

Tina Lasisi

Postdoctoral Researcher — University of Southern California
Incoming Assistant Professor — University of Michigan
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Professional Experience

Academic

- From July 2023 **Assistant Professor**
University of Michigan
Department of Anthropology
- 2022—present **Postdoctoral Researcher**
Supervisors: Drs. Michael (Doc) Edge & Jazlyn Mooney
University of Southern California
Department of Quantitative and Computational Biology
- 2021—2022 **Postdoctoral Researcher**
Supervisor: Dr. Nina Jablonski
The Pennsylvania State University
Department of Anthropology

Other

- 2022—present **Science Show Host & Writer**
PBS Digital Studios *Why Am I Like This?*
Produced by STEMedia
- 2021—present **Research Consultant**
Azure Cognitive Services, Microsoft

Education

- 2015—2021 **Ph.D.**, Biological Anthropology
Doctoral dissertation: “The genetic architecture and evolutionary function of human scalp hair morphology” [digital copy available]
Advisors: Drs. Nina Jablonski and Mark Shriver
The Pennsylvania State University, Department of Anthropology
- 2011—2014 **B.A.**, Archaeology and Anthropology (First Class Honours)
Undergraduate dissertation: “Human hair diversity: quantitative variation of hair fibre shape and pigmentation”
Advisor: Dr. Colin Shaw
University of Cambridge, Department Archaeology and Anthropology,
Division of Biological Anthropology

Research interests

Human phenotypic and genetic variation | Admixture | Skin pigmentation | Hair fiber morphology and pigmentation | Thermoregulation | Science communication and education

Grants, honors & awards

- 2022 Jon C. Graff, PhD Prize for Excellence in Science Communication
- 2022 Science News Top 10 Scientists To Watch
- 2021 Video Contest 1st Place Winner, Graduate Student Exhibition, Penn State, (\$500)
- 2019 Wenner-Gren Foundation Dissertation Fieldwork Grant (Gr. 9911), (\$19,700)
- 2019 Africana Research Center Grant, Penn State, (\$1,000)
- 2019 Hill Post-Comprehensive Fellowship, Department of Anthropology, Penn State, (\$5,000)
- 2019 William T. Sanders Graduate Award, Department of Anthropology, Penn State, (\$300)
- 2019 National Science Foundation Doctoral Dissertation Improvement Grant (No. 1847845), (\$31,703)
- 2018 RGSO Conference Travel Award, Penn State, (\$400)
- 2018 Liberal Arts External Funding Incentive Award, (\$500)
- 2018 Millennium Science Pitch Competition with PPG Industries, Penn State, (\$500)
- 2018 Summer Institute in Statistical Genetics Scholarship, University of Washington, (\$1,950)
- 2018 Juan Comas Prize, American Association of Physical Anthropologists (AAPA), (\$500)
- 2018 Video Contest 3rd Place Winner, Graduate Student Exhibition, Penn State, (\$100)
- 2018 Hill Pre-Comprehensive Fellowship, Department of Anthropology, Penn State, (\$2,000)
- 2017 RGSO Graduate Student Travel Award, Penn State, (\$400)
- 2014 The Corpus Christi Prize and Studentship, University of Cambridge
- 2014 Examination Prize, University of Cambridge
- 2013 The Manners/Corpus Scholarship, University of Cambridge
- 2013 Dissertation Research Fund Award, University of Cambridge, (£300)

Publications

- 2021 **Lasisi, T.**, Zaidi, A. A., Webster, T. H., Stephens, N. B., Rutch, K., Jablonski, N. G., & Shriver, M. D. High-throughput phenotyping methods for quantifying hair fiber morphology. *Scientific Reports*, 11(1), 1–11.
- 2021 **Lasisi, T.** The constraints of racialization: How classification and valuation hinder scientific research on human variation. *American Journal of Physical Anthropology*.
- 2019 Quillen, E. E., Norton, H. L., Parra, E. J., Lona-Durazo, F., Ang, K. C., Illiescu, F. M., Pearson, L. N., Shriver, M. D., **Lasisi, T.**, Gokcumen, O., Starr, I., Lin, Y.-L., Martin, A. R., & Jablonski, N. G. Shades of complexity: New perspectives on the evolution and genetic architecture of human skin. *American Journal of Physical Anthropology*, 168 Suppl 67, 4–26.
- 2019 Fuentes, A., Ackermann, R. R., Athreya, S., Bolnick, D., **Lasisi, T.**, Lee, S.-H., McLean, S.-A., & Nelson, R. AAPA Statement on Race and Racism. *American Journal of Physical Anthropology*, 169(3), 400–402.
- 2018 **Lasisi, T.**, & Shriver, M. D. Focus on African diversity confirms complexity of skin pigmentation genetics. *Genome Biology*, 19(1), 13.
- 2017 Dadzie, O. E., **Lasisi, T.**, & Jablonski, N. G. The Anthropology of Human Scalp Hair. In N. A. Vashi & H. I. Maibach (Eds.), *Dermatoanthropology of Ethnic Skin and Hair* (pp. 315–330). Springer International Publishing.

