VIETNAM EXPLORED:

A JOURNEY THROUGH ITS HISTORY AND CULTURE

Vassar Travel Program

Educational Excursions for Alums, Family, & Friends

MARCH 7 - 20, 2027 *WITH*
VASSAR HOSTS: ROBERT K. BRIGHAM, *SHIRLEY ECKER BOSKEY PROFESSOR OF HISTORY AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AT VASSAR COLLEGE,* AND MONICA CHURCH *P'23, VISUAL ARTIST*

Vassar Travel Program

Dear Vassar alums and friends,

With its dramatic landscapes, fascinating history, epic food, and pulsating energy, Vietnam is the perfect travel destination. We invite you to join us March 7 - 20, 2027, as we explore Vietnam's past and present in a remarkable tour of the country.

We begin in charming Hanoi, whose French architecture blends seamlessly with the serenity and timelessness of ancient pagodas and temples. Time in Hanoi allows you to take in the city's colorful Old Quarter, its historical highlights, and its many museums. We will meet the people primarily responsible for Vietnam's remarkable transformation into one of the most dynamic countries in Asia. We next fly to Hue, the seat of the Nguyen Dynasty and the national capital from 1802 to 1945. We will visit the Dai Noi Citadel and the Forbidden Purple City (UNESCO World Heritage sites), once the emperor's home.

While in Hue, we will retrace my father's footsteps as a US Marine Corps combat photographer during the 1968 Tet Offensive. A short drive takes us to Hoi An, another UNESCO World Heritage site, with its eclectic mix of merchant architecture showcasing old houses in French, Chinese, and Japanese styles all of which miraculously escaped the ravages of war. We conclude the trip in bustling Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon), a mix of old and new that makes the perfect bookend for the journey. We take a day trip into the Mekong Delta during our stay in Saigon, exploring the lower reaches of the Mekong River.

Private meetings with government officials, public health experts, NGOs, educators, entrepreneurs, diplomats, writers, and artists have been arranged exclusively for our group. We anticipate that interest in this well-paced, vibrant program will be strong. Contact Tina Patterson at Authentic Asia at (888) 263-4513 or tina@authenticasia.net to reserve your space today.

Cheers,

Robert K. Brigham, Shirley Ecker Boskey Professor of History and International Relations at Vassar College Monica Church P'23, Visual Artist

Vassar Travel Program

Itinerary

> *"We explore Vietnam's past and present, its dramatic landscapes, fascinating history, epic food, and pulsating energy."*

Day 1

March 7
Departure

Depart the United States bound for Hanoi. International airfare is not included. Airport transfers in Hanoi are included.

Day 2

March 8
Arrival in Hanoi

Upon arrival in Hanoi, you will be escorted through the VIP immigration and customs channel and transferred to the Sofitel Legend.

The Hotel Metropole Hanoi was the first Sofitel Legend property in the world and is the recipient of numerous international awards for its fine service. This legendary landmark has contributed to the history and heritage of the city. The hotel has a long tradition as a luxury venue for prestigious events & as a popular rendezvous for business and leisure travelers—including playwrights, ambassadors, and heads of state.

Accommodations: Sofitel Metropole Hotel

Day 3

March 9
Hanoi

We start the day with a faculty and staff introduction meeting before we set out on a full-day tour of Hanoi beginning at the famous Old Quarter with its narrow streets, busy markets, and traditional architecture. Its labyrinth streets are filled with shops and food stalls. Each street used to specialize in a particular trade, and although many of these specialties have evolved, one can still find streets dedicated to specific goods, such as silk, bamboo, and more.

One of the most important sites within the Old Quarter is St. Joseph's Cathedral, a French Gothic building constructed in 1886. The morning concludes with a tour of Hoa Lo Prison, once famously named the "Hanoi Hilton" by American POWs. In the afternoon we will take a stroll through the grounds of the Temple of Literature. Built in 1076, it was Vietnam's first university once

devoted to the education of the country's royalty, mandarins, and members of the elite. The well-preserved architecture and beautiful garden make for a lovely place for today's young students to gather or find a quiet spot to read.
Our day concludes at "Train Street" a unique part of the city where the railway tracks run just mere inches away from houses and shops, offering a glimpse into daily life in Hanoi and the unique coexistence of urban living and railway transportation.

Accommodations: Sofitel Metropole Hotel
Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 4

March 10
Hanoi

Today's program begins with a morning visit to the US Embassy for an informative briefing. This represents a rare opportunity to gain perspective from those closely engaged with the region.

