

**MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF EDUCATION**  
DEPARTMENT of INSTRUCTIONAL SYSTEMS and WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT  
Course Syllabus

**Course Prefix and Number:** TECH 4423/TECH 6423

**Course Title:** History of Administration of Veterans' Benefits

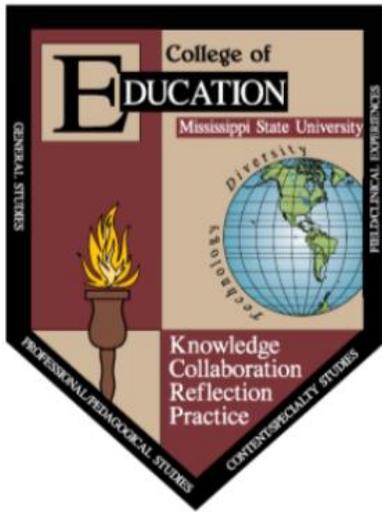
**Credit Hours:** 3 credit hours

**Method of Instruction:** C = Lecture

**Catalogue Description:**

Three Hours Lecture. This course is a historical survey of legislative and organizational developments of the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) from 1776 through present day.

**College of Education Conceptual Framework**



The faculty in the College of Education at Mississippi State University are committed to assuring the success of students and graduates by providing superior learning opportunities that are continually improved as society, schools, and technology change. The organizing theme for the conceptual framework for the College of Education at Mississippi State University is educational professionals - dedicated to continual improvement of all students' educational experiences. The beliefs that guide program development are as follows:

1. **KNOWLEDGE** - Educational professionals must have a deep understanding of the organizing concepts, processes, and attitudes that comprise their chosen disciplinary knowledge base, the pedagogical knowledge base, and the pedagogical content knowledge base. They must also know how to complement these knowledge bases with the appropriate use of technology.
2. **COLLABORATION** - Educational professionals must continually seek opportunities to work together, learn from one another, forge partnerships, and assume positions of responsibility.
3. **REFLECTION** - Educational professionals must be willing to assess their own strengths and weaknesses through reflection. They must also possess the skills, behaviors, and attitudes necessary to learn, change, and grow as life-long learners.
4. **PRACTICE** - Educational professionals must have a rich repertoire of research-based strategies for instruction, assessment, and the use of technologies. They must be able to focus that array of skills on promoting authentic learning by all students or clients, while exhibiting an appreciation and commitment to the value and role of diversity.

## **Course Objectives:**

Upon completion of this course students will be able to:

1. Explain the Department of Veterans Affairs' (DVA) purpose, current organization and the key functions of major line administrations. CFPO #1, 3, 5, 7
2. Explain the mission and responsibilities of the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA). CFPO #1, 3, 5, 7
3. Trace the evolution of the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) from its inception as the Department of Veterans Benefits (DVB) in 1953 to its current status as a major line administration under the DVA, noting its changing mission and its movement within various bureaucracies within the federal government. CFPO #1, 3, 7
4. Describe the economic and social changes in the United States that led to changes in veterans' benefits from 1776 to 1994. CFPO #1, 3, 7, 9
5. Describe how special interest groups influenced public opinion and brought about changes in veterans' benefits, before and after the Civil War. CFPO #2, 3, 7
6. Explain how Vietnam era veterans were different from veterans of other wars/conflicts and how these differences impacted public opinion and veterans' benefits. CFPO #2, 3, 7
7. Evaluate the possible impact of fighting in a war/conflict on a veteran's behavior and return to active/full participation in society. CFPO #1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 8, 13, 14

## **Detailed Course Outline:**

1. DAV's purpose, organization, and key functions (5 clock hours)
  - a. Mission and purpose (1 hour)
  - b. VA Central Office (VACO) – Secretary, Deputy Secretary, and Assistant Secretaries (1 hour)
  - c. Three major line administrations (Veterans Benefits administration, Veterans Health Administration, and National Cemetery Administration) (1.5 hours)
  - d. Field facilities (1.5 hours)
2. Mission and responsibilities of the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) - administration of programs that provide financial and other forms of assistance to veterans, their dependents, and survivors (5 clock hours)
  - a. Veterans' compensation (0.5 hours)
  - b. Veterans' pensions (0.5 hours)
  - c. Survivors' benefits (0.5 hours)
  - d. Rehabilitation and employment assistance (0.5 hours)
  - e. Vocational and educational counseling (0.5 hours)
  - f. Educational assistance (0.5 hours)
  - g. Home loan guaranties (0.5 hours)
  - h. Life insurance coverage (0.5 hours)
  - i. Burial and internment allowances (1 hour)

