Conference/Call for Proposals:
DNA, RACE, AND HISTORY (Friday-Saturday, April 18-19, 2008)
Center for Race and Ethnicity, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ
Paper proposals (REVISED DUE DATE: JANUARY 10, 2008)

Organizers:
• Keith Wailoo, Director, Center for Race and Ethnicity/History/Health Policy, Rutgers
• Mia Bay, Associate Director, Center for Race and Ethnicity/History, Rutgers
• Catherine Lee, Sociology, Rutgers
• Alondra Nelson, African-American Studies and Sociology, Yale

Although scholars have long agreed that race is a social rather than genetic or biological reality, recent trends in DNA analysis have obfuscated this distinction. Today, DNA is discussed often as a proxy for race, lending renewed authority to biological understandings of race in both the present and the past. Used in fields from the genetic genealogy to anthropology and evolutionary biology, genetic evidence promises to reshape understandings of the ethnic ancestries of individuals, the collective histories and lineages of particular groups, and race relations in history. Across societies, genetic evidence is being called upon to perform a kind of racially-charged cultural work – to repair and recast the past, and to reshape identity in the present.

This conference brings together scholars from a wide range of disciplines – history, cultural studies, genetics, law, medicine, anthropology, ethnic studies, sociology, and other fields – to examine the emerging and often contested connections between race, DNA, and history.

We welcome papers on a variety of topics, including the historical use of DNA in medicine and the sciences of man, the rise and implications of DNA in genealogy and other fields, the historical uses and misuses of genetic information, the way in which DNA testing is reshaping understandings of group identity, both within and across cultural and national boundaries, and the cultural, ethical, social, and philosophical challenges raised by relying upon DNA to resolve questions of history and identity.

The DNA, RACE, AND HISTORY conference will consist of a series of intensive panel discussions of short pre-circulated papers (15-30 pages).

Paper proposals (DUE by JANUARY 10, 2008) should be no more than 1-2 pages in length, should engage intersections between race, history, and the mapping, testing, analysis, and cultural meanings of DNA, and should provide a platform for broad, cross-disciplinary discussion.

Travel and accommodation expenses relating to conference will be covered by the Center for Race and Ethnicity. Interested participants are asked to submit their paper proposals to the Center at raceethnicity@sas.rutgers.edu. We expect that an edited volume will be published from the proceedings.