Our next stop will be the Women's Museum, a unique cultural institution dedicated to celebrating the lives, heritage, and contribution of Vietnamese women throughout history. Housed near the Old Quarter and Hoan Kiem Lake, the museum was established in 1987 and officially opened to the public in 1995. It functions as both a museum and research center showcasing the historical, social, and cultural roles of women across Vietnam's 54 ethnic groups, with more than 25,000 documents, objects and artifacts on display.

After lunch we make our way to Zo Project, a social enterprise focused on preserving and revitalizing the traditional craft of making Do paper, a handmade paper with deep cultural roots dating back centuries. Zo Project creates contemporary, everyday products – like notebooks, postcards, decorative items, and accessories, using traditional paper and marrying cultural heritage with modern design.

Accommodations: Sofitel Metropole Hotel
Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Day 5

March 11
Hue

A morning flight will take us to Hue. Located in central Vietnam, it was once the imperial capital of the Nguyen Dynasty from 1802 to 1945. As a result, it is rich in history, culture, and architectural heritage.
This part of our journey is especially meaningful to Professor Brigham as we will follow a special tour of his father's footsteps, Sergeant Bruce Allen Atwell.
In the afternoon, a boat ride down the Perfume River brings us to the Thien Mu Pagoda. One of the main attractions here is the car in which Thich Quang Duc, a Buddhist monk set himself on fire on June 11, 1963, at a busy intersection in Saigon. The car, a white Austin Westminster, is kept at the pagoda as a historical artifact commemorating the event and the monk's sacrifice. It serves as a solemn reminder of the Buddhist struggle for religious freedom and human rights.

Accommodations: Azerai La Residence Hue
Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 6

March 12
Hue

This morning, we will visit the Purple Forbidden City, a UNESCO World Heritage Site constructed in 1802, following the model of Chinese Imperial Palaces inside the city's Citadel. Its name was derived from the color purple, which was historically associated with royalty and imperial power in Vietnam.
After lunch, a short drive will take us outside of Hue to the majestic royal tombs built for the Nguyen dynasty emperors, nestled in the hills of and along the Perfume River.

Accommodations: Azerai La Residence Hue
Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 7

March 13
Hoi An

We depart by bus for Danang and the famous China Beach, a stretch of coastline that gained international recognition during the war when it served as a popular relaxation spot for American soldiers. We will allow for some free time to enjoy the clear turquoise waters and white sands before we make our way to Hoi An.

The town of Hoi An was declared a UNESCO World Heritage site in 1999. The legacy of maritime trade in Hoi An left an eclectic mix of merchant architecture with housing in French, Chinese, or Japanese styles. Hoi An is one of the rare places in Vietnam where you can find genuine Vietnamese architecture which miraculously escaped the war. This afternoon we will take a leisurely stroll through this delightful town with hundreds of historic houses and a vibrant local market.

Accommodations: Anatara Hoi An Resort
Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Day 8

March 14
Hoi An

Today's excursion takes us to My Son, one of the most stunning sites in Vietnam and home to the wonderful open air Cham Museum. The monuments are set in a verdant valley overlooked by the Cat's Tooth Mountain. My Son was once a center for spirituality and worship during the reign of the Champa Kingdom. It is a bit reminiscent of the great monuments at Angkor Wat. We return to Hoi An in the afternoon.

Accommodations: Anantara Hoi An Resort
Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 9

March 15
Hoi An

Enjoy a free day in Hoi An to explore its tailor shops, many of which can craft custom made garments in just a day or two. Wandering through Hoi An's streets, you will find boutiques filled with vibrant silks, soft linens, leather goods and much more. Each shop has its own personality, treasures to uncover and a lively friendly atmosphere.

Even if you are just browsing, you will find something new and delightful around every corner.

Accommodations: Anantara Hoi An Resort
Meals: Breakfast

Day 10

March 16
Saigon

We invite our early risers to join us on a sunrise excursion to see the fishermen of Cua Dai return from their nightly fishing expedition and unload their catch that will be sold at the local Duy Hai Fish Market where locals buy for daily meals and restaurant supply.

Later this morning we depart for Danang Airport in time for our flight to Saigon. En route we will stop at the wonderful Cham Museum that preserves and showcases the artistic legacy of the ancient Champa civilization, which flourished in central and southern Vietnam from roughly the 5th to the 15th century.

Our flight arrives in Saigon in the early evening. Officially known as Ho Chi Minh City since 1976, the city is a bustling metropolis and melting pot of cultures with influences from various ethnic groups, colonial powers, and international communities.

Accommodations: Park Hyatt Hotel
Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Day 11

March 17
Saigon

Enjoy a full day exploring this vibrant and dynamic city starting at one of its most iconic landmarks, the Presidential Palace. It served as the seat of government for the Republic of Vietnam (South Vietnam) until the fall of Saigon in 1975. Afterwards, we will tour the War Remnants Museum, dedicated to documenting the Vietnam War and its aftermath, focusing primarily on the experience of the Vietnamese people.