3. Changes in mission and responsibilities of VBA from 1953 to present day. (5 clock hours)
  - a. 1953 – Changed from Office of Bureau of Pensions to Veterans Benefits Administration; expanded responsibilities (1 hour)
  - b. 1989 – Reorganized under the Department of Veterans Affairs (1 hour)
  - c. 1995 – Remained under the Department of Veterans Affairs but reorganized to provide more comprehensive services (2 hours)
    - i. Compensation and Pension Services
    - ii. Education Services
    - iii. Loan Guaranty Services
    - iv. Veterans’ Assistance Services
    - v. Vocational Rehabilitation and Counseling Services
    - vi. Insurance Services
4. Economic and social changes in the United States that led to changes in veterans’ benefits. (9 clock hours)
  - a. 1776 (Continental Congress) through early 1900s (1 hour)
  - b. World War I (1 hour)
  - c. The Great Depression (1 hour)
  - d. World War II (1 hour)
  - e. Korean Conflict (1 hour)
  - f. Vietnam Era (1 hour)
  - g. Post-Vietnam Era and post conscription era (1.5 hours)
  - h. Persian Gulf Conflict (1.5 hours)
5. Impact of special interest groups on public opinion and veterans’ benefits before and after the Civil War. (6 clock hours)
  - a. The Society of Cincinnati (0.7 hours)
  - b. Grand Army of the Republic (0.3 hours)
  - c. American Veterans of Foreign Service (VFS) (0.3 hours)
  - d. American Veterans of Foreign Wars (AVFW) (0.2 hours)
  - e. The American Legion (0.5 hours)
  - f. Disabled American Veterans (DAV) (1.5 hours)
  - g. American Veterans Committee (1.5 hours)
  - h. Bonus Expeditionary Force (1 hour)
6. Difference between Vietnam era veterans and veterans of other wars/conflicts and how these differences impacted public opinion and veterans’ benefits. (6 clock hours)
  - a. Numbers of veterans returning with permanent injuries (physical and mental) (1 hour)
  - b. Isolation and alienation felt by veterans (1 hour)
  - c. High unemployment among veterans (1 hour)
  - d. Increased drug addiction and post-traumatic stress syndrome (1 hour)
  - e. The public’s rejection or acceptance of veterans back into the community (1 hour)
  - f. Benefits legislated specifically for Vietnam era veterans and why (1 hour)

7. Impact of fighting in war/conflict on a veteran's behavior and return to active/full participation in society. (9 clock hours)
  - a. Capacity to return home and pick up the pieces with family members (1.5 hours)
  - b. Veteran's expectations of self and others (1.5 hours)
  - c. Veteran's attempts to understand changes in his/her attitudes and behavior (1.5 hours)
  - d. Increased divorce rate among veterans (1.5 hours)
  - e. Increased suicides among veterans (2 hours)
  - f. What lawmakers have done to help veterans readjust to civilian life (1 hour)

**Text(s):**

*The veterans benefits administration: An organizational history: 1776-1994* (1995).  
Washington, DC: Department of Veteran Veterans Benefits Administration.

**Description of Instruction:**

**(Campus 1)** Lecture. Instruction will be delivered through face-to-face lectures. The teaching format will include lecture, discussion, demonstration, hands-on activities and simulations, project assignments, and exams.

**(Campus 5)** Lecture. This course will be delivered via an on-line platform – Canvas. Class materials will include handouts, preparation guidelines, supplementary materials, and recorded lectures. Class activities such as group discussions will be held on Canvas in the format of threaded discussion topics.

**Honor Code:**

**(Campus 1& 5)** Mississippi State University has an approved Honor Code that applies to all students. The honor code states: "As a Mississippi State University student I will conduct myself with honor and integrity at all times. I will not lie, cheat, or steal, nor will I accept the actions of those who do."

Upon accepting admission to Mississippi State University, a student immediately assumes a commitment to uphold the honor code, to accept responsibility for learning, and to follow the philosophy and rules of the honor code. Ignorance of the rules does not exclude any member of the MSU community from the requirements or consequences of the honor code.

For additional information please visit: <http://www.honorcode.msstate.edu>

**(Campus 5 specifically)** Online tests will be administered with random ordered questions. All written assignments must be submitted through Turnitin.

