

U.S. Women's History Crime Project

Students will create a fictional court case trying a fictional not so well-behaved woman in U.S. history. You will bring charges, hold her trial, cover the event in newspapers, and ultimately decide her fate. This assignment is meant to be creative and develop students' analytical, research, and communication skills. All projects are expected to incorporate diverse perspectives. All topics and ideas must be approved by me first. Detailed assignment instructions can be found under "Resources" on the course LMS page.

The Crime Project is worth 1,000 total points and 60% of your total final grade.

- Topic Due: February 7 paper copy in class
- Bibliography Due: February 11 paper copy in class
- Formal Charges Due: February 16 paper copy in class
- Biographies Due: February 25 paper copy in class
- Trial Transcript (Prosecution) Due: March 25 paper copy in class
- Trial Transcript (Defense) Due: April 22 paper copy in class
- Newspaper Coverage Due: April 27 paper copy in class
- Jury & Findings Due: May 2 paper copy in class
- Analysis Essay Due: May 9 paper copy in class
- Final Project Due: May 16 paper copy in class

Assignment Specifications:

- Bring a printed, preferably double-sided copy to class
- Double-spaced (unless noted otherwise)
- 12 pt. font size
- Georgia or Times New Roman font style
- 1-inch margins all around
- At the top of the document include the following information, single-spaced
 - [Insert Your Name]
 - HIS 301: US Women's History
 - Crime Project: [Insert Assignment Component]
 - [Due Date of Assignment Component]

Topic (Due February 7): You will write a one-paragraph summary of your topic. Your summary needs to include a brief background of the accused, the victim, and the crime the accused supposedly committed. You also need to place your topic in its historical context and explain its historical significance. Remember, this is a US women's history class; therefore, your topic must fall within the United States, but any time period is acceptable.

Bibliography (Due February 11): You will create a bibliography conforming to the Chicago Manual of Style. Your bibliography needs to be divided into Primary Sources and Secondary Sources. You will identify and cite six primary sources and four secondary sources. Citations are single spaced with a gap between each entry.

Formal Charges (Due February 16): Submit a revised summary of your topic based on my feedback. Your summary needs to include a brief background of the accused, the victim, and the crime the accused supposedly committed. You also need to place your topic in its historical context and explain its historical significance. You will also now need to include a summary of the formal charges for your project. You need to identify a real-life law/s the defendant is accused of breaking and cite the law and explain it.

Biographies (Due February 25): You will write no more than one-page biographies for the accused, the victim, and four witnesses. Biographies must include their race, class, and gender. Include relevant details to help explain each character's world view, such as family background, the type of labor they do, their current relationships, etc. You also need to include no more than one-page biographies for two expert witnesses. In this case, these people will be real life, contemporary historians that you cited in the Secondary Sources section of your bibliography. Identify them, explain their academic background and credentials, and explain how their scholarship is relevant to your case.

Trial Transcript (Prosecution) (Due March 25): You will write a 3-4 page trial transcript for the prosecution. The transcript should be single spaced with a single gap between each person's dialogue, like a script.

The trial should include the following components:

- Opening Statement from the Prosecution

- Opening Statement from the Defense
- Prosecution's Witness Testimony

Opening Statements: You need to begin the trial with opening statements first from the prosecution and then the defense. Each statement should be approximately one paragraph long and is designed to lay out the case each side is going to present.

Witness Testimony: You need to include testimony from two pro-prosecution witnesses and the victim in this section. Remember, this is the half of the trial where the prosecution presents their case, so the witnesses you identify should be pro-prosecution and the testimony should lend itself toward supporting the prosecution's case.

Expert Testimony: You need to include testimony from one pro-prosecution expert witness. Establish who they are and how they are an expert in this case. You need to use their research to help the jury understand the racial, class, and gendered components happening in the case. Remember that they will also be cross-examined, so be prepared to represent their arguments in response to the cross examination. Historians argue with each other in their writing, and you should draw from those historiographical arguments to write the expert testimony.

Note: Your trial transcript needs to be narrative in nature, meaning you cannot fill page requirements through a litany of yes-no questions and answers. It should also be clear from your trial how different groups of people defined gender and understood women's place within society.

Trial Transcript (Defense) (Due April 22): You will write a 3-4 page trial transcript for the defense. The transcript should be single spaced with a single gap between each person's dialogue, like a script.

The trial should include the following components:

- Witness Testimony
- Closing Statement from the Prosecution
- Closing Statement from the Defense

Witness Testimony: You need to include testimony from the other two pro-defense witnesses and the accused in this section. Remember, this is the half of the trial where the defense presents their case, so the

witnesses you identify should be pro-defense and the testimony should lend itself toward supporting the defense' case.

Expert Testimony: You need to include testimony from another pro-defense expert witness. Establish who they are and how they are an expert in this case. You need to use their research to help the jury understand the racial, class, and gendered components happening in the case. Remember that they will also be cross-examined, so be prepared to represent their arguments in response to the cross examination. Historians argue with each other in their writing, and you should draw from those historiographical arguments to write the expert testimony.

Note: Your trial transcript needs to be narrative in nature, meaning you cannot fill page requirements through a litany of yes-no questions and answers. It should also be clear from your trial how different groups of people defined gender and understood women's place within society.

Closing Statements: You need to end the trial with closing statements from first the prosecution and then the defense. Each statement should be approximately one paragraph long and is designed to summarize the case each side presented.

Newspaper Coverage (Due April 27): You will write four news articles covering the trial. The news "format" is up to you, and you can combine a variety of types, including but not limited to newspaper coverage, radio coverage, television, social media, etc. The news articles should be written to represent a perspective/slant in their coverage of the event, and you should strive for diversity in that coverage over the four news articles. Your news coverage should demonstrate how Americans used gendered language and saw their society through a gendered (but also intersectional lens). Each piece should be 1-2 pages long.

Jury & Findings (Due May 2): You will write a one-page explanation of the findings in the case. Include whether the defendant was found guilty or not guilty of the crime but also include whether they were actually guilty of the crime. You also need to include an explanation of the jury in your trial. What groups of people made up the jury? Explain how those groups viewed the case and whether they were a monolith. Make sure that those people in your jury would be allowed to serve on a jury in the time period you selected.

Analysis Essay (Due May 9): You will write a 2-3 page essay explaining how your trial reflects the historical context of the time period it was in and what it tells us about women in US history and how gender roles were constructed and redefined. Highlight the choices you made in crafting your trial to illustrate these points. You may write this section in the first person to explain your choices.

Final Project (Due May 16): You will combine all of the above components and submit them as the final version of your project. I highly suggest you take the time to edit and revise throughout the semester based on the feedback I give you. Editing and revising soon after I issue you your feedback is the most effective way to implement my comments because the information will be fresh but it will also help you stay on top of the project (rather than trying to do all revisions right before it is due on top of writing the explanatory essay). I am always available to look over drafts and help you revise as you go along.