

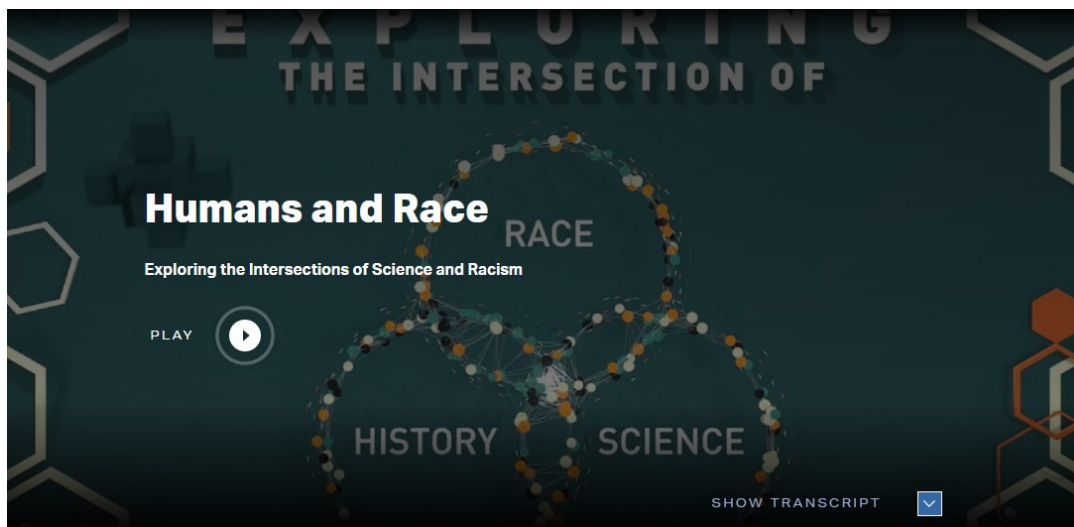
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Humans & Race: Exploring the Intersections of Science and Racism

Watch the first of AAAS-DoSER's "Humans & Race" video series, which introduces themes of the past and present as it intersects with science and racism.

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VIDEO
EVOLUTION & LIFE SCIENCES
SOCIAL SCIENCES
MEDICINE & HEALTH
GENETICS & EPIGENETICS
HISTORY OF SCIENCE
PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT
ETHICS
3:06



Introducing "Humans and Race," the first of DoSER's video series exploring the past and present intersections of science and racism. How many variations do we as human species actually have? Is race biological? In which ways is race "real" and in which ways is it not? Answer these questions and more here with our featured experts.

VIDEO TRANSCRIPT

Joseph L. Graves Jr.: Our species, anatomically modern humans, are a young species with very little genetic variation. Would you like to know how little? We have less genetic variation than one group of Western African chimpanzees. Our species, in fact, really does not have biological races.

Agustín Fuentes: So humans present this conundrum. Science helps us in saying race, right? Black, White, Asian, are not biological units. So how is it that humans can be so widespread and look so different, and yet share so much in common? That's a huge challenge for science to figure out because that's not the typical pattern for mammals.

Jada Benn Torres: My job as an educator is to understand the ways in which race is real and the ways in which it's not real. It is a lived experience. It does have impacts on our biology, but it is not biology.

Joseph L. Graves Jr.: Americans routinely conflate socially defined and biological conceptions of race. They are not the same thing.

Agustín Fuentes: That's what's hard for people to understand, that these social constructs, these ways of being, these structures of history, and politics, and economics, and health are very, very real, but they're not explained by our biology.

Jada Benn Torres: Science certainly has been responsible for some of the ideas that we have about race, about thinking about human difference, some that have particularly been damaging to too many communities. So I think science has both a role and a responsibility in mitigating that damage.

Joseph L. Graves Jr.: Racial ideas have been at the root of so much discord in human history.

Agustín Fuentes: Their science was filtered through a racist, colonialist bias that they had doing the work.

Joseph L. Graves Jr.: And the tragedy of our past racial thinking is that we have taken what are essentially superficial, physical traits and we've imputed great significance to them.

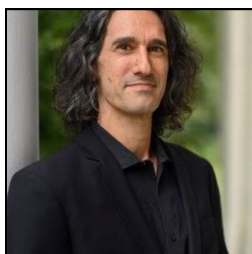
Agustín Fuentes: So understanding the science behind human variation allows you to dispel the myth of race.

Jada Benn Torres: Now, genetics have become a tool where we can explore distant relationships. It can upend the narrative and really cause us to question what we think we know.

Joseph L. Graves Jr.: When we dismantle racist concepts, it makes us a whole lot easier for us to be able to view other human beings as precisely that, people who have the same aspirations as I do.

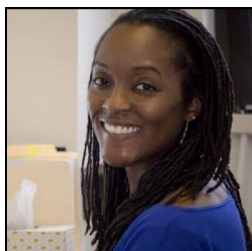
Agustín Fuentes: Once you've dispelled the biological underpinning for inequality in this country, you're then faced with a political, historical, and social reality. And as a moral and ethical imperative, you have to deal with that. And that's why it's so hard to teach race and racism because people don't want to deal with how messed up we are and how hard it is to get out of this hole we've dug for ourselves.

Featured Scholars:



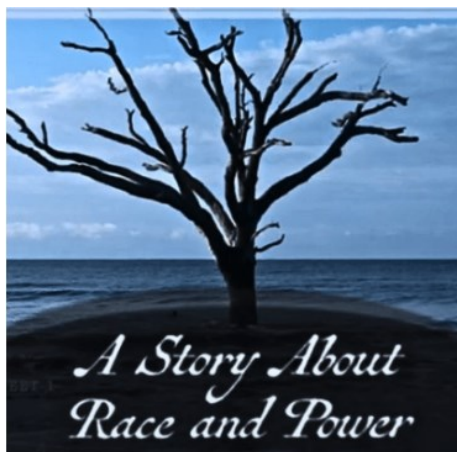
Agustín Fuentes, PhD
Professor of Anthropology
Princeton University

Joseph L. Graves Jr., PhD
Professor of Biological Sciences
AAAS Fellow: Section G: Biological Sciences
North Carolina A&T University



Jada Benn Torres, PhD
Associate Professor of Anthropology
Vanderbilt University

Watch the other videos in the series:



Science as Mastery: A Story about Race & Power

This 27-minute documentary explores the intersection of the history of race, religion, and science as it relates to social structures and civil movements. This challenging and moving short film opens the door for discussions of scientific racism of the past and present, the use of religion and science as social tools, the continuing impact of eugenics in society, and the challenges of societal progress in the face of these histories.

[Watch here.](#)

The Legacy of Racist Science in Medicine

What structures of power have influenced modern medicine? And at whose expense? In this installment of the Humans & Race video series, Dr. Deirdre Cooper Owens delves into the legacy of racist science in medicine.

[Watch here.](#)



Facilitating dialogue and engagement between scientific and religious communities on science, technology, and society.

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