**Technology:**

**(Campus 1)** Students will be required to use Canvas to access course syllabus, class preparation guidelines and handouts, and supplemental course materials, as well as to check their grades. Students may also be required to submit assignments using Canvas.

**(Campus 5)** Students will be required to use Canvas to access course syllabus, recorded lectures, class preparation guidelines and handouts, and supplemental course materials, as well as to check their grades. Students will also be required to submit assignments using Canvas. In addition to these, students will engage in class discussions by creating or relying to threaded discussion topics on Canvas.

*Technical Support:* The MSU [Help Desk](http://www.its.msstate.edu) is a service provided at no charge to all students, staff, and faculty at Mississippi State University. The consultants are there to help you with various computer-related information or problems. Check the Information Technology Services (ITS) Web site at <http://www.its.msstate.edu> for handouts and/or resolutions to common computer problems. If you cannot find an answer to your question on the Web or you do not have access to the Internet, please call ITS at 325-0631 or 888-398-6394 (7:30 a.m. to Midnight Monday through Thursday; 7:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Friday; 1:00 p.m. to Midnight Sundays). You can also e-mail ITS directly for help with technical problems at [helpdesk@msstate.edu](mailto:helpdesk@msstate.edu) or go by their office at 108 Allen Hall with walk-in hours from 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. Monday to Thursday; 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Friday; 1:00 p.m.-10:00 p.m. Sunday.

**Diversity:**

Diversity will be addressed through discussions in various topics in communicating and solving problems with a diverse clientele.

**Accommodation for Students with Disabilities:**

Students with disabilities in need of accommodations to meet the expectations of this course are encouraged to bring this need to the attention of the instructor and should register with the Office of Student Support Services as soon as possible. The Office of Student & Disability Support Services is located in 01 Montgomery Hall, (662) 325-3335 (phone), and <http://www.sss.msstate.edu> (web address).

**University Safety Statement:**

Mississippi State University values the safety of all campus community members. Students are encouraged to register for Maroon Alert texts and to download the Everbridge App. Visit the Personal Information section in Banner on your mystate portal to register. To report suspicious activity or to request a courtesy escort via Safe Walk, call University Police at 662-325-2121, or in case of emergency, call 911. For more information regarding safety and to view available training resources, including helpful videos, visit [ready.msstate.edu](http://ready.msstate.edu).

**Field Component:**

There is no field component in this course.

## Evaluation of Student Progress: (Campus 1 and Campus 5)

Student progress will be measured as follows:

1. **Quizzes:** Students' knowledge will be assessed through quizzes to demonstrate knowledge of the Department of Veterans Affairs' (DVA) purpose, current organization, and key functions of major line administrations, as well as, the mission and responsibilities of the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) after reading Chapter 3, Sections 301-322 of Title 38 of the United States Code, the DVA 2010 Organizational Briefing Book located at <http://www.va.gov/ofcadmin/docs/vaorgbb.pdf>, and reviewing the Department of Veterans Affairs' Organizational chart located at <http://www.va.gov/ofcadmin/docs/vaorgchart.pdf> (objectives #1 and 2; CFPO #1, 3, 5, 7).
2. **Paper and Presentation:** Explain how special interest groups impacted public opinion and influenced federal laws that affected veterans' benefits after reading pages 1-25 of the textbook, reviewing instructor prepared PowerPoint presentation posted online (Special Interest Groups), and conducting other research on groups, for example, Internet research. Students will submit a written five page, double-spaced paper and present the subject addressing each of the eight groups listed in the syllabus. Each presentation is to include slides (PowerPoint), graphs, charts, and graphics in the presentation. (objective 5; CFPO #2, 3, 7).
3. **Midterm and Final Exams:** A comprehensive midterm and final examination will be given to assess students' knowledge Demonstrate an understanding of the economic and social changes that occurred in the United States which led to changes in veterans' benefits from 1776 to 1994 by developing a presentation that will be shared online with class members. (objective 4; CFPO #1, 3, 7, 9).
4. **Class Participation/ Discussion:** Demonstrate knowledge of Vietnam era veterans and the evolution of the VBA from its inception to present day organization after reading pages 29-74 of textbook. Class Participation will be evaluated in the face-to-face course through discussion question/answer during class meetings. Class participation will be evaluated in the online course through discussion question/answer during weekly online meetings. (objectives 3 and 6; CFPO #1, 2, 3, 7).
5. **Book Review:** Students will complete a book review using criteria provided by the instructor to evaluate the impact of a soldier fighting in a war/conflict on his/her behavior and return to active/full participation in society after reading Browder's book, *When Jane comes marching home*, or Armstrong, Best, and Domenici's book, *Courage after fire* (objective 7; CFPO #1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 8, 13, 14).

