

# AFR 374D/ HIS 350R/ WGS 340

## Black Women on Trial

---

### UT-Austin, Spring 2019

**Instructor:** Dr. Ashley D. Farmer  
**She/ Her/ Hers**

#### **Course Description:**

This seminar course provides an overview of race, class, gender, and sexuality constructs in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> 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:**

1. **Melton McLaurin**, *Celia: A Slave* (also available online via UT libraries)
2. **Kali Gross**, *Hannah Mary Tabbs and the Disembodied Torso: A Tale of Race, Sex, and Violence in America*
3. **Elizabeth M. Smith-Pryor**, *Property Rites: The Rhinelander Trial, Passing, and the Protection of Whiteness*
4. **All other readings accessed Canvas or online**

#### **Grading:**

<b>Class Attendance</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>Weekly Media Analysis:</b>	<b>15%</b>
<b>Class Participation:</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>Visual Analysis:</b>	<b>15%</b>
<b>Document Analysis:</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>Final Paper:</b>	<b>25%</b>

**Class Attendance:**

Regular attendance in class is very important. 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 provided.*** This policy can be updated on a case-by-case basis for students with accommodations.

**Class Participation:**

Your participation grade will be calculated based on your contributions to in-class discussion, critical engagement in our group activities, and thoughtful participation during our in-class practicums. Often times, we will perform written tasks or activities that will be collected and recorded as part of your participation grade.

**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 between 200 and 500 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 6 p.m. on the Sunday before class via CANVAS.**

**Posts will be assessed as follows:**

**0 points:** No post for the week

**1 point: LATE, but includes:** Link to article/video, main argument/ summary of media

**2 points: ON TIME and includes:** Link to article/video, main argument/ summary of media **AND** reflection on/ analysis of media

**3 points: ON TIME and includes:** Link to article/video, main argument of media, reflection on media **AND** meaningful connection to course readings and discussion.

- **Note:** you are not required to turn in a media analysis Week 1, Week 9 (spring break), or Week 12 (research paper workshop)

**Document Analysis: Rolling Deadline**

This is a 5-7-page paper on a textual primary source document. This can be a document we have used in class or one you locate on your own. 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. For example, you write about Alice Jones, your paper will be due on Monday February 18<sup>th</sup>**

**Visual Analysis: Rolling Deadline**

This is a 5-7-page paper that analyzes an image of one of the women we studied in the course. This can be an image we have discussed in class or one that you locate on your own. Possible images include photographs, posters, drawings, cartoons, and political caricatures of the figure in question.

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: Due May 17<sup>th</sup> via CANVAS by 5pm**

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 source material for approval on the dates listed below.

**Revisions:**

Students can rewrite the Document and Visual Analysis assignments if they so choose. The revised paper is due ***one week after the student turned in the original draft.***

- Revised papers turned in late will be graded according the late policy listed below
- Revised papers also must include a **one-paragraph synopsis** of the revisions made based on the comments from the original paper. Revisions that do not include the one-paragraph memo will be considered incomplete

## **Rules, Regulations, and Respect:**

### **Late Assignment Policy:**

Please contact me advance of an assignment's due date if you think that you will have difficulty meeting a particular deadline. ***All assignments submitted late without permission will automatically be marked down one half grade per day.***

### **Academic Integrity:**

The University's *Institutional Rules* (Section 11-802(d)) define plagiarism as including, "but not limited to, the appropriation of, buying, receiving as a gift, or obtaining by any other means material that is attributable in whole or in part to another source . . . and presenting that material as one's own academic work offered for credit." In other words, "**handing in someone else's work and taking credit for it as if it were your own.**" (Source: History Department statement on Academic Integrity).

Students who violate University rules on academic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and/or dismissal from the University. Since such dishonesty harms the individual, all students, and the integrity of the University, policies on academic dishonesty will be strictly enforced. For further information, please visit the Student Conduct and Academic Integrity website at: <http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/conduct>.

### **Accessibility:**

This course is intended for all students at UT Austin. This includes those with mental, physical, or cognitive disabilities, illness, injuries, impairments, or any other condition that tends to negatively affect one's equal access to education. If, at any point in the semester, you find yourself not able to fully access the space, content, and experience of this course, you are welcome (but not required!) to contact me by email, phone, or during office hours to discuss your specific needs. I also encourage you to contact Services for Students with Disabilities at 471-6259 (voice) or 232-2937 (video phone) or <http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd>.