To conclude the morning, we will head to Cholon, Saigon's historic Chinatown that reflects centuries of Chinese settlement and cultural exchange in southern Vietnam. Established in the 18th century by Chinese merchants, Cholon quickly grew into a major commercial hub, kown for its wholesale markets, traditional medicine shops, and family-run businesses. Even today it remains one of the most active trading areas in Saigon.

The city is also home to a vibrant and diverse contemporary art scene with galleries scattered across Districts 1 and 3 featuring both Vietnamese and international artists. From sleek, modern spaces to intimate boutique galleries, the city offers a dynamic platform for painting, sculpture, photography and multimedia installations. Renowned galleries exhibit a mix of established artists and emerging talents, often highlighting works that explore Vietnam's rich cultural heritage alongside global artistic trends.

This afternoon, we will tour some of the city's most impressive galleries.

Accommodations: Park Hyatt Hotel
Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Day 12

March 18
Mekong Delta

We leave the city behind this morning as we make our way to Ben Tre, one of the country's southern provinces, situated in the Delta of the Mekong River. The province is known for its fertile agricultural land which supports the cultivation of rice, coconut, fruit orchards, and aquaculture. Once we arrive in the Mekong Delta, we will board our cruise boat that takes us deep into the heart of the riverways, where we will have a chance to see coconut farms, local families living off fishing and farming, hatch roof houses, and tropical fruit orchards.

An overnight in the Mekong Delta allows us to settle into the slow pace of this region and enjoy a delicious seafood dinner.

Accommodations: Mango Home Hotel
Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 13

March 19
Saigon

After a leisurely breakfast, we make our way back to Saigon with a scheduled arrival mid-day. The remainder of the afternoon will be at leisure.
We have chosen a beautiful riverside restaurant for our farewell dinner.

Accommodations: Park Hyatt Hotel
Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Day 14

March 20
Departure

Travelers will be transferred to the airport in time for their departure flight. All departure times as well as hotel pick up times will be reconfirmed the day prior to departure

Meals: Breakfast

Booking Your Spot

Tour Cost: $8,750 per person based on double occupancy. Single Room Supplement $2,150.

For additional information on this journey, please contact Tina Patterson at Authentic Asia at 888-263-1170 or tina@authenticasia.net.

Your Vassar Hosts

Robert K. Brigham, *Shirley Ecker Boskey, Professor of History & International Relations at Vassar College*

Robert. K. Brigham, Shirley Ecker Boskey Professor of History and International Relations at Vassar College, joined the Vassar faculty in 1994. He is a specialist in the history of US foreign policy, particularly the Vietnam War.

Brigham is the author or co-author of ten books on the war, among them *Reckless: Henry Kissinger and the Tragedy of Vietnam* (PublicAffairs, 2018) and *Argument Without End: In Search of Answers to the Vietnam Tragedy* (PublicAffairs, 1999), written with former secretary of defense, Robert S. McNamara and James G. Blight. Brigham's latest book is This is a True War Story: An Adoptee's Memoir (The University of Chicago Press).

Bob has been traveling to Vietnam since the 1980s, making more than fifty trips to the country in the last forty years.

Monica Church P'23, Visual Artist

Monica Church P'23, Visual Artist, is an artist working in painting, collage, printmaking, and photography. She first traveled to Vietnam in 1992 and has returned many times to photograph and collect materials.

Monica's award-winning series of collages, *From the Streets of Hanoi*, was exhibited widely and was on the cover of *Vietnam Generation*, and most recently discussed at the Ogden Museum as part of the 2023 Kolaj Fest in NOLA.

For more information, visit Monica's website: monicachurch.org and follow her on Instagram: @monicadchurch

161 College Avenue,
Box 14
Poughkeepsie, NY 12603

Terms & Conditions

Included are: All accommodations as listed; internal flights in Vietnam in economy class; all meals as listed; airport transfers in Hanoi and Saigon; tea and coffee with all meals; bottled water with all meals and during all sightseeing; soda and juice drinks with all meals; all sightseeing and entrance fees, service of a professional tour manager and Vietnamese guide, talks/lectures by Professor Robert Brigham.

Not included are: U.S. domestic and international airfare into Hanoi and out of Saigon; gratuities to guides and driver, trip cancellation/baggage insurance, Vietnam visa fee, excess baggage fees, travel insurance and items of purely personal nature and those not expressly mentioned as included.

Capacity: This departure is limited to a maximum of 20 paying participants. What to expect: This trip does involve a certain amount of physical activity such as moderate walking, stair climbing, and walking on uneven surfaces. Travelers must be in good physical health in order to fully participate in the tour.

