HI450
Women on Trial
Boston University, Fall 2016

Professor: Ashley D. Farmer
Office: HIS 210
Office Hours: Tuesdays 4:00-6:00pm
Email: adfarmer@bu.edu

Course Description:
This course provides an overview of race, class, gender, and sexuality constructs in the late 19th and early 20th century using the public trials of women. Students will investigate the trials of women like Rosa Lee Ingram and Angela Davis in the context of their historical moment while also exploring how these women shaped, and were shaped by, contemporaneous definitions of rape, civil disobedience, sexual harassment, and self-defense. Students will examine primary media coverage of the trials along with secondary sources on race, gender, and queer theory to learn how these historical moments shaped and reflected public understandings of womanhood, race, class, and sex. By the end of the course, participants will have a more nuanced understanding of American history and the ways in which race, class, gender, and sexuality shape public opinions of womanhood today.

Required Texts: All available online via BU libraries
1. Melton McLaurin, Celia: A Slave
2. Kali Gross, Hannah Mary Tabbs and the Disembodied Torso: A Tale of Race, Sex, and Violence in America
3. Elizabeth M. Smith-Pyor, Property Rites: The Rhinelander Trial, Passing, and the Protection of Whiteness
4. All other readings will be made available through Blackboard Learn (BL)

Course Requirements:
Weekly Media Analyses: You will write a short analysis of a contemporary news article, report, blog, or video featuring a woman or group of women. These pieces should be no more than 500-600 words. In each post, you should explain the topic of the article/blog/video the main argument of the author, and your thoughts about how the piece frames race, class, gender, and/or sexuality. Media Analyses are due by 9 p.m. on Sunday night via the Blackboard discussion forum.

Posts will be assessed as follows:
0 points: No post for the week
1 point: LATE, but includes: Link to article/video, main argument of media, reflection on media
2 points: ON TIME and includes: Link to article/video, main argument of media, reflection
3 points: ON TIME and includes: Link to article/video, main argument of media, reflection on media AND meaningful commentary that stimulates responses

Document Analysis: This is a 5-7-page paper on a primary source authored by a figure featured in the course. The document should speak to the particular woman’s experiences on trial, situate the document in its historical context, consider the author’s background, and how the author is advocating for her cause. Your paper should make an argument about how the document shapes popular narratives women and the law. This paper is due in class the week after we examine the figure. I.e. if you write about Angela Davis, your paper will be due on Monday October 31st.
**Visual Analysis:** This is a 5-7-page paper that analyzes an image of one of the women we studied in the course. It should situate the image in historical context, pay special attention to the medium of the image, how it was circulated, and the intended audience, and make an argument about the role of this image in supporting or undermining the woman’s case. **Like the Document Analysis this paper is due the week after we examine the figure.**

**Final Paper:** This 12-15-page research paper will deal with some aspect of a trial that we have studied in the course in more depth. You will create an original research paper with a strong argument about the importance of the trial in shaping how we understand race, class, and gender during a given era. You will submit the research paper topic and bibliography for approval before the end of the semester.

**Grading:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written Analysis</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Paper</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media Analyses</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual Analysis</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Class Attendance:**
Regular attendance in class is absolutely necessary. Furthermore, you are expected to come to class having read the material and prepared to engage with the assigned texts. Multiple absences will count against you. Please notify me in advance (if possible) if you know that you will need to be absent from class. **After one unexcused absence, I will begin deducting 1/3 of a letter grade off your final participation grade for every missed class.**

**Plagiarism Policy:**
Each student is expected to complete all stages of work. Taking the words of others, or presenting the ideas of others as your own is a violation of the University’s Academic Conduct Code. It is your responsibility to understand all of the provisions of the CAS Academic Conduct Code. **The minimum penalty for such offenses is to fail the assignment; the more common penalty is to fail the course.**

**Accessibility:**
If you are a student requiring accommodations for a disability, please let me know as soon as possible. The Office of Disability Services is available to assist you and may be contacted at 353-3658.

**Late Policy:**
Late work will be penalized a half grade for every 24 hours for which it remains outstanding. For example: A late A paper will receive the grade of A-, an A- paper a B+, etc.

**Email and Electronics Policy:**
Email communication with the instructor should be considered formal, similar to other business-style correspondence. You should remember to include a proper salutation and sign your name at the end of the email. I will usually be able to answer emails within 24 hours except for weekends and holidays. **I typically will not respond to email between 8pm and 8am.**

You are permitted to use electronic devices and laptops to take notes during the lecture portion of our class. **I reserve the right to ask you to discontinue the use of devices during class discussion or ban them if students are caught engaging in non-academic activity.**
Course Schedule

Week 1, September 12th: Welcome and Introductions
- Celia: A Slave, chapters 1-4.

