

# JOSEPH DOWNING THOMPSON, JR.

Virginia Theological Seminary, 3737 Seminary Rd., Alexandria, VA 22304

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## Ordination

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Canonically resident in the Diocese of Missouri.

Ordained Priest in the Episcopal Church, September 26, 2019, Immanuel Chapel, Virginia Theological Seminary by the Rt. Rev. George Wayne Smith.

Ordained Deacon, December 21, 2018, Christ Church Cathedral, St. Louis, Missouri by the Rt. Rev. George Wayne Smith.

## Education

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Doctor of Philosophy, African American Studies and English, Yale University, December 2001

Master of Arts, Interdisciplinary Study of Religion, Virginia Theological Seminary, May 2018

Master of Philosophy, African American Studies and English, Yale University, December 1997

Master of Arts, African American Studies and English, Yale University, December 1997

Honors Bachelor of Arts, *summa cum laude*, English, Minors in Black American Studies and History, University of Delaware, May 1994

## Professional Experience

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**Associate Dean of Multicultural Ministries, Virginia Theological Seminary, July 2022 to Present**

**Assistant Professor of Race and Ethnicity Studies and Director of Multicultural Ministries, Virginia Theological Seminary, July 2018 to June 2022**

**Visiting Professor of African American Studies and Director of Multicultural Ministries, Virginia Theological Seminary, July 2016 to June 2018; Prior titles: Martha Horne Visiting Professor and Interim Director of Multicultural Ministries**

**Archivist for the African American Episcopal Historical Collection, Virginia Theological Seminary, June 2012 to June 2018; Prior titles: Assistant Archivist and Assistant to the Archivist**

Served as primary curator of the collection. Performed a range of activities, including collection development, accessioning, arrangement and description, and reference.

Researched, conducted, and processed oral history interviews. Administered a research

grant program.

**Senior Lecturer in English and African American Studies (AFAS), and Educational Archivist for the Film and Media Archive, Washington University in St. Louis, July 2007 to July 2011**

Taught AFAS courses and the Research Seminar of the Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship Program, as well as overseeing undergraduate studies for AFAS. Also responsible for outreach to users of the Film and Media Archive, which focused on collecting the production materials of black documentary filmmakers. *Also served as Academic Coordinator of AFAS, July 2008 to June 2010.*

**Faculty Fellow of the Park/Mudd Residential College, Washington University in St. Louis, August 2007 to June 2011**

Lived in a residence hall and organized formal and informal events to help bridge the gap between students and faculty.

**Assistant Professor, English and African American Studies, Washington University in St. Louis, July 2002 to June 2007; Prior title: Lecturer, January to June 2002**

**Director, John Hope Franklin Research Center for African and African American Documentation, Duke University Libraries, September 1999 to October 2001**

Directed the acquisition of African American and African Diaspora materials in the Rare Book, Manuscript, and Special Collections Library, and of African American materials in Perkins Library, the circulating collection. Provided specialized reference assistance. Administered research grants program.

## **Courses Taught**

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Race, the African American Experience, and Christian Discipleship

Introduction to Intercultural Competency

Race and the Pandemic

Cross-Cultural Colloquy

Freshman Seminar: The Concept of Race in Black Thought

Senior Seminar for the African American Studies Major

Deconstructing Black Manhood

Survey of African American Literature from the Harlem Renaissance to the 1970s

Survey of African American Literature up to the Harlem Renaissance

Race, Class, and Writing in the United States and the Caribbean, 1900-1950

Texts and Contexts of the Harlem Renaissance

Writing and Argumentation

Authors and Archives: A Graduate Practicum in Research Utilizing Rare and Unique Materials  
Research Seminar for the Mellon-Mays Undergraduate Fellowship

## **Publications, Conferences, Lectures**

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- "'Bear Fruits Worthy of Repentance': A Black Administrator's Perspective on the Virginia Theological Seminary Reparations Program," forthcoming in edited volume *The Time Is Now*.
- "Slavery Reparations," with Ian S. Markham. *The Serendipity of Hope*. Simon Lee and Ian S. Markham, eds. Eugene, Oregon: Pickwick Publications, 2023.
- "'Good Wings': Orality, Literacy, and Arna Bontemps's *Black Thunder*." *Spectrum: A Journal on Black Men* 9 (Autumn 2021): 55-71.
- "Building Outreach at the African American Episcopal Historical Collection," Mid-Atlantic Regional Archives Conference, Annapolis, MD, November 5, 2016
- "The Henry Hampton Collection as Teaching Resource," with David Rowntree, ITeach Conference, Washington University in St. Louis, January 2008.
- "Cinematizing the Life of Richard Bruce Nugent," Department of English, Eastern Illinois University, February 2006.
- "'Too Dirty to be Picturesque': Print Culture, Tourism, and Langston Hughes's *The Big Sea*," Modern Language Association Convention Panel, Washington, DC, December 2005.
- "Brother to Brother and Richard Bruce Nugent," Invited lecture at Modern Literary Biography Symposium, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, October 2005.
- Zora's Ink: A Review of Valerie Boyd's Biography of Zora Neale Hurston," *Belles Lettres: A Literary Review* 4.3 (March/April 2004): 7-8.
- "Arna Bontemps and the Institutions of Literate Society, 1936-1948," *Annual Conference of the South Atlantic Modern Language Association*, Baltimore, Maryland, November 2002.
- "The Caribbean Novel before 1950," *History of Literature in the Caribbean*. Vol. 2. James Arnold, ed. Amsterdam and New York: John Benjamins and International Comparative Literature Association, 2001.
- "African Americans and Education: A Study of Arna Bontemps." *Syracuse University Library Associates Courier* 33 (1998-2001): 77-99.
- Founder and Editor, *New Books in African American Studies in the Duke University Libraries*, monthly e-mail service, June 2000 to October 2001.
- "The Novels of Herbert G. de Lisser," *Eighth Annual Central New York Conference on Language and Literature*, Cortland College of the State University of New York, October 1998.

## **Dissertation**

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**"The Story Scarcely Mentioned: Race, Education, and Arna Bontemps"**

Focused on the professional life of African American poet, novelist, dramatist, and librarian-archivist Arna Bontemps. Through close readings of Bontemps's writings, the dissertation studied connections between race, formal schooling, and cultural production in early twentieth-century America. Other figures discussed include Langston Hughes, Jessie Fauset, and Claude McKay. Relied significantly on archival materials.

## **Languages**

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Reading knowledge of French and Spanish

## **Continuing Education**

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"'Real World' Reference: Moving Beyond Theory, Part I and II," Workshop of the Society of American Archivists, Washington, DC, December 2015

"Managing Electronic Records in Archives and Special Collections," Workshop of the Society of American Archivists, Fairfax, VA, March 2015

"Introduction to Encoded Archival Description (EAD)," Workshop of the Mid-Atlantic Regional Archives Conference, Philadelphia, PA, November 2013.

"Copyright: The Archivist and the Law," Workshop of the Society of American Archivists, Richmond, VA, October 2013.

"Describing Archives: A Content Standard (DACS)," Workshop of the Society of American Archivists, Charlottesville, VA, October 2013.

"Preservation of Photographic Materials," On-line Lyrasis Workshop, November 2012.

"Understanding Archives: An Introduction to Archival Principles and Practices," Workshop of the Society of American Archivists, Providence, RI, May 2012.

"Virtual Harlem in Second Life," Workshop of the Digital Diasporas Conference, University of Maryland, May 2008.

"Copyright: Archivists and the Law," Workshop of the Society of American Archivists, Denver, CO, August 2000.

Modern Archives Institute, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC, January 2000.