

Reconstruction Era (1863-1877)

Immediate aftermath of the Civil War and the end of slavery--
optimism, violence, despair, resignation

Purpose: We will try to understand the important and tumultuous time that followed the Civil War-- a period of hope, violence, despair, a time followed by a century of oppression of black Americans, a time with whose legacy we still live.

Moderator:	Bob Romer
Co-moderator:	Jay Russell
Date and Time:	Tuesday morning, 9:30-11:30 10 weeks, starting September 25
Format:	Seminar
Location:	UMass University Without Walls, room 113, Hadley

Description: Reconstruction (roughly from 1863 to 1877) is one of the most important and least understood periods in American history and probably the period most often, and most seriously, misrepresented (by historians, politicians and the "media"). These years saw the end of the Civil War, the adoption of the so-called "Reconstruction Amendments" (the Thirteenth, Fourteenth and Fifteenth) to the Constitution, newly freed slaves experiencing freedom for the first time, and also the rise of the KKK. There were hopeful signs with the creation of hospitals and schools, but also the gradual "redemption" of the southern states by former rebels. Reconstruction effectively ended with the contested election of 1876, the resulting "Compromise of 1877" and the withdrawal of northern support for black rights. With the advent of the era of Jim Crow, the post-Reconstruction period marked the beginning of nearly a century in which blacks were denied human and civil rights not only in the South, but throughout the nation.

Role of participants: Each member of the seminar will give a 30-minute presentation on a topic, chosen in consultation with the moderators, on an aspect of the Reconstruction Era. Everyone will have the opportunity, and be encouraged, to participate in the question and discussion period following each presentation.

Resources: All participants will be encouraged to read Eric Foner's *A Short History of Reconstruction*, Updated Edition (2015), and an abridged version of Foner's *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution 1863-1877* (1990, Updated Edition 2014). The moderators will provide members of the seminar with a selected bibliography, including books by W.E.B. DuBois, John Hope Franklin, C. Vann Woodward and David Blight.

About the Moderators: Bob Romer, a retired professor and 5CLIR member since 2000, has written on colonial-era slavery and has led 5CLIR seminars on abolition, causes and consequences of the Civil War, and *Civil Rights from Johnson (Andrew) to Johnson (LBJ)*.

Jay Russell, a retired attorney and 5CLIR member since 2013, is interested in history and politics and has co-moderated or moderated seminars on presidential powers, the 2016 elections, and the Supreme Court.

Maximum number of participants: 18

Auditors accepted: no

Course # 18FRE