### **Preferred Names and Pronouns:**

Courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, culture, religion, politics, sexual orientation, gender, gender variance, and nationalities. Class rosters are provided to the instructor by the university. I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records.

### **Religious Holy Days**

Religious holy days sometimes conflict with class. Students will be excused from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose. University policy required students to notify each of their instructors as far in advance of the absence as possible so that arrangements can be made.

### **E-mail Correspondence:**

E-mail is recognized as an official mode of university correspondence; therefore, you are responsible for reading your e-mail for university and course-related information and announcements. You are responsible to keep the university informed about changes to your e-mail address. Email communication with should be considered formal, and follow the conventions of professional emails. I will usually be able to answer emails within 24 hours except for weekends and holidays.

## Course Schedule

### Week 1: Introductions

**Wednesday, January 23<sup>rd</sup>**

- Welcome and Introductions

### Week 2: The Trial of Celia the Slave

**Monday, January 28<sup>th</sup>**

- *Celia: A Slave*, chapters 1-4.

**Wednesday, January 30<sup>th</sup>**

- *Celia: A Slave*, chapters 5-8 (no conclusion)
- Brenda Stevens, "What's Love Got to Do with It? Concubinage and Enslaved Women and Girls in the Antebellum South," *Journal of African American History* 98:1 (Winter 2013): 99 – 125. (CANVAS)

### Week 3: The Trial of Hannah Mary Tabbs

**Monday, February 4<sup>th</sup>**

- *Hannah Mary Tabbs and the Disembodied Torso*, Prologue & Chapters 1-3

**Wednesday, February 6<sup>th</sup>**

- *Hannah Mary Tabbs and the Disembodied Torso*, Chapters 4-6 & Epilogue

### Week 4: The Trial of Alice Jones

**Monday, February 11<sup>th</sup>**

- *Property Rites*, Chapters 1-4

**Wednesday, February 13<sup>th</sup>**

- *Property Rites*, Chapters 5-6, and 9
- Jamie L. Wacks, "Reading Race, Rhetoric, and the Female Body in the *Rhineland* Case," (CANVAS)

### Week 5: The Trial of Rosa Lee Ingram

#### Monday, February 18<sup>th</sup>

- Erik S. McDuffie, "A New Freedom Movement of Negro Women": Sojourning for Truth and Justice, and Human Rights During the Early Cold War," *Radical History Review* (Spring 2008): 81-106. (CANVAS)
- Charles H. Martin, "Race, Gender, and Southern Justice: The Rosa Lee Ingram Case" *American Journal of Legal History* (July 1985): 251-268. (CANVAS)

#### Wednesday, February 20<sup>th</sup>

- We will review the Research Paper guidelines & discuss potential topics and methods for finding source material

### Week 6: The Trial of Rosa Parks

#### Monday, February 25<sup>th</sup>

- Jo Ann Robinson, "The Origin of the Trouble" in *The Montgomery Bus Boycott and the Women Who Started It* (CANVAS)
- Jeanne Theoharis, "'A Life of Being Rebellious:' The Radicalism of Rosa Parks" (CANVAS)

#### Wednesday, February 27<sup>th</sup>

- 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 (CANVAS)

### Week 7: The Trial of Angela Davis

#### Monday, March 4<sup>th</sup>

- Bettina Aptheker, "Prologue" and "The Trial" in *The Morning Breaks: The Trial of Angela Davis* (CANVAS)

#### Wednesday, March 6<sup>th</sup>

- Angela Davis, "Afro Images: Politics, Fashion, Nostalgia" in *Soul: Black Power: Politics and Pleasure*, 23-31 (CANVAS)

### Week 8: The Trial of Joan Little

#### Monday, March 11<sup>th</sup>

- Genna Rae McNeil, "'Joanne is You and Joanne is Me': A Consideration of African American Women and the Free Joan Little Movement" (CANVAS)

#### Wednesday, March 13<sup>th</sup>

- Danielle McGuire, "'It was Like All of Us Had Been Raped: Sexual Violence, Community Mobilization, and the African American Freedom Struggle,'" *Journal of American History* (December 2001): 906-931. (CANVAS)
- Angela Davis, "Joan Little and the Dialectics of Rape," *Ms. Magazine* Spring 2002 (online)

