

History 511A: U.S. Reconstruction
Fall 2005

In other words, every historical research supposes that the inquiry has a direction at the very first step. In the beginning, there must be a guiding spirit.

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Description:

Reconstruction is one of the most complicated periods in U.S. history. It is also one of the most controversial. When did Reconstruction begin and when did it finish? What was the difference between Presidential and Congressional Reconstruction, and why did one replace the other? How did social relations of property in man shift toward property rights in labor? What role did former slaves play in Reconstruction? Was Reconstruction a glorious moment or a tragic failure? How does Reconstruction compare with other post-emancipation societies?

Objectives:

The aims of this research seminar course are to:

- provide a basic understanding of U.S. Reconstruction at local, state, regional and national levels.
- see how scholars argue over the past (Paper 3).
- further encourage analysis of documentary sources of the era (Paper 1 or 2).
- synthesize primary and secondary sources to produce an essay (Paper 1 or 2).
- compare an historical case in search of broader understanding (Paper 4).
- improve critical, research, and writing skills (Research Paper).

Expectations:

All students are expected to attend class and participate in discussions on a weekly basis. There are four small assignments due in class. The questions are listed below from week 3 through week 6. The papers should be 3 typewritten pages each presented in the Chicago style. They represent 40% of your grade. In the interests of fairness to fellow students, and professionalism, late papers will not be accepted.

The final research paper must draw upon documentary and secondary sources. IT MUST BE A RESEARCH PAPER NOT AN ESSAY ON A TOPIC. It must be at least 15 pages for undergraduates and 20 pages for graduates. It must be presented in Chicago style. It is worth 60% of your grade

The four books below are all required readings and are listed in order of their usage:

📖 Eric Foner. *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution 1863-1877*. Harper Collins: New York, 1988.

📖 William E. Gienapp, ed. *The Civil War and Reconstruction: A Documentary Collection*. Norton: New York, 2001.

📖 Steven Hahn. *A Nation Under our Feet: Black Political Struggles in the Rural South from Slavery to the Great Migration*. Harvard: Cambridge, 2003.

📖 Eric Foner. *Nothing But Freedom: Emancipation and its Legacy*. Louisiana State University Press: Baton Rouge, 1983.

Those readings marked with an asterisk* are on electronic reserve at Jackson Library.

Weekly Meetings:

W1: Aug. 18 **Introduction**

W2: Aug. 25 **Reconstruction's Historians**

READ: Foner, *Reconstruction*, preface, chaps. 1-2

W3: Sep. 1

Political Reconstruction

READ: Foner, *Reconstruction*, chaps.5-8; McKinney, "Politics of Reconstruction,"*; Gienapp, *Documentary Collection*, 317-75

HarpWeek, 1864-1876 Presidential Elections, cartoons.

Paper 1: Either: A/ Explain Republican Reconstruction

Or: B/ Examine a document/cartoon & discuss its historical significance.

W4: Sep. 8

Economic Reconstruction

READ: Foner, *Reconstruction*, chpts. 3-4, 8; Kerr-Ritchie, "Forty Acres,"*; Gienapp, *Documentary Collection*, 377-92.

Paper 2: Either: A/ How were free labor relations different to slave labor?

Or: B/ Examine a document & discuss its historical significance.

** You must write ONE essay and ONE document for Paper 1 & Paper 2.

W5: Sep. 15

Social Reconstruction

READ: Hahn, *Nation Under our Feet*, prologue, part II; Kerr-Ritchie, "Black Republicans,"*; Foner, *Reconstruction*, chap. 9

Paper 3: What is Hahn's argument? How does he make it? Are you persuaded?

W6: Sep. 22

Comparing Emancipation

READ: Foner, *Nothing But Freedom*; Kerr-Ritchie, "Comparing Emancipations,"*.

Paper 4: Was U.S. Emancipation exceptional?

W7: Sep. 29

No meeting

Think about your research topic.

W8: Oct. 6

Research Topics

+ 10 minute class presentation of research topic.

+ 3 page historiography paper due. Make sure you identify your documentary sources. Put your email address at top.

W9: Oct. 13

No meeting - Tutorial

15 minute discussion of research topic with each student in my office.

W10: Oct. 20

No meeting.

Read, research and write.

W11: Oct. 27

No meeting.

Read, research and write.

+ 4 page draft on topic due in my office mail box. Email address at top.

W12: Nov. 3

No Meeting.

Read, research and write.

W13: Nov. 10

No Meeting.

+ 8 page draft due in my office mail box. Email address on top.

W14: Nov. 17

No Meeting.

Rewriting

W15: Dec. 1

U.S. Reconstruction

+ 15 research paper due in class.

End of class discussion.

