

**Genetics & Society:** On Origins and Identity—The Science and Ethics of Ancestry DNA Testing | The 2025

Walter and Susan Schenker Seminar in the Humanities

**Faculty:** Michell Chresfield, Assistant Professor, Africana Studies & Research Center

**Week Two:** July 13 - 19, 2025

**Schedule:** Monday - Friday, 9-12 and 1:30-3:30, except Wednesday afternoon.

**Location:** On campus, Kennedy Hall 101

Welcome to Genetics & Culture!

My name is Dr. Michell Chresfield, and I am an assistant professor of 20<sup>th</sup> Afro-Native history and the history of science. I am delighted to have you join this timely and thought-provoking course designed especially for those interested in how new scientific tools are reshaping age-old questions about family, history, and identity.

Whether you're an avid genealogist, someone curious about a recent DNA test, or simply interested in the cultural and ethical questions surrounding ancestry, this course offers a space for meaningful exploration and reflection. Over five days, we'll examine how advances in genetic testing intersect with memory, belonging, race, and the human desire to know where we come from.

Together, we'll:

- Trace the rise of genealogical and DNA ancestry testing
- Revisit personal and collective histories
- Consider how communities—Indigenous, diasporic, and otherwise—navigate these technologies
- Explore what happens when science both confirms and disrupts our sense of self

Through engaging discussions, interactive activities, and accessible readings, we'll not only look back—but we'll also ask how we carry these stories forward.

Feel free to reach out should you have any questions. In the meantime, I'm very much looking forward to a week of discovery, dialogue, and connection.

Until soon,

MC