Race in America: Paper One Research Questions Assignment Description: Students will be asked to choose one topic between five questions and compose a paper that answers the question (four to six pages, Times New Roman, 12-point font, double-spaced). Students will be asked to incorporate three secondary sources (books, scholarly articles, websites associated with research organizations, etc.) and one primary source. The topic will pertain to issues of race, politics, society, and culture from the British colonial period until the Reconstruction period. Students should pay particular attention to the structure of their paper, making sure that its paragraphs are grouped in logical sections, that ideas flow from paragraph to paragraph, and that each paragraph ties back to the central argument or thesis of the paper. Evidence should be employed to support the author’s argument and should be analyzed to clarify the evidence’s meaning for the reader. Citation standards will be emphasized and enforced: plagiarism and copying from other students will not be tolerated. Students should submit a printed version of the paper at the start of class. 1.) How and why did prior European ideas on difference change and make room for “race” as a salient social category in the British colonies by the eighteenth century? The following questions can help you construct your response, but you do not need to answer each and every one of the questions below: What role did European travel narratives to Africa and the Americas play in how Europeans began to conceive of race? Did European philosophers during the Enlightenment speak about race, and what were their ideas? How did labor systems in the colonial Americas (encomienda, indenture, slavery) come to coincide with race in European empires? How did British law on land use and slavery impact the way people viewed race? Were “mixed-race” people important in establishing social hierarchy in the British colonies, and how were they considered? 2.) Consider either Bacon’s Rebellion or the Stono Slave Rebellion and answer the following question: what role did violence play in creating and maintaining racial difference in British colonial society? The following questions can help you construct your response, but you do not need to answer each and every one of the questions below: What were the primary motivations and contextual elements that explain why the Rebellion took place to begin with? Who were the principal actors in these rebellions (either as instigators or as opponents), and how did their opinions about race in society influence their actions? How was violence discussed in the rebellion and why was violence considered necessary during the rebellion? What does the resort to violence tell us about the stability or instability of British colonial society or politics? Did violence factor into the construction or the enforcement of the law before, during, or after the rebellion? 3.) To what extent did the authors of the United States Constitution consider racial dynamics in the country when drafting, arguing for, or amending this founding document? The following questions can help you construct your response, but you do not need to answer each and every one of the questions below: Does the word “race” or references to explicit racial difference enter into the text of the Constitution, and what other textual references to race or racial/racist institutions can we extrapolate from the document? How did figures who drafted the US Constitution (Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, Alexander Hamilton, etc.) discuss Native sovereignty and black slavery in their personal and political lives? Did all of these figures agree on what was to be done, or did they disagree? What are the arguments by some historians regarding the Bill of Rights being drafted to police Native or enslaved people, and do you find these arguments convincing? 4.) How did ideas about Native sovereignty, territory, and citizenship change from the British colonial period until Reconstruction, and what was the biggest turning point in this history in your opinion? The following questions can help you construct your response, but you do not need to answer each and every one of the questions below: How did British authorities interact with Native tribes diplomatically, how did they identify Native tribes, and what was their relationship to the British Empire? Did interactions between British settlers and Native people change as more British people and settlements emerged, and, if so, how? To what extent were wars such as the French and Indian War or the American Revolution impactful to this dynamic with Native people? What were the legal questions at the heart of the “Cherokee Cases” before the Supreme Court in the 1830’s? Was Indian Removal and the Trail of Tears a continuation or a deviation from prior British and/or American practice? 5.) Was Reconstruction after the Civil War a success or a failure and what were the principal changes for the country’s status quo from before the Civil War? The following questions can help you construct your response, but you do not need to answer each and every one of the questions below: When did Reconstruction begin and end and what phases do historians divide the period into? What rights did African Americans gain during this period and which of those rights endured after Reconstruction’s end? How impactful were the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendment to black freedom in the South or in the country as a whole? How was labor and the economy in the South impacted by Reconstruction? What was different about social life in the South following Reconstruction?