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Helga Lenart-Cheng (PhD, Harvard University) is Professor at Saint Mary's College of California. Her research focuses on life writing, genetic genealogy, algorithmic storytelling, critical media studies, memory, and digital archives. She is the author and editor of several books, most recently *Story Revolutions* (2022) and *Life Writing as World Literature* (2025).

DNA, Family Secrets, and the Stories We Inherit

Helga Lenart-Cheng

Saint Mary's College of California, USA

This talk examines how genetic genealogy platforms and public media reshape the stories Americans tell about identity, family, and race. Focusing on the PBS series *Finding Your Roots*, it explores how DNA, archives, and television narrative turn biological data into autobiographical meaning.



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