

ARE YOU NOW OR HAVE YOU EVER BEEN...

McCarthyism and the threat to democracy

COURSE #:

22F-ARE

FORMAT:

Seminar

MODERATOR:

Neil Novik

Tyll van Geel

DATE & TIME:

Wed – 9:30 – 11:30 AM

10 Weeks

Starting on 9/28/2022

LOCATION:

Applewood,
Amherst

MAX NO. OF PARTICIPANTS:

18

AUDITORS ACCEPTED:

Yes

MAX NO. OF AUDITORS:

2

PURPOSE:

We will examine McCarthyism by considering its roots, the areas of American life it affected most, the major players and forces at work, and the legacies and lessons that can be gleaned from this dark period in American history.

DESCRIPTION:

McCarthyism is named for the senator from Wisconsin who was relatively unknown before he burst onto the scene in 1950. However, the era's roots go back decades before McCarthy and lasted years beyond his death. McCarthyism touched every corner of American life. People came under suspicion and many were fired, blacklisted, and arrested, not only because of their political beliefs, but also because of whom they spoke to, what they read or wrote, or who their relatives and friends were. Protecting democracy was secondary to the "clear and present danger" that communism supposedly presented.

Each session of the seminar will be devoted to one broad theme related to McCarthyism, such as the rise and fall of American Communism. A list of these themes will be distributed in advance of the seminar. A list of suggested topics within each session's overall theme will also be distributed. Topics other than those on the list will be allowed with the approval of the moderators.

ROLE OF PARTICIPANTS:

Participants will read the material suggested by the moderator, prepare and deliver a 30-40 minute presentation of a topic relevant to the seminar and acceptable to the moderator, and lead a discussion of their topic during the remainder of the session.

RESOURCES:

The moderators will provide a list of resources.

ABOUT THE MODERATORS:

Neil Novik has been an LIR member for seven years and has moderated or co-moderated a variety of seminars on American history, crime fiction, and radio. Tyll van Geel is a long-time member of 5CLIR who has regularly moderated seminars on history and law, and is currently serving as past president of 5CLIR.