



National Institutes of Health
Office of NIH History & Stetten Museum

Dream of Controlling Human Heredity”

Presenter

Nathaniel Comfort is Professor of the History of Medicine at Johns Hopkins University. He is the author of *The Tangled Field: Barbara McClintock's Search for the Patterns of Genetic Control* (2001), editor of *The Panda's Black Box: Opening Up the Intelligent Design Controversy* (2007), and author of *The Science of Human Perfection: How Genes became the Heart of American Medicine* (2012).

Details

Thursday, Oct. 28, 2021, from 12:00 to 1:00 p.m. ET
<https://videocast.nih.gov/watch=44029>



"What a galaxy of genius might we not create!" burred Francis Galton in 1865, exuberant about his conception of a voluntary human breeding program, to be informed by Darwinism. Subpar intelligence, he was convinced, lay at the root of poverty, promiscuity, disease, and antisocial behavior of all kinds. A similar enthusiasm girds contemporary social and behavioral genetics, or "sociogenomics." In fact, every revolution in our understanding of heredity prompts a new wave of enthused hereditarianism: Darwinism, Mendelism, cytogenetics, molecular biology, genomics. This lecture will examine continuity and change in our enduring impulse to take control of our own evolution, and also the benefits and risks of our perennial drive to understand, and improve, human nature.

Visit history.nih.gov for news of upcoming lectures.