

TODNE THOMAS
Curriculum Vitae

Yale University Religious Studies | 320 York Ave | New Haven, CT | 06511
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PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYMENT

- 2023-present Associate Professor of Divinity and Religious Studies (without term), Yale Divinity School and Yale College
- 2021 – 2023 Associate Professor of African American Religious Studies, Harvard Divinity School, Harvard University
- 2017 – 2021 Assistant Professor of African American Religions, Harvard Divinity School, Harvard University
- Suzanne Young Murray Assistant Professor, Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study
- 2013 – 2017 Assistant Professor of Religion, University of Vermont, Burlington Core Faculty Member for the Critical Race and Ethnic Studies Program
- 2011 Postdoctoral Fellow of Religion, University of Vermont, Burlington
- 2008 – 2010 Instructor in Anthropology and African American Studies, University of Virginia, Charlottesville

EDUCATION

- 2012 Ph.D. Socio-Cultural Anthropology, University of Virginia, Charlottesville
- 2007 M.A. Socio-Cultural Anthropology, University of Virginia, Charlottesville
- 2005 Jamaican Language Competency, University of the West Indies, Mona, Jamaica
- 2004 B.A. Anthropology and Africana Studies, Cornell University, Ithaca
- 2003 Spring Semester in the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of the West Indies, Mona, Jamaica

ACADEMIC INTERESTS

African American Religion | African Diaspora Studies | American Studies | Anthropology of Christianity | Black Church Arson | Black Studies | Black Theology | Caribbean Diaspora | Critical Race and Ethnic Studies | Displacement | Ethnicity, Race, and Racism | Kinship and Social Networks | Neoliberalism | Racial and Religious Violence | U.S. Evangelicalism | U.S. South

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Summer 2023	Archival research on NCCUSA Burned Churches Project Papers held by Presbyterian Historical Society in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
	Ethnographic and archival research on Black church burning in Knoxville, Tennessee and Birmingham, Alabama
Fall 2021	Archival research on NCCUSA Burned Churches Project Papers held by Presbyterian Historical Society in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Summer 2021	Ethnographic research on Black church burning in Knoxville, Tennessee
Spring 2021	Remote interviews for ethnographic research on Black church burning in Springfield, Massachusetts
Summer 2019	Ethnographic research on Black church burning in Knoxville, Tennessee
Spring 2018	Museum research on representations of Black church arson in San Francisco, California
Summer 2016	Ethnographic research on Black church burning in Knoxville, Tennessee
Spring 2016	Archival research and oral historical research on Black evangelical theology
Fall 2011	Legal and institutional research on Eddie Long sex-abuse lawsuits and New Birth Missionary Baptist Church
2007 – 2008	Ethnographic research on Afro-Caribbean and African American evangelicalism in Atlanta, Georgia
Summer 2006	Ethnographic research on Afro-Caribbean migrant community in Atlanta metropolitan area

FELLOWSHIPS, GRANTS, AND AWARDS

2022	Yale Divinity School, Presidential Visiting Fellow
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2020	Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study, Accelerator Workshop Grant Recipient on Racio-Religious Violence and Religious Racism (co-PI) (\$16,000—held virtually)
2019	Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study, Academic Year Fellowship
2019	Northeastern University, Sacred Writes/Faithfully Magazine Media Partnership Recipient
2018	Outstanding Faculty Member of the Year, Harvard Divinity School
2013	Wenner-Gren Foundation, Workshop Grant Recipient (co-PI) (\$20,000)
2011–2012	University of Vermont, Henderson Post-Doctoral Fellowship in Religion
2010	University of Virginia, Anthropology Dissertation Year Fellowship
2010	University of Virginia, Dissertation Acceleration Grant (\$5,000)
2010	Virginia Foundation for the Humanities, Public Humanities Fellowship in South Atlantic Studies (\$5,000)
2008	University of Virginia, Jefferson Foundation Research Grant Recipient (\$7,000)
2004–2008	University of Virginia, Jefferson Graduate Fellowship
2001–2011	Social Science Research Council, Mellon Mays Fellowship

PUBLICATIONS

Peer-Reviewed Publications

Books

2021	<i>Kincraft: The Making of Black Evangelical Sociality</i> , Duke University Press
2017	Co-edited volume with Asiya Malik and Rose Wellman, <i>New Directions in Spiritual Kinship: Sacred Texts across the Abrahamic Religions</i> , Palgrave Macmillan.

