

Dr. Keel is an interdisciplinary scholar who has written widely about Euro-American science as a cultural practice inseparable from western legacies of religious belief, political governance, and racial ideology. Dr. Keel holds a joint appointment with the UCLA Institute for Society and Genetics, and the Department of African American Studies. He earned his Ph.D. from Harvard University under the Committee on the Study of Religion and the Department of the History of Science. He also holds a Masters degree in Theological Studies from Harvard Divinity School. Keel previously taught at UC Santa Barbara where he served as Vice Chair to the Department of History and was the first Black Studies Professor to receive the Harold J. Plous Award—the highest honor given to a junior faculty member in recognition for his scholarship and teaching.

His first book, [\*Divine Variations\*](#) (Stanford University Press, January 2018) explains how Christian thought made possible the development of the race concept in science while also shaping the moral and epistemic commitments embedded in the study of human biology. Keel's study demonstrates that Christian ideas about creation, ancestry, and universalism helped form the basis of modern scientific accounts of human biodiversity—despite the ostensible shift in modern biology towards scientific naturalism, objectivity, and value neutrality. He argues that modern biology has undergone an uneven process of secularization, leaving contemporary scientific theories of race haunted by a religious past that can not be fully transcended.

Dr. Keel is a recent special co-editor with George Lipsitz, of the journal [\*Kalfou\*](#) where he generated an interdisciplinary debate among social constructionists on the growing efforts of geneticists to use research on ancient humans to understand health disparities in present day Mexican people. In this issue Dr. Keel explored the prospects of a socially grounded definition of race within science compatible with radical demands for political accountability and social justice, which by necessity involves denaturalizing biological variation and prioritizing the human-made sources of our differences. In what he calls “biocritical inquiry” Dr. Keel argues that scientists interested in understanding and eliminating health disparities have a responsibility to conceptualize the social policies, political institutions, and legacies of calculated discrimination that manifest as biological difference and alter our life chances.

Dr. Keel is an affiliate of the newly formed Center for the Study of Racism, Social Justice & Health under the directorship of Dr. Chandra Ford of the UCLA Fielding School of Public Health. He also is a senior advisor to the [\*Gold Institute\*](#), a Chicago based non-profit organization that advocates globally for grassroots leadership, conflict resolution, poverty alleviation and environmental justice.