

### Application Essay

My senior honors thesis has required a great deal of research that I have been able to do thanks to the resources provided by the University of Maryland libraries. My thesis is analyzing the Vietnam antiwar movement's use of the legal system to further its goal of ending the war in Southeast Asia. I first became interested in this history in the course HIST319V: America in the 1960s that I took the fall of my sophomore year at UMD. After spending last summer reading books that discussed many different sides of the antiwar movement, I realized that few discussed the role the legal system played in the movement. I decided that filling this gap in the historiography would be a great way to combine my interests in politics, law, and social history.

In the fall 2021 semester I began my research by reading a lot of secondary source materials on the antiwar movement and its methods of protest. I found all these materials through the UMD library, both physical books as well as online journals accessed through the library databases. To find secondary source books, I searched the library's collections using phrases such as "antiwar movement," "1960s student protest," and "Vietnam and the courts." This proved very successful when searching for books that would provide me with a general background on the topic. I also used the library's collections to discover primary sources. Through ILL I was able to receive several printed materials of antiwar organizations' publications. The source most helpful was the Lawyer Committee on American Policy Towards Vietnam's "American Policy Vis-à-vis Vietnam." This source was critical in establishing my argument in the two other chapters of my thesis. ILL was an incredible resource for the sources needed for the chapter in this submission for they were sent to me through ILL.

The online database that I used the most was Nexis Uni to find court decisions. Every court case I analyzed for this thesis I read on Nexis Uni, especially the Supreme Court cases

specifically cited in this submission. The JSTOR database was also extremely helpful for its Independent Voices collection. While not used in this chapter, in the two other chapters of my thesis I used a great deal of newspaper articles and flyers published by antiwar organizations to prove my arguments. For the chapter included in this submission, JSTOR and HeinOnline were helpful in providing me with secondary source articles that analyzed a particular case in depth.

I indirectly sought help from librarians by requesting items online. I also had a meeting with the government resources specialist to learn how best to use the online databases and direct my research. By far the person whom I sought the most assistance from was my professor/advisor, Dr. Katarina Keane. Dr. Keane taught the history course I took two years ago that inspired my love of 1960s history, and she has a wealth of knowledge on the subject. Every week last semester when I was conducting the bulk of my research, I would meet with Dr. Keane to review the material I found and discuss ways to take my research further. Dr. Keane constantly offered new suggestions for sources, including books and cases that would bolster my argument. As I was writing my thesis, Dr. Keane constantly inspired me to be a better writer and analyst, and never missed an opportunity to lift my spirits when I was stressed. I could not think of anyone else who would have been a better advisor and point of contact throughout this research.

When selecting my sources, the first thing I analyzed was the year in which it was published. This was critical for primary sources as activists' thoughts and ideas changed overtime. For example, I would try to find activists' writings pre- and post-1968 as many major events took place in Vietnam that would have influenced their opinions about the war. I also reviewed what exactly the type of source was – an autobiography, a letter, a newspaper column, etc. – as an individual's thoughts and language would be expressed differently in each type of

source. I tried, when possible, to find the personal writings of activists in order to more accurately understand their point of view and beliefs about the war. When evaluating my sources, I paid great attention to the language being used and any bias the author had. With a conflict as contentious as the Vietnam War, bias was extremely present in all the sources I read. Therefore, I made sure to account for this in my analysis and attempted to explain how this bias influenced these activists' behaviors as well as the behaviors of listeners/readers.

This work has taught me more about the research process than I ever thought it would. I learned that often the perfect source does not exist and that you need to get creative when looking for information. I learned that it will take a long time to find exactly what you need, and that sometimes you will spend hours reading material that is not helpful at all. Most importantly, I learned that while research is difficult, it is a lot of fun. Next year I will be attending law school and learning how to conduct legal research – and staying optimistic throughout it – will be extremely helpful in both my academic and professional legal careers.

If I could change anything I would hold on to sources longer. Often I would return a source to the library when I finished reading it, but then needed to obtain it again as my analysis changed throughout the writing process. I would also have a better organization system to find my research notes. I constantly had to double back through my research throughout the writing process. And finally, the biggest thing I would change to make the library a better place for my research would be for it to have all the sources I needed – a researcher's biggest dream.