

## SYLLABUS for *THE THINGS THEY CARRIED*

### NOVEMBER 5, CLASS ONE:

- “The Things They Carried”  
A catalogue of items/burdens of the soldiers, emphasis on Lt. Jimmy Cross / death of Ted Lavender
- “Love”  
A visit/conversation when Jimmy Cross visits Tim O’Brien after the war
- “Spin”  
A series of war-time anecdotes and reminiscences w/occasional commentary about writing/stories
- “On the Rainy River”  
Conflicted summer when the first-person narrator (Tim) receives draft notification
- “Enemies”  
Vicious argument between Lee Strunk and Dave Jensen over a missing jackknife
- “Friends”  
“Death” pact between Lee Strunk and Dave Jensen
- “How to Tell a True War Story”  
Curt Lemon’s death and Rat Kiley’s response / definitions of “war story” and truth

### NOVEMBER 12, CLASS TWO:

- “The Dentist”  
A Curt Lemon story
- “Sweetheart of the Song Tra Bong”  
A Rat Kiley story: a soldier’s girlfriend flies from the States to his outpost in the jungle
- “Stockings”  
Henry Dobbins “good luck” charm
- “Church”  
A stop at a monastery where two monks help clean Henry Dobbins’ M-60
- “The Man I Killed”  
Tim O’Brien’s response to killing a Vietnamese soldier (note the fantasy)
- “Ambush”  
Tim O’Brien’s daughter asks if he ever killed anyone during the war
- “Style”  
A young Vietnamese survivor of a ruined hamlet dances in the ruins of her village
- “Speaking of Courage”  
Norman Bowker after the war in his hometown on the Fourth of July
- “Notes”  
Tim O’Brien’s contact with Bowker after the war / the writing of “Speaking of Courage”

### NOVEMBER 19, CLASS THREE:

- “In the Field”  
Kiowa’s death, the story behind “Speaking of Courage”
- “Good Form”  
The form of these stories: “happening-truth” versus “story-truth”
- “Field Trip”  
Tim O’Brien and his daughter Kathleen visit Vietnam and the field where Kiowa died

“The Ghost Soldiers”

Tim O’Brien’s revenge on the medic who “messed up”

“Night Life”

Rat Kiley’s end to his war

“The Lives of the Dead”

Story of Linda and explanation of why Tim O’Brien writes