

Scott, Nathan A., Jr. papers

Nathan A. Scott Jr. papers

c.1956-2001



Title Statement

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Profile Description

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Descriptive Summary

Unit ID

MSS 16731

Unit ID

[Archival Resource Key](#)

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Unit ID

/repositories/3/resources/1435

Unit Date

c.1956-2001

Mixed Materials [X032571334]

1 (box)

Language

English

Creator

Scott, Nathan A.

Extent

.75 Cubic Feet One legal document box and one half legal document box

Repository

Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections Library

Administrative Information

Conditions Governing Access

The collection is open for research use.

Immediate Source of Acquisition

This collection was transferred from Dr. Jennifer Geddes, Associate Professor, Director of Graduate Studies in the Department of Religious Studies, to the Small Special Collections Library on 31 May 2022.

Preferred Citation

MSS 16731, Nathan A. Scott, Jr. papers, Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections Library, University of Virginia Library.

Biographical / Historical

Nathan A. Scott Jr. (24 April 1925 - 20 December 2006) was an American literary scholar, theologian, and professor. He was born in Cleveland, Ohio, to Nathan Alexander and Maggie Martin Scott. He contributed to the modern field of theology and literature and co-established the well-known Ph.D. program in that field at the University of Chicago. In 1976, he was the first Black faculty member in the Religious Studies department and one of the first tenured Black professors at the University of Virginia.

Dr. Scott studied "the works of literary figures, both secular and religious, from such pagan greats as Camus and Sartre, Stevens and Frost, to such Christian writers as Eliot and Auden, Graham Greene and Fyodor Dostoevsky."

Some reviewers and commentators of his work, expressed surprise when they learned that Scott was an African American. When asked about this racial characterization, he responded, "... Virtually no phase of American cultural enterprise is uninvaded by the racial animus that still ruinously indwells our national life, and I have not escaped its lash." Dr. Scott also fielded comments from his "Black confreres" pointing out that he studied "dead white European males" instead of following the old way of "scurrying off to the South and serving his people" with theology. While Scott has written at length on Black writers, most especially in the long chapter on "Black Literature" (The Harvard Guide to Contemporary American Writing) (1979) edited by Daniel Hoffman, he did not specialize in what is spoken of as "the Black Experience." Scott labored relentlessly to establish an innovative and structured program in the interdisciplinary study of both religion and literature. Himself a specialist in the fields of modern theology, modern literature, and literary theory, he pioneered in the study of literary figures, history, and theory in relation to the Christian tradition of the West. His work can be seen as a model "in which literary texts may be appropriately incorporated into theological discourse." For two decades at Chicago, hundreds of students from various departments had attended his classes, and by the time of his departure for Virginia, more than forty students had taken their doctorates under his tutelage.

Scott's innovation in literary criticism was to reject the New Critics' idea that poems should be studied as autonomous objects and to remind scholars that authors' personal beliefs are crucial for understanding their texts. In this way, he also returned criticism to a study of the way literature represents the outside world.

Scott earned his B.A. at the University of Michigan in 1944, his B.D. at Union Theological Seminary in 1946, and his Ph.D. at Columbia University in 1949, having studied under Lionel Trilling, Reinhold Niebuhr, and Jacques Barzun. He served as dean of the chapel at Virginia Union University and was an ordained priest in the Episcopal Church. He taught at Howard University in Washington, D.C.; University of Chicago from 1955 to 1976, and the University of Virginia from 1976-1990 where he was the William R. Kenan Professor of Religious Studies, was chair of the Department, and retired Professor Emeritus. He also served as a President of the American Academy of Religion and held honorary doctorates from Brown University, Philadelphia Divinity School, Northwestern University, University of Michigan, Ripon College, Wesleyan College, and the University of the South.

Sources: Nathan A. Scott. Wikipedia. Retrieved 12/01/22 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nathan_A._Scott_Jr.

Talk by Nathan A. Scott, Jr. "A Ramble on a Road Taken," followed by an Interview with him. / *Christianity and Literature* Vol. 43, No. 2 (Winter 1994), 203-12. <https://www.christianityandliterature.com/Nathan-Scott>

Burham, William D. "Nathan Scott's Literary Criticism and Fundamental Theology" Peter Lang Inc., International Academic Publishers; New edition (October 11, 2006) <https://www.amazon.com/Literary-Criticism-Fundamental-Theology-University/dp/0820463833>

Content Description

This collection contains the papers of Nathan A. Scott Jr. (1925-2006), a religious scholar, founding figure in the field of Religion and Literature, and professor at the University of Virginia from 1976 to 1990. He was the first Black faculty member in the Religious Studies department and one of the first tenured Black professors at the University of Virginia. The bulk of the materials are articles on religious and literature topics from colleagues in the field, often signed or sent with notes attached. Also included are some pastoral letters, and teaching materials including vocabulary lists, syllabi, bibliographies, and lists of faculty, students, and conference attendees. Box one contains articles, notes and poems. Box two contains Church papers, and course materials from the University of Chicago.

