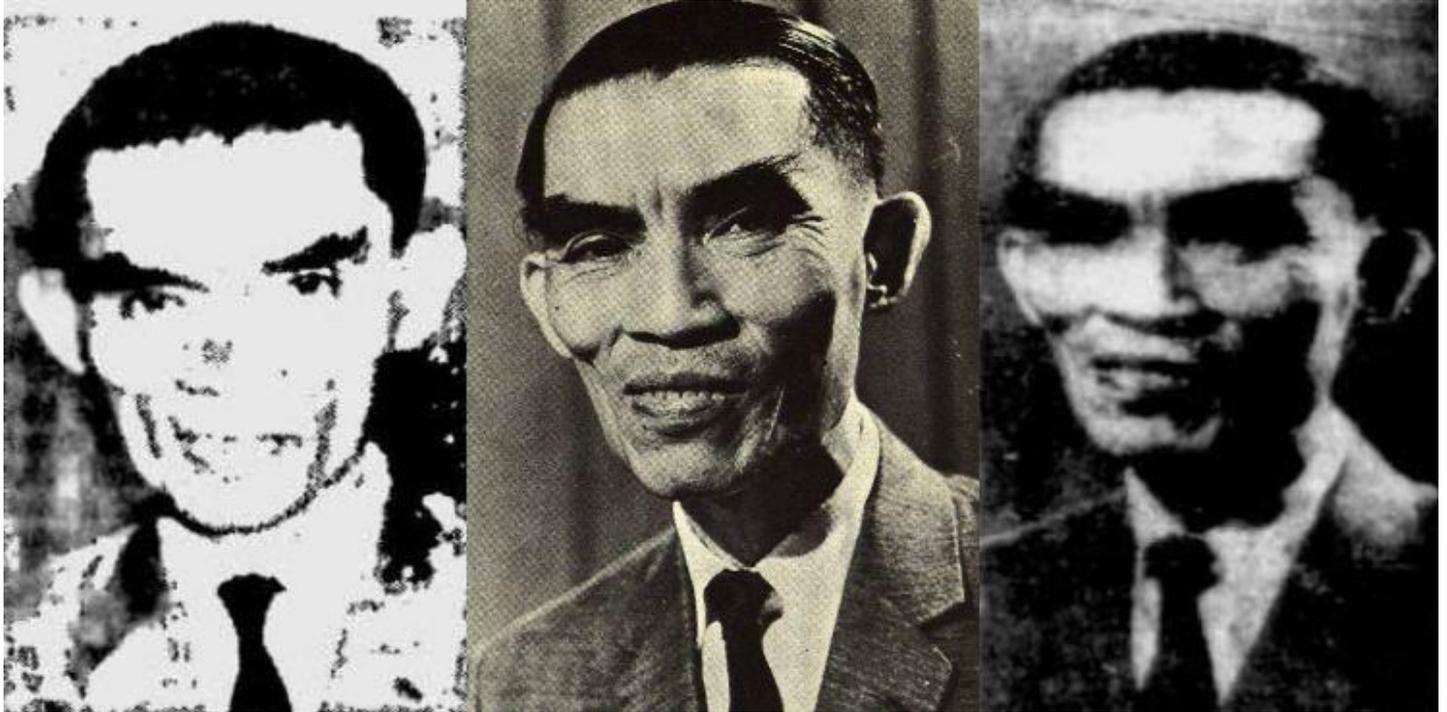


The Southeast Asian Research Group presents:

**Legacy Lost:
The Political Life and
Tragic Death of Tran Van Van**



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Southeast Asian Studies

UW-Madison

6:00 PM, Thursday, April 4, 2013

Location: TBD

Free and open to the public

The chaotic political environment of the post-Ngo Dinh Diem assassination period of the Republic of Vietnam (RVN) remains an untapped resource for research, analysis, and interpretation. Between the time of Diem's death in late-1963 and the country's first open presidential election in 1967, various high-ranking generals in the RVN's army orchestrated several coups and counter-coups against different civilian and military regimes. During this period of instability and democratic disruption a furious and complex political battle raged behind the scenes between the country's leading civilian and military leaders over who would lead the nation and under what form of government. This contentious civilian-military dynamic, especially the defiant civilian politicians who opposed military rule, have been largely ignored by scholars, both Western and Vietnamese. This paper remedies some of the deficiencies in the existing scholarly literature on the civilian-military divide and the more democratically-inclined civilian perspective by treating the political life and tragic death of the nation's leading civilian political leader and military critic Tran Van Van. From 1965 until his tragic assassination in late-1966, Tran Van Van emerged as the main rival of Gen. Nguyen Cao Ky, the country's flamboyant and authoritarian Prime Minister. This dichotomy between Van and Ky, perhaps more than any other political antagonism in the nation's brief but complex history, best exemplifies the state of contentious differentiation among the RVN's politically engaged leaders during the 1960s. First, this state of differentiation is dissected by comparing some of the major differences and sources of tension between Van and Ky and their inner circles. This will be followed by a chronological account of Van's political life (1954 to 1966) which includes an analysis of the evidence relating to his assassination and its social and political consequences.