### Week 9: Spring Break

### Week 10: The Trial of Anita Hill

#### Monday, March 25<sup>th</sup>

- Excerpts from Anita Hill, *Speaking Truth to Power* (CANVAS)
- Whaneema Lubiano, "Black Ladies, Welfare Queens, and State Minstrels: Ideological War by Narrative Means," (CANVAS)

#### Wednesday, March 27<sup>th</sup>

- **In-class** film analysis, *Anita*

### Week 11: Rachel Jeantel on Trial

#### Monday, April 1<sup>st</sup>

- Jennifer Nash, "Unwidowing: Rachel Jeantel, Black Death, and the 'Problem' of Black Intimacy," *Signs* 41: 4 (2016): 751-774 (CANVAS)
- Sarah Muller, "Zimmerman Case: Is Rachel Jeantel on Trial Too?" *MSNBC.com*, June 29, 2013 (online)

#### Wednesday, April 3<sup>rd</sup>

- "Trayvon Martin Case: How Rachel Jeantel went from Star Witness to 'train wreck'" *Christian Science Monitor*, June 29, 2014 (Online)
- Alexander Abad-Santos, "My Star Witness is Black: Rachael Jeantel Testimony Makes Trayvon Martin a Show Trial," *The Atlantic*, 27 June 2013 (Online)
- Jelani Cobb, "Rachel Jeantel On Trial," *New Yorker Magazine*, 27 June 2013 (online)

## Week 12: Research Paper Development

### Monday, April 8<sup>th</sup>

- Bring to class, 1 page statement that includes:
  - 2 possible research topics
  - 3 primary and 2 secondary sources for each of the 2 topics
  - 1-2 written Questions/ concerns you have about pursuing your research topic

### Wednesday, April 10<sup>th</sup>

- Bring to class, 1 page that includes:
  - Updated topic & source list based on Tuesday's discussion
  - Possible thesis statement
  - 2-paragraph summary of steps for research

## Week 13: The Trial of Marissa Alexander

### Monday, April 15<sup>th</sup>:

- Kali Gross, "African American Women, Mass Incarceration, and the Politics of Protection," *Journal of American History* 102: 1 (June 2015): 25–33. **(CANVAS)**
- Marissa Alexander, "In Her Own Words: Marissa Alexander Tells Her Story," *Essence*, March 4, 2015 **(online)**

### Wednesday, April 17<sup>th</sup>:

- Kristen T. Edwards, "Is It 'Marissa' or 'Michelle'": Black Women as Accessory to Black Manhood in *Trayvon Martin: Race, and American Justice* **(CANVAS)**
- Sean Davis, "No Marissa Alexander's Conviction Was Not a 'Reverse Trayvon Martin' Case in Florida," *Media Trackers* July 16, 2013 **(online)**

## Week 14: The Trial of Cece McDonald

### Monday, April 22<sup>nd</sup>

- "The Transgender Crucible," *Rolling Stone*, July 30, 2014 **(online)**

### Wednesday April 24<sup>th</sup>

- "Cece McDonald Murder Trial," *Citypages*, May 9, 2012 **(online)**



### Week 15: The Trial of the NJ4

#### Monday, April 29<sup>th</sup>

- “Four Women Are Convicted in Attack on Man in Village,” *New York Times*, April 19, 2007 (**online**)
- “Lesbian Wolfpack Guilty,” *New York Daily News*, April 19, 2007 (**online**)

#### Wednesday, May 1<sup>st</sup>

- **In-class** film analysis, *Out in the Night*

### Week 16: Cyntoia Brown

#### Monday, May 6<sup>th</sup>

- Andrea Ritchie, *Invisible No More*, chapter 7, “Policing Sex” (**CANVAS**)
- “Cyntoia Brown, Serving life for murder, asks Tennessee Parole Board for Clemency: A Look at her Case,” *FoxNews.com*, May 23, 2018. (**Online**)
- “Parole Board Is Divided on Cyntoia Brown, Trafficking Victim Serving Life Sentence for Murder,” *New York Times*, May 23, 2018 (**Online**)

#### Wednesday, May 8<sup>th</sup>

- **In class** film analysis, Clips from *Me Facing Life: Cyntoia’s Story*

\*\*\*\*Final Paper Due Friday May 17<sup>th</sup> by 5pm via CANVAS \*\*\*\*