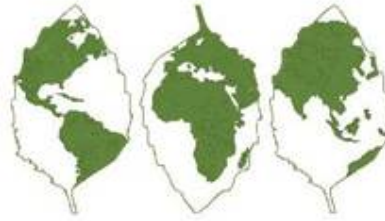


“KNOW-THYSELF: GENETIC ANTHROPOLOGY AND THE POLITICS OF GENEALOGY”



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Recent years have witnessed an explosion of research in “genetic history.” By analyzing diversity at the molecular level, genetic anthropologists seek to reconstruct recent population-specific genealogies. In turn, the field has generated a commercial industry in which people can “test themselves” to discover their racial/ethnic origins and their likely relatedness to particular individuals. From the perspective of studies of Jewish origins that I analyze in the context of a shifting terrain of identity politics, this paper considers some of the social and political implications of genetic history as a scientific pursuit and a cultural practice. Who is the genetic anthropological subject? What does it mean to “know-oneself” on the basis of genetic anthropological knowledge? What does one actually come to know?

Nadia Abu El-Haj is Associate Professor of Anthropology at Barnard College and Columbia University. She held fellowships at Harvard University's Academy for International and Area Studies, the University of Pennsylvania Mellon Program, and the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton. She is also a former Fulbright Fellow and a recipient of awards from the SSRC-McArthur Grant in International Peace and Security, the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research, and the National Endowment for the Humanities among others. Her book entitled Facts on the Ground: Archaeological Practice and Territorial Self-Fashioning in Israeli Society won in 2001 the Middle East Studies Association's Albert Hourani Annual Book Award for the best book published on the Middle East that year. Her research focuses on intersection of race, diaspora, kinship and archeology with special attention to the relationship between scientific knowledge and the making of social imaginations and political orders, nationalist claims to recognition and redress, and migration. Among her other publications are "The Genetic Reinscription of Race," "Edward Said and the Political Present," "Producing (Arti)Facts: Archaeology and Power during the British Mandate of Palestine.

Friday

May 8th, 3:15 - 5:00 PM

Conference Room, Bldg. 50, Rm. 51A

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