Office of the Provost
College of ARTS AND SCIENCES

Freshman Seminar Learning Community

Thursday, November 19, 2009
5 p.m.
Cramton Auditorium

Dr. Fatimah L.C. Jackson

Professor of Biological Anthropology,
Director, Institute of African American Research,
The University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill

Fatimah Jackson is Professor of Anthropology and Director of the Institute of African American Research at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. Previously, she was Professor of Applied Biological Anthropology at the University of Maryland, College Park. She is one of the most important scientists studying the origins of humanity and was one of the scientists who helped map the human genome. She also was the coordinator for genetic research for the African Burial Ground Project in New York City. Having published over 30 research articles, Dr. Jackson received her B.A. from the University of Colorado, Boulder; and her M.A. and Ph.D. from Cornell University.

According to Dr. Jackson, she has tried to “ground [her] research teaching, and service-related efforts in theoretically rigorous and methodologically sound concepts that reflect my broad scientific training at Cornell University, my extensive ethnographic experiences in Tanzania, Liberia, Cameroon, and Egypt, and my ongoing interest in the human biological consequences of cultural and historic events, and environmental exposures.” She has studied and used research from geography, molecular and population genetics, ethnography, demography, history, evolutionary biology, biochemistry, toxicology, epidemiology, and public health and integrated these data in a biocultural anthropological context.

Dr. Jackson is a scientist who seeks to solve real-life problems in the African-American community, including environmental health, cancer health disparities, and hypertension-related issues. In 2002, Dr. Jackson co-founded the first human DNA bank in Africa (based at the University of Buea in Cameroon) with the aim of changing the way that anthropological genetic research is done on the African continent (moving away from the colonial approach), enhancing local infrastructure and expertise, and dramatically improving the potential for scientific understanding of the interactions of genotypes and environmental factors in producing specific phenotypes (by providing clear context for data analysis and interpretation). Dr. Jackson states that “my research interests remain theoretical and applied. It is my goal to contribute to both areas, and most importantly link application with theory, particularly within the area of applied biological anthropology.”