Book Chapters

- 2017 “Rebuking the Ethnic Frame: West Indian and African American Evangelicals and Spiritual Kinship,” in *New Directions in Spiritual Kinship: Sacred Ties Across the Abrahamic Religions*, Palgrave Macmillan, 219–44.
- 2017 With Rose Wellman and Asiya Malik, “Re-Sacralizing the Social: Spiritual Kinship at the Crossroads of the Abrahamic Religions,” *New Directions in Spiritual Kinship: Sacred Ties across the Abrahamic Religions*, Palgrave Macmillan, 1–28.

Journal Articles

- 2021 “Black Church Arson in the Museum,” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 89 (4): 1360–1405.
- 2016 “Strangers, Friends, and Kin: Negotiated Recognition in Ethnographic Relationships,” *Anthropology and Humanism* 41 (1): 66–85.
- 2014 “Pastor, Mentor, or Father: Reframing the Contested Intimacies of the Eddie Long Sex Abuse Scandal,” *Journal of Africana Religions* 2 (1): 1–30.
- 2012 “Breaking Bread with the Brethren: Fraternalism and Text in a Black Atlantic Church Community,” *The Journal of African American Studies* 16 (4): 604–621.

Manuscripts in Preparation

Books

In production *From Hate to Hallows: Re-Framing Black Church Arson*, Duke University Press.

In preparation *Black Church Arson: An American Story*

Book Chapters

In preparation “Between Bombs and Boycotts: Economic Activist Strategies of Black Clergy in Civil-Rights Era Birmingham,” Black Pastoral Research Collaborative, Office of Black Church Studies, Duke Divinity School, edited volume.

In preparation “Storm, Oya Yansa, and the Groundings of Monogamy,” *Reading the X-Men*, edited volume, under contract with Columbia University Press.

Articles

“Fire as Chemical, Ecological, and Symbolic Processes,” *Annual Review of Anthropology*.

Op-Eds

- 2021 (with Courtney Bender) “Neoliberalism and Ambient Apocalypse, The Immanent Frame,” March 3.
- 2019 “White Evangelical Support of Trump Makes Sense When You Examine the History of the Christian Right,” *Faithfully Magazine*, October 7.
- 2018 “James H. Cone and The Mystery of Black Social Life,” *African American Intellectual Historical Society*, September 4.
- 2015 “When a Black Church Burns (But Not to the Ground)” (section column), *Anthropology News*, September 15.
- 2013 “The Strange Fruit of Race and Region” (op-ed), *Rutland Herald and Argus Times Newspapers*, July 21.

SELECTED LECTURES AND PRESENTATIONS

Peer-Reviewed Conference Presentations

- 2022 Response to Fetish and Fetishization Panel, American Academy of Religion, Denver, November 19.
- 2022 Response to *Violent Utopia: Dispossession and Black Restoration in Tulsa* by Jovan Scott Lewis, American Anthropological Association, Seattle, November 10.
- 2021 “Black Church Arson and the Criminalization of Black Church Congregants.” American Anthropological Association, Baltimore, November 17.
- 2019 “Black Evangelicalism and Racialized Skepticism.” American Academy of Religion Presidential Plenary, San Diego, November 23.
- 2019 “Burning the BlackMotherChurch: Race, Gender, Violence, Analogy.” American Studies Association Meetings, Honolulu, November 7.

