Militarized Freedom: Vietnamese American Soldiers and the Diasporic Memory of War and Empire

Dr. Long Thanh Bui

Long Thanh Bui received his Ph.D. in Ethnic Studies from the University of California, San Diego. He is currently the Chancellor’s Postdoctoral Research Fellow in the Department of Asian American Studies at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign.

This presentation highlights the stories of Vietnamese American G.I’s who have fought in the “War on Terror.” Analyzing oral interviews, media reports, and literary texts, the talk explores the recruitment of racial minorities in new protracted global conflicts reminiscent of the Vietnam War. Insofar as soldiers’ critiques of current U.S. foreign policy are filtered through Cold War memories of American intervention in Southeast Asia, the talk explores how diasporic subjects exiled from the failed state of South Vietnam painfully negotiate their role as foreign occupiers in “Vietnamized” territories like Iraq and Afghanistan, as emasculated refugees turned into imperial agents. Exploring the overlap of military diasporas and refugee diasporas, this talk reveals the (geo)political economy of the security state as it bears upon the evolution of Asian-American historical relations and what Bui conceptually frames as “militarized freedom.”

This event is sponsored by the Diaspora Cluster Initiative and the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

For more information, contact Hanan Wuhush at hwuhus2@uic.edu