Hip-hop music and gender relations within African American culture, urban sociology, black masculinity, and queer theory—these are just a few of the topics tackled by award-winning professor Mark Anthony Neal. Well known and respected for his pioneering research in African American, cultural, and gender studies, Neal delves deep into the fields of literary theory, social history, postmodern philosophy, and most notably, popular culture. As professor of Black Popular Culture at Duke, he specializes in the study of the music, television, film, and literature produced within the context of cultures in the African diaspora. His work demonstrates how this under-scrutinized area of knowledge profoundly impacts societal and cultural norms within the United States and around the world.

While Neal’s provocative writings and lectures challenge his audiences to engage with the ideologies of black popular culture, his express purpose is to promote positive dialogue and raise healthy inquiry around these important cultural topics.

Neal is the founder and managing editor of the blog NewBlackMan and he hosts the weekly webcast Left of Black in collaboration with the John Hope Franklin Center at Duke University. He was recognized as Hip-Hop Scholar of the Year in 2012 by the Beats and Life Foundation and received the Robert B. Cox Teaching Award from Duke University in 2010.