- 2016 **Lasisi, T.**, Ito, S., Wakamatsu, K., & Shaw, C. N. Quantifying variation in human scalp hair fiber shape and pigmentation. *American Journal of Physical Anthropology*, 160(2), 341–352.

Invited talks

- 2022 Apr UZH Hair, skin & racialization: an evolutionary perspective. University of Zurich 2022 Colloquium Series.
- 2022 Mar UPenn Sense & salience: measuring what matters in hair and skin. Penn Anthropology 2022 Colloquium Series.
- 2022 Feb Rutgers Hair, skin & racialization in human evolutionary biology. Rutgers University, Department of Anthropology.
- 2021 Nov UT Austin Human hair evolution:reframing form & function. Seminar Series, UT Austin, Department of Anthropology.
- 2021 Nov Yale Quantifying bias in constructed categories of hair and skin. Fall 2021 Ecology and Evolutionary Biology Seminar Series, Yale
- 2021 Sep Duke Hair, skin & bias: The cost of convenient categories for continuous phenotypes. Spring Seminar Series, Duke Department of Evolutionary Anthropology.
- 2021 Aug Pixar Understanding human phenotypic diversity: hair morphology, pigmentation and admixture. Special Guest Seminar, Pixar Animation.
- 2021 Jun Oxford From classification to quantification: hair morphology. Archaeological Science Seminar Series, Oxford School of Archaeology.
- 2021 Jan UVic Phenotyping & evolutionary genomics: what we can learn from studying hair morphology. Spring Colloquium Series, University of Victoria, Department of Anthropology.
- 2020 Nov NYU What's in a trait? Genomes, phenomes and scientific narratives of racialized traits. Center for the Study of Human Origins Fall 2020 Colloquia Series, NYU Department of Anthropology.
- 2020 Oct UMich Measuring hair & skin: the importance of phenotypes in evolutionary genomics. Fall 2020 Virtual: Series Genetics, Evolution, and Human Behavior, University of Michigan, Department of Anthropology.
- 2020 Oct Smithsonian How Hair Reveals the Futility of Race Categories. HOT (Human Origins Today) Topic Series, Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History.
- 2019 Feb Chatham The richest ornament of a woman: Hair, race and the white male gaze in human evolutionary theory. Chatham University, Women's Institute Distinguished Lecture Series and Sciences Department Seminar Series.
- 2018 Oct Cambridge The Nearly Naked Ape: human evolution just got hairier. University of Cambridge, Biological Anthropology Seminar Series.

Selected conference presentations

- 2022 **Lasisi, T.** & Schaefer, B. *Integumentary Anthropology*. The 91st Annual Meeting of the American Anthropological Association, Denver, CO, USA. [Symposium Chair]
- 2021 **Lasisi, T.** *Finding Your Voice: How to navigate challenges in the workforce while not compromising your pursuit for equity and advocating for diverse communities*. Annual Meeting for the American Society of Human Genetics. [Panel]
- 2021 Beasley, M., **Lasisi, T.**, Schmitt, C., Molopyane, K., Ocobock, C., Kissel, M., & Dunsworth, H. *Bringing Truth to a Post-Truth World: how anthropologists engage and assess their science communication*. The 90th Annual Meeting of the American Anthropological Association, Baltimore, MD, USA. [Panel]

