

WINTER 2015 COLLOQUIA SERIES

Date: Wednesday, March 4

Time: 3:15-4:45PM

Location: Social Sciences 1, room 261



Dr. Duana Fullwiley

Associate Professor of Anthropology, Stanford University

The New Race: Human Difference, American Genome Politics, & Modern Progress

Since the early 2000's the Western world has seen a resurgence of racial difference discourse within genetic science, and within medicine more broadly. Many scientific professionals argue that cataloging human biological difference through logics of race is exceedingly important to determine the genetic basis for health disparities. This turn of embracing potentially racialized biology to help, heal, and empower U.S. minorities marks a curious shift in the history and culture of science.

Through ethnographic study in several U.S. laboratories, I examine how geneticists go about trying to understand health disparities that disproportionately affect American minorities. I discuss the social processes that are embedded in the scaffolding of their models, which tease out human genetic difference by continent of origin through comparisons of DNA taken from people who are thought to typify American racial categories. I will also examine how other scientists have held out the promise that full genome sequences "for all" might deliver us beyond racial thinking with personal genomics. I conclude by noting the potential political contradictions and tensions that operate at the core of certain DNA technologies and research sorting practices. At issue is how to best research human genome diversity in a cultural context that aspires to multicultural diversity within the U.S. At stake is how ideals of democratic inclusion and equal representation, with regard to DNA procurement and analysis for health problems, can paradoxically constrain and even undermine antiracist thinking when is race literally constructed (digitally, materially, and virtually) as "biological."

Duana Fullwiley is an anthropologist of science and medicine interested in how social identities, health outcomes, and molecular genetic findings increasingly intersect. Her first book, *The Enculturated Gene: Sickle Cell Health Politics and Biological Difference in West Africa* (Princeton, 2011), which examines how structural adjustment policies in Africa affected both the lived experiences of sickle cell patients in Senegal and the genetic science about them, was awarded prizes by the American Anthropological Association and The Royal Anthropological Institute. She is currently finishing her second book entitled *Tabula Raza: Mapping Race and Human Diversity in American Genome Science*. Her work has been funded by the National Science Foundation, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the Social Science Research Council, the Andrew and Florence White Fellows program in Medicine and the Humanities, the Ford Foundation, and the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research. She has also been an invited scholar at the Centre de *Sociologie de l'Innovation* in Paris (1997-1998, 2000 and 2002), a USIA Fulbright Scholar to Senegal, a fellow at the School of Social Science at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton (2004-2005), and a Robert Wood Johnson Health and Society Scholar at the Harvard School of Public Health (2005-2007). She recently completed a Scholars Award in NSF's Science, Technology & Society Program.