

## Maya Jasanoff



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### Public Lecture Offerings

#### **Ancestry: Where do we come from and why do we care?**

Everyone comes from somewhere. From the doctor's office to the passport office, from whom we've descended affects the biological, legal, and cultural identities of just about everybody in the world today. How did ancestry come to play such a critical role in defining status? Drawing on insights from history, anthropology, and genetics, this lecture will meditate on the human preoccupation with lineage from ancient times to the DNA tests of today.

#### **Globalization Then and Now**

It's commonplace in the 21st century to say that we live in a globalized world, interconnected (for better and worse) by people, commerce, technology, and culture. But if the term "globalization" is fairly new, the phenomenon is not. This lecture will look at the precursors to present-day globalization around 1900, when most of the 200 or so independent nation-states that fill the world today were governed by a handful of imperial powers. What can we learn from the rise and fall of empires, and what are its implications for the present?

**What have the British done to us? Empire and its legacies**

The British Empire was the largest in world history, encompassing at its height fully one in five people in the world and more than 50 of today's nations. Though it has now all but vanished from the map, its legacies shape the 21st-century world: in international borders and conflicts; in financial and commercial networks; in widespread legal practices and norms; and in the global predominance of the English language and soccer. What are the competing interpretations of British imperial history, and how should we make sense of the empire and its afterlife today?

**Classroom Discussion Topics**

History as story: the art and craft of writing historical narrative, and the relationship between history and fiction

Empires past, present—and future?: no country describes itself as an empire today, but how is imperialism still with us?

Genealogy and genetics: pros and cons of genetic ancestry testing

In addition, I'm happy to elaborate on any other aspects of the lecture topics above.