- 2021 **Lasisi, T.** *Studying hair morphology in African and African-descendant populations.* The 90th Annual Meeting of the American Association of Physical Anthropologists. [Talk]
- 2021 **Lasisi, T.**, Smallcombe, J., Shriver, M. D., Kenney, W. L., Havenith, G., & Jablonski, N. G. *Hair fiber morphology and function: at the intersection of anthropology, physiology, and engineering.* Experimental Biology. [Talk]
- 2019 **Lasisi, T.**, Zaidi, A., Webster, T. H., Jablonski, N. G., & Shriver, M. D. *New insights into human hair variation: High-throughput phenotyping paves way for genome-wide association studies and selection screens.* In The 88th Annual Meeting of the American Association of Physical Anthropologists (Vol. 168, pp. 137–137). Cleveland, OH, USA. [Talk]
- 2019 Shriver, M. D., White, J. D., **Lasisi, T.**, Eller, R. J., González-Zarzar, T., Indencleef, K., ... Claes, P. *SNPs discovered in European GWAS shape worldwide facial diversity.* In The 88th Annual Meeting of the American Association of Physical Anthropologists. Cleveland, OH, USA. [Poster]
- 2018 **Lasisi, T.**, Ito, S., Wakamatsu, K., Shriver, M. D., & Jablonski, N. G. (2018). *More than meets the eye: what chemical analyses can reveal about hair color.* In The 87th Annual Meeting of the American Association of Physical Anthropologists(162, pp. 153–153). Austin, TX, USA. [Poster]
- 2018 Jablonski, N. G., **Lasisi, T.**, Abhimanyu, A., Coussens, A. K., Naude, C. E., Chaplin, G., ... Wilkinson, R. J. *Variation in skin reflectance and pigmentation genes in young adults of Xhosa and Cape Mixed ancestry from the Western Cape, South Africa.* In The 87th Annual Meeting of the American Association of Physical Anthropologists (Vol. 162, pp. 228–228). Austin, TX, USA. [Poster]
- 2017 **Lasisi, T.**, Jablonski, N. G., Shriver, M. D., Kenney, W. L., & Havenith, G. *Thermoregulatory properties of hair: is human hair morphology adaptive?* In The 17th International Conference on Environmental Ergonomics (pp. 66–66). Kobe, Japan.[Poster]

Teaching and mentoring

Mentoring

Current

Graduate students

- 2022 — present **Taylor Spencer** Ph.D. student at the University of Michigan
- 2021 — present **Sarah Taylor** Ph.D. student at Penn State University
- 2020 — present **Ca’la Connors** Ph.D. student at Northwestern University
- 2018 — present **Bobbie Benavidez** Ph.D. student at Northwestern University

Undergraduate students

- 2021 — present **Benjamin Zydney** Computer Science (Major) & Mathematics (Minor) at Penn State

Former

Graduate students

- 2018 — 2022 **Abiodun Olowo** Ph.D. student at the University of Ibadan (Nigeria)

Undergraduate students (Penn State)

- 2021 — 2022 **Shuyao Wang** Mathematics (Major) & Statistics (Minor)
- 2020 — 2022 **Archit Goswami** Computer Science
- 2020 — 2022 **Hannah Marchok** Biobehavioral Health
- 2019 — 2022 **Duneshka Cruz** Biological Anthropology

2019 — 2021	Elizabeth Begley Anthropology
2018 — 2020	Yesenia Hill Biology
2018 — 2020	Kendall Routch Biological Anthropology
2017 — 2020	Feihong Rodell Biological Sciences & Health Professions
2017 — 2019	Benjamin Davisson Biological Anthropology

Teaching experience

Guest Lecture

Spring 2022	BIO 437: Human Adaptation, University of Zurich
Spring 2022	ANTH B208: Human Biology, Bryn Mawr College
Fall 2021	FA 790: History, Method, and Theory in Biological Anthropology, Boston University
Fall 2021	FRNSC 413: Criminalistics: Biology, Penn State
Spring 2021	ANTH 427: Anthropology and Race, UNC
Spring 2021	GEN ED 1027: Human Evolution and Human Health, Harvard
Fall 2020	ANTH 812: Current Topics in Anthropological Genetics, Yale
Fall 2019	BBH 302: Diversity and Health, Penn State
Spring 2019	ANTH 197: Anthropology, Ancestry, and You, Penn State
Fall 2018	ANTH 197: Anthropology, Ancestry, and You, Penn State