- 2019 “Kinship as Reflection and Reformation Seminar.” Kinship as Critical Method Symposium, Tufts University, Boston, October 11.
- 2019 “Black Church Arson in the Museum.” W.E.B. Du Bois Colloquium, Harvard AAAS Department, Cambridge, September 11.
- 2018 “Beyond Racial and Social Death: Black Evangelicals and the Elsewhere of Spiritual Kinship.” American Anthropological Association Meeting, San Jose, November 17.
- 2018 “The Sacred Kinwork of Afro Caribbean Evangelical Women.” Annual Meeting of the Caribbean Studies Association, Havana, Cuba, June 4–8, 2018.
- 2017 “(Ir)ration(aliz)ing African American Kinship: Neoliberal Moral Orders of Family and Race.” Annual Meeting of the Anthropological Association, Washington D.C., November 14.
- 2017 “Hallowed Ground: Black Church Arson, Neoliberalism, and Re-Presentations of Black Sacred Space.” Black Geographies Symposium, University of California, Berkeley, October 10.
- 2016 “Between the Margins of Race and Values: Black Evangelicals and Interstitial Solidarities.” Annual Meeting of the American Anthropological Association, Minneapolis, November 17.
- 2015 “We Are People(s) Out of Time(s) and Place(s): Categorical Protests in/around Afro-Diasporic South(s).” American Anthropological Association Meetings, Denver, November 18.
- 2014 ““The Scandal of [An] Evangelical Mind”: Sally Langston and the Critique of Conservative Institutionalism.” American Studies Association, Los Angeles, November 9.
- 2013 “Between the Borders of Blackness: The Alterity of Black Atlantic Evangelical Communion.” Annual Meeting of the American Anthropological Association, Chicago, November 24 (panel co-organizer).
- 2013 “Problematizing Race, Silencing Ethnicity: Black Atlantic Evangelicals and Negotiations of Difference and Cohesion.” Trans-Atlantic Roundtable on Religion and Race’s Black Churches and 21st Century Captivities Conference, Accra, Ghana, July 28–30.
- 2013 “Syncretism and its Discontents: Black Evangelicals and the Ambivalence of Institutional Change.” Meeting of the Society for the Anthropology of Religion, Pasadena, April 12.

- 2011 “Return to a Sacred Past: Black Evangelicals, Diaspora, and Traditionalism.” Association of Black Anthropologists Works-in-Progress Session. Annual Meeting of the American Anthropological Association, Montreal, November 19.
- 2011 “‘I’m Building Me a Home’: Black Evangelicals, Traditionalism, and Diasporic Religious Consciousness.” Association for the Study of African American Life and History, Richmond, October 5–9.
- 2011 “Of Evangelicals and Eddie Long: The Sacred and Scandalous Dimensions of Spiritual Kinship.” Woodson 30th Anniversary Symposium: African American and African Studies at Work in the World, Charlottesville, April 8.
- 2011 “A Sacred or Sinful City? Moral Geographies of a Southern (Black) Mecca.” Southern Anthropological Society, Richmond, March 24 – 27.
- 2010 “‘I Took Her for My Mother’: Spiritual Mothers and the Reproduction of a Black Atlantic Church Community.” 2010 Virginia Foundation for the Humanities South Atlantic Studies Forum, Charlottesville, April 28.
- 2010 “In the ‘Royal Family of God’: Celestial Genealogy and Transcendent Citizenship among West Indian Brethren.” Association for Caribbean Women Writers and Scholars, Baton Rouge, April 21.
- 2009 “Spiritual Parenthood among West Indian Evangelical Brethren in Atlanta, Georgia.” Annual Meeting of the American Anthropological Association, Philadelphia, December 3.
- 2009 “On ‘Creation,’ ‘Man,’ and ‘Folks’: Anthropologies of a (Black) Brethren Community in Atlanta, Georgia.” Huskey Graduate Research Exhibition, Charlottesville, March 16.
- 2006 “The ‘Dirty South’ as Counterpoint? Representations of the U.S. South and its Intersection with Global Modernity.” Annual Meeting of the American Anthropological Association, San Jose, November 16.
- 2006 “An Exploration of Transnational Collateral Kinship among Jamaicans in Atlanta.” Mellon Mays Graduate Conference, New York, June 13.

