The Department of African American Studies is proud to present award-winning writer, sociologist, and cultural critic, professor with the Center for Information, Technology and Public Life at UNC Chapel Hill and MacArthur Fellow, Dr. Tressie McMillan Cottom as their keynote speaker for the annual Robert Smalls Lecture on Thursday, March 23, 2023.

In addition to holding the prestigious MacArthur Fellowship, Dr. McMillan Cottom is a New York Times Opinion Columnist, and author of the award-winning book, *Thick: And Other Essays*. Dr. McMillan Cottom is celebrated for her profound yet personal ideas and the dynamic accessibility of her analyses.

Dr. McMillan Cottom’s first book, *Lower Ed: The Troubling Rise of For-Profit Colleges in the New Economy*, led to appearances on The Daily Show, NPR's Marketplace and Fresh Air, and has been name-checked by Senators Bernie Sanders and Elizabeth Warren and activists like The Debt Strike Collective. *Thick* became a Finalist for the 2019 National Book Award. The following year, Dr. McMillan Cottom received a MacArthur Foundation Fellowship – known as the “genius grant.” She is prolific – beyond her books and celebrated New York Times opinion column, she has written a Substack newsletter, “Essaying,” co-hosted the Black feminist podcast *Hear to Slay* with Roxane Gay, and has been a guest host for *The Ezra Klein Show*.

(The event will be live streamed for those unable to attend in person)