Teaching Assistant

Spring 2017	ANTH 021: Introduction to Biological Anthropology, Penn State
Spring 2016	ANTH 045: Cultural Anthropology, Penn State
Fall 2015	ANTH 001: Introductory Anthropology, Penn State

University & professional service

2020 — Current	Black in Biological Anthropology (BiBA) Collective, Co-founder
2018 — 2019	Anthropology Graduate Student Association (AGSA), Penn State, President
2018 — 2019	Committee on Diversity - International subcommittee, AAPA, Co-Chair
2018 — 2020	Black Graduate Student Association, Penn State, IT Chair
2017 — 2019	AGSA Welfare Committee, Penn State, Founder and Chair
2017 — 2019	AGSA Outreach Committee, Penn State, Founding Member
2017 — 2018	AGSA, Penn State, Secretary
2017 — 2019	Committee on Diversity, AAPA, Member

Community engagement & outreach

2022	SING Canada 2022 Social Media Workshop [Virtual], Panelist
2022	Cambridge University, Archaeology Field Club [Virtual], Invited Lecture
2022	California State University Dominguez Hills, Anthropology Club [Virtual], Invited Lecture
2022	Delaware Community College [Virtual], Invited Lecture
2021	DisCon. The 79th World Science Fiction Convention. Panelist & Speaker
2021	UCLA Biological Anthropology, Community involvement & representation(s) in biological anthropology [Virtual], Panelist
2021	Black in Bio Anth Week [Virtual], Co-Organizer
2021	The Leakey Foundation's Young Professionals Group Speaker Series, Why Care About Hair? [Virtual], Panelist
2019	Museum of Modern Art New York, Research & Development Salon 33: Hair, Invited Contributor

- 2019 Bioinformatics and Genomics Retreat, Panel on Science Communication [Penn State], **Panelist**
- 2019 Pan-African Professional Alliance, Penn State, Addressing Challenges in Knowledge Production in the Black Diaspora, Spring Conference [Penn State], **Panelist**
- 2019 Pan-African Professional Alliance, Penn State, Pan-Africanism Today Dialogue [Penn State], **Panelist**
- 2018 Newham Collegiate Sixth Form Centre [London, UK], **Invited Speaker**
- 2018 Caveat, Underground Science Festival [New York City], **Speaker and Panelist**
- 2018 Extended Learning Program, Radiopark Elementary [State College, PA], **Session Leader**
- 2017 Graduate Women in Science [Penn State], **Workshop Leader**
- 2017 Finding Your Roots, Genetics Summer Camp [Penn State], **Instructor**

Popular media

- 2022 Jul Chesterton, M. What is Healthy Hair? BBC Crowdsience
- 2022 Feb Van Ness, J. Hair Variation, What's Her Story? Getting Curious with Jonathan Van Ness.
- 2021 Dec Jeff, J. Black Don't Crack (S2:E3). In Those Genes.
- 2021 Dec Jeff, J. The Future is Black AF (S2:E2.5). In Those Genes.
- 2021 Dec Jeff, J. Black To The Future (S2:E2). In Those Genes.
- 2021 Oct Kwong, E. Here's a better way to talk about hair. In Short Wave. NPR.
- 2019 Oct Owens, C., Ocobock, C., & Lynn, C. SoS 51- A Hairy History with Tina Lasisi. Sausage of Science.
- 2019 Jul Tetro, J. Bad hair days. In Super Awesome Science Show (SASS). Global News (Canada).
- 2019 Jun Rivera, M. Episode 15: Why does human hair vary in shape and color around the world? (No. 15). The Arch & Anth Podcast.
- 2019 Apr Raff, J. What Does DNA Tell Us About Race? Forbes Magazine.
- 2019 Apr Boissoneault, L. Unraveling the History of Human Hair. Mental Floss.

Membership in professional societies

Black in Biological Anthropology Collective
 American Anthropological Association
 American Association for Anthropological Genetics
 American Association of Physical Anthropologists

References

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Evan Pugh Professor of Anthropology
 Pennsylvania State University
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Mark D. Shriver

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 Pennsylvania State University
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Michael "Doc" Edge

Assistant Professor of Quantitative & Computational Biology

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Jazlyn Mooney

Gabilan Assistant Professor of Quantitative & Computational Biology

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