**Graduate Students:** Students will be able to evaluate the possible impact of fighting in a war/conflict on a veteran's behavior and return to active/full participation in society after reading and analyzing two journal articles following guidelines provided by the instructor (objective #7, CFPO #1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 8, 13, 14). The articles must be research based from a peer reviewed journal. The articles must address a subject related to veterans such as post-traumatic stress syndrome, adjusting to civilian life after participating in a war/conflict, or other veteran related subjects.

## Evaluation of Students' Progress:

Students' final grade will be determined based on a combination of written assignments, a project, comprehensive midterm and final examinations, and participation in scheduled discussions.

### Grading System:

The grades based on the points system will be used for scoring all assignments in this class.

### Undergraduate Students:

Assignment/Task	Percentage
1. Classroom (online) discussions	5%
2. Quizzes (2)	10%
3. Paper (3 to 5 pages)	10%
4. Presentation	15%
5. Book review	15%
6. Comprehensive midterm exam	25%
7. Comprehensive final exam	20%
Totals	100%

### Graduate Students:

Assignment/Task	Percentage
1. Classroom (online) discussions	5%
2. Quizzes (2)	5%
3. Paper (3 to 5 pages)	10%
4. Presentation	15%
5. Book review	10%
6. Journal articles (2)	10%
7. Comprehensive midterm exam	20%
8. Comprehensive final exam	25%
Totals	100%

### Grading Scale:

90 - 100.00% = A (Excellent)  
80 - 89.99% = B (Good)  
70 - 79.99% = C (Satisfactory)  
60 - 69.99% = D (Poor)  
Below 59.99% = F (Fail)

## Attendance:

The class is responsible to read the MSU Attendance Policy AOP 12.09.

<https://www.policies.msstate.edu/policy/1209>

In accordance with university policy (AOP 12.09), students should attend all classes. When an absence from class is essential, the student must inform the instructor via phone or email and provide appropriate documentation.

Attendance in the **online course** is evaluated on a weekly basis. Each student is expected to join the online environment at the scheduled time for a combination of lecture and discussion. Just as in the face-to-face environment, not being logged in for class constitutes a single absence.

## Title IX Policy

MSU is committed to complying with Title IX, a federal policy that prohibits discrimination, including violence and harassment, based on sex. This means that MSU's educational programs and activities must be free from sex discrimination, sexual harassment, and other forms of sexual misconduct. If you or someone you know has experienced sex discrimination, sexual violence and/or harassment by any member of the University community, you are encouraged to report the conduct to MSU's Director of Title IX IEEEO Programs at 325-8124 or by e-mail to [titleix@msstate.edu](mailto:titleix@msstate.edu). Additional resources are available at <http://www.msstate.edu/web/security/title9-12.pdf>, or at <http://students.msstate.edu/sexualmisconduct/>.

## Bibliography:

- Ackerman, R. and DiRamio, D. (Eds) (Summer 2009). *Creating a veteran-friendly campus: strategies for transition and success*. New Directions for Student Services, no. 126. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Armstrong, K., Best, S., and Domenici, P. (2006). *Courage after fire*. Berkeley, CA: Ulysses Press.
- Browder, L. (2010). *When Jane comes marching home*. Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press.
- Evans, P. L. (2012). *VeteranSpeak: An introduction to the language of veterans*. CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform
- Hill, J., Lawhorne, C., and Philpott (2011). *Life after the military: A handbook for transitioning veterans*. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, Inc.
- Lowry, R. S. (2008). *The gulf war chronicles*. New York, NY: iUniverse Star Inc.
- Mettler, S. (2005). *Soldiers to citizens: The GI Bill and the making of the greatest generation*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Stidhman, B. F. (Ed) (2011). *Federal veterans laws, rules and regulations*. National Veterans Legal Services Program.

Veterans' Benefits. *Title 38, United State Code, Chapter 3, Sections 301-322*, located at [http://uscode.house.gov/download/title\\_38.shtml](http://uscode.house.gov/download/title_38.shtml).