Invited Presentations

- 2023 Panel presentation. Mellon Sawyer Seminar on Black Citizenship and Religion, Rutgers University, Newark, March 8.

- 2023 Paper. Distinguished Lecture for the University of Tennessee Department of Religious Studies, Knoxville, February 16.
- 2022 Ethnography and Black Religious Studies Roundtable. Panel presentation (virtual). Crossroads Faculty Working Group, Princeton University, Princeton, December 13.
- 2022 An Artful Evening: Black Public Art and Religion. Discussion with Dean Kymberly Pinder. Yale Divinity School, New Haven, November 2.
- 2022 “On Sorcery and Listening: Some Challenges of Ethnographic Representation.” Class presentation (virtual). Theory and Methods at Harvard Divinity School, Cambridge, October 19.
- 2022 “From Tree to Tree: Lynching and Black Church Arson.” Panel presentation (virtual). Yale Center for British Art, New Haven, October 7.
- 2022 “The 16th Street Baptist Church Bombing: Martyrdom, Iconography, and Mourning.” Guest lecture. Black Religion and the Modern Civil Rights Movement, 1954-1968 (class), Yale Divinity School, New Haven, October 4.
- 2022 “Artistic, Youth, and Economic Activism in the wake of the 16th Street Baptist Church Bombing.” Panel presentation. Black Pastoral Leadership Collaboration Project, Duke Divinity School, Durham, June 14.
- 2022 “Kinship as Ecclesiology: Afro-Caribbean and African American Brethrenism.” Paper (virtual). Brethren Archivists and Historians Network Meeting, Dubuque, May 29.
- 2022 “Feeling Genocide: Matrilocality and Black Church Arson.” Paper (virtual). Feminist Approaches to Theorizing Genocidal Violence Keynote, Racial Violence Hub, University of California, Los Angeles, May 6.
- 2022 An Introduction to *Kincraft*. Guest Lecture (virtual). Religion and the Colonial Encounter course, Indiana University, Bloomington, March 2.
- 2022 “Black Intramural Violence, Self-Portraiture, and Narrative Care: Ethnographic Views.” Paper (virtual). University of Notre Dame Anthropology Department Colloquium, South Bend, February 25.
- 2022 “A *Black* Arsonist: Bias, Class, Politics, and Intramural Violence.” Paper (virtual). Crossroads Faculty Working Group, Princeton University, February 11.
- 2021 “Burning the BlackMotherChurch: On Ethnography and Matrifocal Methodology.” Paper (virtual). Pennsylvania State University Africana Research Center, State College, December 1.

- 2021 Presidential Plenary on “American Evangelicalism and Race.” Panel presentation. American Academy of Religion, San Antonio, November 20.
- 2021 “Of ‘Hallowed Ground’ and Conjure Warnings: Black Religious Hermeneutics, Racial, and Spatial Violence.” Paper. Cornell University Anthropology Department Colloquium, October 22.
- 2021 *Kincraft* Conversation. Podcast interview with Reighan Gillam. *New Books in Anthropology*, June 16.
<https://newbooksnetwork.com/kincraft>
- 2021 Author Discussion with Todne Thomas, Judith Casselberry, and Soong-Chan Rah. Panel presentation (virtual). Center for the Study of World Religions, Cambridge, April 26.
- 2021 “The Making of Black Evangelical Sociality.” Paper (virtual). Wilfred Laurier University Religion and Culture Colloquium, Waterloo, April 7.
- 2021 “Seeking More Than Salvation: Religious Communities.” Panel presentation (virtual). Virginia Festival of the Book, Charlottesville, March 26.
- 2021 “Field Methods and Black Atlantic Religion.” Guest lecture (virtual). Ethnographic Methods course, Our Lady of the Lake University, San Antonio, March 5.
- 2021 “Colonialism is just a Cousin of Racism”: Black Evangelicals, Ethnicity, and Familial Identity. Paper (virtual). New Jersey City University Lee Hagan Africana Studies Center, Jersey City, March 4.
- 2021 “Moving Against the Grain: The Evangelism of T. Michael Flowers in the Segregated U.S. South.” Paper (virtual). Edinburgh University Anthropology Department, Edinburgh, February 15.
- 2020 “Kincraft and Chosen Kin.” Presentation (virtual). The Center for Black, Brown, and Queer Studies, Cambridge, December 10.
- 2020 *Kincraft* Overview. Panel presentation. Duke University Press Religious Cultures of African and African Diaspora Peoples AAR Panel, Online Meetings, December 4.
- 2020 “Black Church Arson, Speculation, and Re-Imaginations of the Neoliberal Commons.” Paper (virtual). Harvard Anthropology Department, Cambridge, October 19.
- 2020 “Kin/closures and Kincraft: Lessons from Evangelical Sociality.” Paper (virtual). Emory University Ethnographic Forum, Atlanta, October 12.

