

## Alondra Nelson



Alondra Nelson is president of the Social Science Research Council. She is also the Harold F. Linder Professor of Social Science at the Institute for Advanced Study, an independent center for theoretical research and intellectual inquiry in Princeton, New Jersey. She was previously professor of sociology at Columbia University, where she served as the inaugural Dean of Social Science. Nelson began her academic career on the faculty of Yale University and there was recognized with several honors, including the Poorvu Prize for interdisciplinary teaching excellence.

An award-winning sociologist and author, Nelson has published widely-acclaimed books and articles exploring science, technology, medicine, and social inequality. Her recent publications include a symposium in the *British Journal of Sociology* on the history of slavery, genetic genealogy, and the #GU272, and articles with collaborators in the journals *PLOS: Computational Biology*, *Genetics in Medicine*, and *The Du Bois Review*. She is currently at work on a book about science and technology policy in the Obama administration.

Nelson is author of *The Social Life of DNA: Race, Reparations, and Reconciliation after the Genome*, a finalist for the Hurston/Wright Legacy Award for Nonfiction, and a *Wall Street Journal* favorite book. *The Social Life of DNA* is now available in an Arabic translation. Her books also include *Body and Soul: The Black Panther Party and the Fight against Medical Discrimination*, which was recognized with five awards, including the Komarovsky Book Award, as well as *Genetics and the Unsettled Past: The Collision of DNA, Race, and History* (with Keith Wailoo and Catherine Lee) and *Technicolor: Race, Technology, and Everyday Life* (with Thuy Linh Tu). In 2002, Nelson edited "Afrofuturism," an influential special issue of *Social Text*, drawing together contributions from scholars and artists who were members of a synonymous online community she established in 1998.

Nelson's research has been supported by the Ford Foundation, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the Woodrow Wilson Foundation, and the National Science Foundation. She has held visiting professorships and fellowships at the Max Planck Institute for the History of Science, the BIOS Centre at the London School of Economics, the Bayreuth Academy of Advanced African Studies, and the Bavarian American Academy.

Nelson has contributed to national policy discussions on inequality and the social implications of new technologies, including artificial intelligence, big data, and human gene-editing. She serves on the boards of the Data & Society Research Institute, the Center for Research Libraries, the American Assembly, and The Teagle Foundation, as well as the board for African-American programs at Monticello. She also is a member of the board of directors of the Brotherhood/Sister Sol, a Harlem-

based youth development organization. Until 2017, she was the Academic Curator for the YWCA of the City of New York and served on the organization's program committee.

A member of the editorial boards of *Social Studies of Science* and *Public Culture*, her essays, reviews, and commentary have appeared in *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *Science*, *Le Nouvel Observateur*, *The Boston Globe*, and on National Public Radio, *The New Yorker Radio Hour*, and *PBS Newshour*, among other venues. She serves on the jury for the Andrew Carnegie Fellowship and was a juror for the inaugural Aspen Words Literary Prize.

Nelson is an elected fellow of the American Academy of Political & Social Science and The Hastings Center and an elected member of the Sociological Research Association. She serves as a member of the advisory board for the Obama Presidency Oral History Project. She was formerly a member of the World Economic Forum Network on A.I., the Internet of Things, and Trust; of the NSF-sponsored Council on Big Data, Ethics, and Society; and of the Board of Governors of the the Atlantic Philanthropies Fellowship for Racial Equity. Past chair of the American Sociological Association Section on Science, Knowledge, and Technology, Nelson was previously elected to both the Executive Committee of the Eastern Sociological Society and the Council of the Society for Social Studies of Science.

Raised in Southern California, Nelson is a Phi Beta Kappa graduate of the University of California at San Diego. She earned her PhD from New York University in 2003. She lives in New York City and Princeton.