2-3 pages on sample cases due by May 3

Schedule of Lectures and Activities:

Tuesday, January 25 – Syllabus review and introduction

Thursday, January 27 – History of Missing in Action Work in U.S.

- Cyber Training Certificate in class

Tuesday, February 1 – Basics of MIA Research Tutorial – IDPF and MACRs

- FOIA Requests
- In-class reading: *Soldier Dead* excerpts, Chapters 1-2

Thursday, February 3 – Bringing Home Remains in the Wake of WWII

- Basics of MIA Research Tutorial – ancestry.com etc.
- In-class reading: Steere and Boardman excerpts

Tuesday, February 8 – X-Files and Unknowns

- In-class reading: “When X Does Not Mark the Spot” by Dolski

Thursday, February 10 – Battle of Myitkyina – Burma WWII – Context for MIAs

- In class reading: *Soldier Dead* excerpt, Chapter 4

Tuesday, February 15 – Air Losses of Europe – Plane Types - Kassel Missions example

Thursday, February 17 – MIA Research Techniques Online – Research Case Study

Tuesday, February 22 – Challenges of Recovery

- In-class reading: Holland & Mann article on Vietnam War remains

Thursday, February 24 – Writing Tips for Course Papers

- “What are the Challenges of MIA Research and Recoveries?”
- In-class time to work on paper and ask questions

Tuesday, March 1 – Assignment 1 Due – Challenges of MIA Research Paper

- Guest Lecture on Field Missions – Chuck K. – Tour of MIA Project Suite

Thursday, March 3 - WI Military Landmarks – instructions and free time for research

- *Ghost Mountain Boys* Book Discussion

Tuesday, March 8 – Tracking X-files – National Cemeteries

Thursday, March 10 – Family Members and MIAs; DNA and MIA Research

SPRING RECESS

Tuesday, March 22 – Visit to the WI Veterans Museum

Thursday, March 24 – Issues of Vietnam POW-MIAs

Tuesday, March 29 – Assignment 2 Due – Military Landmark Paper

Thursday, March 31 – Writing Battle Narratives – examples

- Choosing MIA Individuals for Final Paper

Tuesday, April 5 – Writing of Case Summaries/Closure Reports for MIAs

Thursday, April 7 – Importance of Morning Reports

- Book Discussion of *What Remains*

Tuesday, April 12 – Google Earth tutorial; MIA Mapping

Thursday, April 14 – Assignment 3 Due - Battle Narratives for Myitkyina

- Documentary on Merrill's Marauders

Tuesday, April 19 – TBD, In-Class Research Time

Thursday, April 21 – TBD, In-Class Research Time

Tuesday, April 26 – TBD, In-Class Research Time

Thursday, April 28 – TBD, In-Class Research Time

Tuesday, May 3 – Final Paper Due; Extra Credit Papers Due