- 2018 “Between Civil Rights and the Moral Majority: A Mid-Twentieth-Century Black Evangelical Imaginary.” Paper. Georgetown University Religion, Politics, and Culture Workshop, Washington D.C., October 19.
- 2018 “The Afro-Diasporic Kincraft of Black Evangelicalism.” Paper. Harvard Mahindra Humanities Center, Cambridge, October 4.
- 2018 “Second-Generation Caribbean Immigrants.” Panel discussion. Northeastern University, Boston, September 25.
- 2018 “Between Sacred Matters and Smatter(ed) Sacred: Encountering Black Church Arson in the Museum.” Paper. UVM Symposium on Black Sacred Space: Materiality and Representation, Burlington, April 20.
- 2017 “Re-Narrating Hallowed Ground: Black Church Arson and the Displacement of Black Sacred Space.” Paper. Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage, November 29.
- 2016 “When ‘The Family’ is Not Enough: The Social Surround of Black Evangelical Religious Solidarity.” Paper. Notre Dame Anthropology Department Colloquium, South Bend, April 20.
- 2016 “‘God Made Folks’: The Racial and Representational Politics of Black Evangelical Anthropology.” Paper. Christianity, Politics, and Social Activism in Africa and the African Diaspora Colloquium, Chapel Hill, March 4–5
- 2015 “Family Beyond ‘The Family’: Black Evangelicals and Social Sincerity.” Paper. University of Vermont Henderson Research Symposium, Burlington, October 22.
- 2015 “Citing/Siting Culture: Re-Examining Regional Archetypes of Black Atlantic Christianities.” Paper. IUPLR Conference, South Bend, April 23–25.
- 2014 “‘Foresee(ing) the Bloody Scenes’: The Patriarchal Racial Anxieties of South Atlantic Imperialism from the Haitian Revolution to Florida’s Stand-Your-Ground Controversy.” Paper. Jefferson Fellowship Selection Weekend Keynote Address, Charlottesville, February 27.
- 2012 “Missionizing Relatedness: Caribbean Moral Geographies of the U.S. South.” Paper. Wheaton College Department of Anthropology and Sociology Colloquium, Wheaton, October 29.
- 2012 “Black or Brethren Like Me? Religion, Ethnicity, and Subversive Community.” Paper. University of Vermont Henderson Research Symposium, Burlington, October 9.

- 2012 “An Introduction to Black Atlantic Evangelicalism.” Guest lecture. Caribbean Cultures and Societies class, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, September 28.
- 2012 “The Identities and Intimacies of Black Atlantic Evangelicalism.” Paper. University of Vermont Ethnic Studies Faculty Working Group, Burlington, February 8.
- 2009 “The Diasporization of Caribbean Religion.” Guest lecture. Caribbean Perspectives class, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, November 18.
- 2008 “An Anthropological Reading of Zora Neale Hurston’s ‘How it Feels to be Colored Me.’” Guest lecture. African American Literature class, Spelman College, Atlanta, September 29.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Harvard University