Keywords

Criticism--Technique; Evaluation of Literature; Literary Criticism; Literature--Evaluation
Religion

Description of Subordinate Components

Series 1. Articles, Essays, Talks, Notes, and Poems

Unit ID [Archival Resource Key](#)

Unit ID [Previous Archival Resource Key](#)

Unit ID [Previous Archival Resource Key](#)

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/221493

Language English

Articles, essays, poems, and notes

Unit ID [Archival Resource Key](#)

Unit ID [Previous Archival Resource Key](#)

Unit ID [Previous Archival Resource Key](#)

Unit ID [Previous Archival Resource Key](#)

Unit ID [Previous Archival Resource Key](#)

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/221494

Mixed Materials [X032571334] 1 (box)

Container 1 (folder)

Language English

Scope and Contents

Stephen Crites; Biography of Edward Ames

Articles, essays, and notes

Unit ID [Archival Resource Key](#)

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/221495

Mixed Materials [X032571334] 1 (box)

Container 2 (folder)

Language English

Articles and essays

Unit ID [Archival Resource Key](#)

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/221496

Mixed Materials [X032571334] 1 (box)

Container 3 (folder)

Language English

Articles, essays, and talks

Unit ID [Archival Resource Key](#)

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/221497

Mixed Materials [X032571334] 1 (box)

Container 4 (folder)

Language English

Articles and essays

Unit ID [Archival Resource Key](#)

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/221498

Mixed Materials [X032571334] 1 (box)

Container 5 (folder)

Language English

Scope and Contents

Articles (Peter Homans)

Unit ID [Archival Resource Key](#)

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/221499

Mixed Materials [X032571334] 1 (box)

Container 6 (folder)

Language English

Articles (Reinhold Niebuhr)

Unit ID [Archival Resource Key](#)

Unit ID [Previous Archival Resource Key](#)

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/221500

Mixed Materials [X032571334] 1 (box)

Container 7-8 (folder)

Language English

Articles (Dr. Joseph Sittler)

Unit ID [Archival Resource Key](#)

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/221501

Mixed Materials [X032571334] 1 (box)

Container 9 (folder)

Language English

Articles (John Smith)

Unit ID [Archival Resource Key](#)

Unit ID [Previous Archival Resource Key](#)

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/221502

Mixed Materials [X032571334] 1 (box)

Container 10 (folder)

Language English

Oversize Galley proofs of article "A Heritage of Prophetic Ministry" David A. Rausch and Carl Hermann Voss, Christian Jewish Relations

Unit ID [Archival Resource Key](#)

Unit ID [Previous Archival Resource Key](#)

Unit ID [Previous Archival Resource Key](#)

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/221514

Unit Date 1987 June 16

Mixed Materials Archival Oversized Box S 6 (Flat_Box)

Container 1 (Oversize_Folder(Within_an_OSBox))

Language English

Series 2. Church conferences and papers

Unit ID [Archival Resource Key](#)

Unit ID [Previous Archival Resource Key](#)

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/221503

Language English

The Reverend Cannon Robert R. Penny obituary

Unit ID [Archival Resource Key](#)

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/221504

Mixed Materials [X032571335] 2 (box)

Container 1 (folder)

Language English

Newsletter Children and Youth, 1960: Appraising Ideals and Values in Their Changing World

Unit ID [Archival Resource Key](#)

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/221505

Mixed Materials [X032571335] 2 (box)

Container 2 (folder)

Language English

The American Consecration Prayer

Unit ID [Archival Resource Key](#)

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/221506

Mixed Materials [X032571335] 2 (box)

Container 3 (folder)

Language English

Pastoral letter about abortion

Unit ID [Archival Resource Key](#)

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/221507

Mixed Materials [X032571335] 2 (box)

Container 4 (folder)

Language English

Report on the Committee on the Council's Role in the Field of Religion and the Arts

Unit ID [Archival Resource Key](#)

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/221508

Mixed Materials [X032571335] 2 (box)

Container 5 (folder)

Language English

Series 3. Academic Class Materials

Unit ID [Archival Resource Key](#)

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/221509

Language English

Class materials

Unit ID [Archival Resource Key](#)

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/221510

Unit Date 1965-1966

Mixed Materials [X032571335] 2 (box)

Container 6 (folder)

Language English

Student and Faculty Lists

Unit ID [Archival Resource Key](#)

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/221511

Unit Date 1972-1976

Mixed Materials [X032571335] 2 (box)

Container 7 (folder)

Language English

Class materials

Unit ID [Archival Resource Key](#)

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/221512

Unit Date 1979 Spring

Mixed Materials [X032571335] 2 (box)

Container 8 (folder)

Language English

Class materials Douglas College Theology and Aesthetics

Unit ID [Archival Resource Key](#)

Unit ID [Previous Archival Resource Key](#)

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/221513

Mixed Materials [X032571335] 2 (box)

Container 9 (folder)

Language English