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Explaining America's Lost War: The Forty-Year Debate Over Vietnam

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Professor Gary R. Hess

Explaining America's Lost War: The Forty-Year Debate over Vietnam

Thursday, September 30 at 2:30 p.m.
Mylander Room (207)
Bowen-Thompson Student Union

Why do debates over Vietnam continue to shape American politics and culture forty years later?

How do the hawks and doves of the Iraq war draw upon the conflicting lessons of Vietnam?

The Vietnam War was so deeply divisive that it is not surprising scholars and participants continue to debate its meaning. But few persons anticipated that Vietnam would profoundly shape American politics and culture for the next forty years. Revisionist and neo-orthodox scholars continue to debate the meaning of Vietnam. The attitudes of conservatives and liberals today reflect the arguments of "hawks" and "doves" of the Vietnam era and the lessons each drew from this war. These groups draw heavily on these lessons to frame and understand the contemporary war in Iraq. Vietnam continues to haunt the presidential election. Dr. Hess will explore both scholarly and contemporary political debate over Vietnam into the 21st century.

Gary R. Hess is Distinguished Research Professor of History at BGSU. Currently a fellow at ICS, he is working on a book for Blackwell Publishing that traces and analyzes the debate over Vietnam, beginning with the teach-ins of 1965. The author of several books and numerous articles, his 2001 book, *Presidential Decisions for War: Korea, Vietnam, and the Persian Gulf* (Johns Hopkins), also was supported by an ICS Fellowship in 1996.

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All events are free and open to the public. For more information, call (419) 372 - 0585