Black Church Burning (HDS 2475)
 Ethnographic Methods in Religious Studies (HDS 2007)
 Introduction to African American Religions—directed reading (REL3001)
 Black Women and Divinity in the African Diaspora (HDS 2429)
 Religion and Neoliberalism (HDS 2125)
 Religion and Family (HDS 2126)
 Religion and Race in the United States (HDS 2127)

University of Vermont

Black Transnational Religious Movements (REL 297)
 Religion, Race, and Ethnicity in the United States (REL 196)
 Religion and Family (REL 196)
 Religion and Globalization (REL 029)
 Caribbean Religion and Beyond (REL 196)
 Introduction to U.S. Ethnic Studies (CRES 095)

SERVICE

Harvard Divinity School

HDS Admissions Committee
 HDS African American Religious Studies Junior Search Committee
 HDS African Diaspora Targeted Search Committee

HDS CSWR Advisory Board
HDS MDiv Committee
HDS MTS Committee
HDS Sexual Misconduct Review Board
HDS WSRP Research Associate Selection Committee

Harvard University

African and African American Studies Faculty Affiliate
American Studies Faculty Affiliate
Anthropology Faculty Affiliate
Committee on the Study of Religion (CSR)
CSR Doctoral Admissions—Religion, Gender, and Culture Doctoral Admissions Sub-Committee; Religion of the Americas Doctoral Admissions Sub Committee; Religion and Society Doctoral Admissions Sub-Committee
FAS Ethnicity, Migration, and Rights Standing Committee
Hoopes Thesis Prize Committee
Weatherhead Institute Religion in Africa and Africa Diaspora and Public Life Committee Co-Chair

Professional Service

- 2023 President Elect for the Association of Black Anthropologists, American Anthropological Association
- 2023 Jury Member for the Analytical-Descriptive Studies Jury, American Academy of Religion
- 2022 Endorser for *Prophesy Deliverance! An Afro-American Revolutionary Christianity* Fortieth Anniversary Edition by Cornel West
- 2022 Reviewer for the *Journal of the Social Scientific Study of Religion*
- 2022 Programming Committee Member, Association of Black Anthropologists
- 2022 Reviewer for the Association of Black Anthropologists American Anthropological Association Meetings Panel Submissions
- 2021 Co-organizer of Sacred Space and Violence: Views from the African Diaspora Workshop. Panel. Meeting of the American Anthropological Association, November 17.
- 2021 Co-organizer of Religious Racism and Racio-Religious Violence Workshop, Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study, September 30–October 1.

- 2021 Manuscript reviewer for Oxford University Press
- 2021 Reviewer for *Religions*
- 2020 Co-editor of *Unveiling the End Times: Neoliberalism and Apocalypse Series*, The Immanent Frame, Social Science Research Council, March 2021.
- 2020 Editorial Board Member for The Immanent Frame, Social Science Research Council (three-year term)
- 2020 Juror for the Clifford Geertz Anthropology of Religion Book Prize
- 2020 Reviewer for *Journal of Feminist Anthropology*
- 2018 Co-organizer of “Social Death and Vital Relations in African American Religions.” Panel presented at the Meeting of the American Anthropological Association, November 17.
- 2016 Reviewer for *HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory*
- 2016 Reviewer for *Transforming Anthropology*—Journal for the Association of Black Anthropologists
- 2014 Co-organizer of “The Sacred Social: Spiritual Kinship Among the Abrahamic Faiths.” International Wenner-Gren Workshop, Charlottesville, March 27–29.
- 2013 Co-organizer of “The Politics of Black Atlantic Religious Mixture.” Panel presented at the Meeting of the Society for the Anthropology of Religion, April 12.
- 2013 Panelist for Mellon Mays Social Science Research Council Graduate Conference Recent PhD Panel, Bryn Mawr College, Bryn Mawr, June 15.
- 2011 Graduate Representative for the AAA Society for Humanistic Anthropology.
- 2009 Co-organizer of panel, “Making ‘Real’ Families: Relatedness, Transcendence, and Boundary Making among Religious Communities in North America.” Annual Meeting of the American Anthropological Association, Philadelphia, December 3.