

# RAMAPO COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY

Office of Marketing and Communications

Press Release

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## **Ramapo College to Present “What is Black? - Deconstructing the Scientific and Social Concept of Race” as Part of African American Heritage Month**

(MAHWAH, NJ) – Ramapo College, in association with the College’s Living Learning Communities, presents “What is Black? - Deconstructing the Scientific and social Concept of Race” on Wednesday, February 22 from 2:45 to 4:45 p.m. in the H-Wing Auditorium. The event is funded by the Schomberg Scholars Program and is part of the African American Heritage Month.

The event features guest speakers Alondra Nelson of Columbia University and Monique Scott of the American Museum of Natural History in New York City.

Nelson is appointed in both the Department of Sociology and the Institute for Research on Women and Gender at Columbia University. She has written several books concerning the treatment of race in medicine and research. Her latest book, “The Social Life of DNA,” explores race, ethnicity, ancestry and genetic analysis in various social ventures, including family history projects, reparations politics, economic development schemes and transnational philanthropy.

Scott is the Assistant Director of Cultural Education in the Education Department and a Research Associate in the Department of Anthropology at the American Museum of Natural History. She is author of the book “Evolution in the Museum: Envisioning African Origins,” which considers Kenyan, British and American perceptions of human evolution exhibitions.

The lectures will address the concept of race from a scientific and social point of view. The event will also explore humanity’s predisposition of race in genetic testing, genealogy of African Americans, and human evolution. Nelson will discuss how the geneticization of race and ethnicity is often the prevailing outcome of DNA testing. Scott will address modern human origins and variation and how human evolution in popular culture communicates racially encoded messages.

The event is free and open to the public.

For more information about the event, please contact Assistant Professor of Biology Sandra Suarez via email at [ssuarez@ramapo.edu](mailto:ssuarez@ramapo.edu).

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Ranked by *U.S. News & World Report* as sixth in the Best Regional Universities North category, Ramapo College of New Jersey is sometimes mistaken for a private college. This is, in part, due to its unique interdisciplinary academic structure, its size of approximately 6,008 students and its pastoral setting in the foothills of the Ramapo Mountains on the New Jersey/New York border.

Established in 1969, Ramapo College offers bachelor's degrees in the arts, business, humanities, social sciences and the sciences, as well as in professional studies, which include nursing and social work. In addition, Ramapo College offers courses leading to teacher certification at the elementary and secondary levels. The College also offers six graduate programs as well as articulated programs with the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey, New York Chiropractic College, New York University College of Dentistry, SUNY State College of Optometry and New York College of Podiatric Medicine.