Reservations & Payments: To reserve a space, return the completed reservation form with your $2,000 per person deposit to Authentic Asia, 1400 Bacchus Drive Unit D, Lafayette, CO 80026, or scan it to tina@authenticasia.net. The balance of payment is due 120 days prior to departure. Personal checks should be made payable to our tour operator Authentic Asia Tours and Travel. Payments can also be made via credit card or bank wire. A 3% credit card fee will be applied. Reservations will be processed in order of receipt. Your trip deposit is non-refundable!

Cancellation Policy and Refund: The trip deposit of $2,000 is non-refundable. The final invoice will be sent 120 days prior to departure and is due upon receipt. Cancellations shall not be effective until they are received in writing and confirmed by Authentic Asia. The following cancellation fees will apply:

If a written cancellation is received 120-90 days prior to departure: 50% of the trip price will be refunded.

If a written cancellation is received 89-60 days prior to departure: 25% of the trip will be refunded.

If a written cancellation is received less than 60 days prior to departure no refund shall be issued.

No refund shall be issued after the tour has commenced or for leaving the tour early. No refunds shall be issued for missed meals, sightseeing or any unused services.

Responsibility: Tour participants assume the responsibility to select a tour that is appropriate for his or her abilities and health. Authentic Asia, Vassar College and the Vassar College Travel Program act only in the capacity of agents for the hotels, airlines, bus and ship lines or owners of contractors providing accommodations, transportation or other services. As a result, all coupons, receipts or tickets are issued subject to the terms and conditions specified by the supplier. By acceptance of tour membership, the participant agrees that neither Authentic Asia, Vassar College and the Vassar College Travel Program nor any of its subsidiaries shall become liable or responsible for personal injury or illness, damage to person or property, loss, delay or irregularity caused by person not controlled by it, such as (without limitation) control. Authentic Asia, Vassar College and the Vassar College Travel Program are not responsible for any additional expenses or liability sustained or incurred by the participants as a result of the above mentioned causes.

Tour participant acknowledges receipt of a copy of these terms and conditions and signifies acceptance of, and consents to all of the terms and conditions set forth herein, when registering for the tour, or making payments on this tour.

Association's Disclaimer: Vassar College and its tour operators reserve the right to accept or decline any person at any time, or to require any participant to withdraw from a program at his or her own expense when such an action is determined by the operator or Vassar College to be in the best interest of the participant's health and safety, or the general welfare of the other participants. Please note that Vassar College does not conduct tours, nor does it act as an agent for guests interested in tours. Vassar College acts as a facilitator with tour operators, with whom tour participants make arrangements for completing travel, and is pleased to act as a liaison with tour operators should you have any questions that may arise before, during or after your tour. Vassar College encourages you to familiarize yourself thoroughly with the tour operator's cancellation and refund policy, and also to investigate available services such as trip cancellation insurance. Vassar College is not responsible for changes to trips or travel arrangements or for losses or additional expenses resulting from travel.

VIETNAM EXPLORED: A Journey Through Its History and Culture

March 7 - 20, 2027

Please make your check payable to Authentic Asia Tours and Travel and mail it to: Authentic Asia, 1400 Bacchus Drive, Unit D, Lafayette, CO 80026. The reservation form can also be scanned and emailed to tina@authenticasia.net For more information, please contact Tina Patterson at (720) 406-7422 tina@authenticasia.net.

PAYMENT

◯ Enclosed is my check for _____ ($ 2,000 per person) to reserve _____ spaces on the journey to Vietnam **OR**

◯ Please email me an online credit card payment link to _____

Note: A 3% credit card fee will be applied.

◯ Payment can also be made via bank wire to:

Account Name: Authentic Asia Tours and Travel

Bank Name: Wells Fargo

Account Number: 2963685389

Domestic Wire Routing Number: 121000248

Wire Memo: Vassar Trip

I/We understand that the final payment is due on November 7, 2026.

Your trip deposit is non-refundable.

Traveler # 1 Name as it appears in the passport _____

Vassar Affiliation _____

Traveler # 2 Name as it appears in the passport _____

Vassar Affiliation _____

Street Address _____

City, State_____ Zip Code_____

Phone _____

E-mail _____

Accommodations

◯ Double/Share

◯ Single (the single room supplement will apply)

I/We have agreed to read the tour itinerary and information section of the brochure and agree to the Terms and Conditions as stated therein.

Signature_____Date_____

Signature_____Date_____

VASSAR TRAVEL PROGRAM

VIETNAM EXPLORED:
A Journey Through Its History and Culture

161 College Avenue,
Box 14
Poughkeepsie, NY 12603