Week 2, September 19th: The Trial of Celia the Slave
- Celia: A Slave, chapters 5-8 (no conclusion)

Week 3, September 26th: The Trial of Hannah Mary Tabbs
- Hannah Mary Tabbs and the Disembodied Torso: A Tale of Race, Sex, and Violence in America

Week 4, October 3rd: The Trial of Alice Jones
- Property Rites, chapters 1-6, and 9.
- Jamie L. Wacks, “Reading Race, Rhetoric, and the Female Body in the Rhinelander Case,” (BL)

Week 4: Substitute class: TUESDAY October 11th: The Trial of Rosa Lee Ingram
- “Mother, Teen Aged Sons, To Die in Electric Chair, Protests Hit Verdict in Farm Killing,” Chicago Defender, 7 February 1948, 1.
- “Nation Rallies to Doomed Widow,” Pittsburgh Courier, 6 March 1948, 1.
- “New Trial Motion For Doomed Ingars, Feb. 21,” Atlanta Daily World, 10 February 1948, 1.

Week 5, October 17th: The Trial of Rosa Parks
- Rosa Parks, “You’re Under Arrest” and “They’ve Messed with the Wrong One Now” in My Story, 108-125 (BL)
- Marissa Chapell, Jenny Hutchinson, and Brian Ward, “‘Dress modestly, neatly … as if you were going to church’: Respectability, Class, and Gender in the Montgomery Bus Boycott and Early Civil Rights Movement,” Gender and the Civil Rights Movement, 69-102 (BL)
Week 6, October 24th: The Trial of Angela Davis
- Bettina Aptheker, “Prologue” and “The Trial” in *The Morning Breaks: The Trial of Angela Davis* (BL)
- *Each student should bring in 2 news media articles about the Angela Davis trial for discussion in addition to their media analysis. One should be sympathetic to Davis, the other should not be.*

Week 7, October 31st: The Trial of Joan Little
- Genna Rae McNeil, ““Joanne is You and Joanne is Me”: A Consideration of African American Women and the Free Joan Little Movement” in *Sisters in the Struggle: African American Women in the Civil Rights/ Black Power Movement*, 259-279 (online BU library)
- Angela Davis, “Joan Little and the Dialectics of Rape,” *Ms. Magazine* Spring 2002 (online)
- “The Joan Little Case: In a small southern town, the night jailer is found murdered, his black woman prisoner gone, did she kill to escape or to resist rape?” *New York Times*, 6 April 1975, 240.

Week 8, November 7th: The Trial of Anita Hill
- **In Class:** Watch *Anita: Speaking Truth to Power*
- Excerpts from Anita Hill, *Speaking Truth to Power,* (BL)

Week 9, November 14th: Rachel Jeantel on Trial
- Jelani Cobb, “Rachel Jeantel On Trial,” *New Yorker Magazine*, 27 June 2013 (online)
- Sarah Muller, “Zimmerman Case: Is Rachel Jeantel on Trial Too?” *MSNBC.com*, June 29, 2013 (online)
- “Trayvon Martin Case: How Rachel Jeantel went from Star Witness to ‘train wreck’” *Christian Science Monitor*, June 29, 2014 (Online)

Week 10, November 21st: Individual Meetings about Research Papers
- During the class period you will meet with the instructor individually about your paper
- Bring thesis statement and short bibliography to class for meeting.
Week 11, November 28th: The Trial of Marissa Alexander
- Kristen T. Edwards, “Is It ‘Marissa’ or ‘Michelle’”: Black Women as Accessory to Black Manhood in *Trayvon Martin: Race, and American Justice* (online BU library)
- Marissa Alexander, “In Her Own Words: Marissa Alexander Tells Her Story,” *Essence*, March 4, 2015 (online)
- Sean Davis, “No Marissa Alexander’s Conviction Was Not a ‘Reverse Trayvon Martin’ Case in Florida,” *Media Trackers* July 16, 2013 (online)

Week 12, December 5th: The Trial of Cece McDonald
- “Cece McDonald Murder Trial,” *Citypages*, May 9, 2012 (online)
- “The Transgender Crucible,” *Rolling Stone*, July 30, 2014 (online)
- Valerie Jenness et. al, “Cinderella, Wilma Flinstone, and Xena the Warrior Princess: Capturing diversity among transgender women in men’s prisons.” (BL)
- Susan Stryker, *Transgender History*, chapters 1 and 2 (online through BU Libraries)

Week 13: December 12th: The Trial of the NJ4

*****Final Paper Due December 18th 8pm****