

MWF 3:30-4:25

Fall 2018

INSTRUCTOR: **Elizabeth Coppock**

<http://ling.bu.edu/people/coppock>

**CAS LX 235**

LANGUAGE IN THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD:

## LANGUAGE, SOCIETY, AND THE LAW



*Rachel Jeantel, the prosecution's key witness in the trial of George Zimmerman for the murder of Trayvon Martin, speaks a non-standard variety of English; she is publicly pilloried for her "ungrammatical" speech, and her credibility is doubted. Did this impact the fairness of the trial?*

**This course is centered around stories:** stories that take place in legal settings, and showcase concepts from linguistics. We will consider **language discrimination**, **minority language rights**, **speaker identification**, **semantic ambiguity in statutes and contracts**, and the **pragmatics of language crimes such as bribery and perjury**.

Students will be evaluated primarily on the basis of **oral presentations** made in **teams**, and will have a chance to make an **educational film** for the final project.

**NO prerequisites** (other than a desire to learn, a readiness to work in teams, and a willingness to share ideas with peers)

**Counts for Humanities Divisional Studies Requirement**

**BU HUB Units:** Ethical Reasoning; Oral & Signed Communication; Teamwork & Collaboration