



In the midst of the civil rights movement, and in the wake of Freedom Summer in 1964, historian James W. Silver published a book that branded Mississippi “the closed society.” As the troubled history that Silver recounts unfolded, Mississippi became unlikely yet fertile ground for artistic expression — especially for writers. In this course, we will study works by a representative group of authors who share common ground in literary Mississippi: William Faulkner, Richard Wright, Eudora Welty, Natasha Trethewey, and Jesmyn Ward. We will consider how these writers draw on lived experiences and lasting legacies to explore forces of oppression and resistance that have shaped Mississippi history and culture. We will read poetry, short fiction, and novels in which the selected authors open up the closed society of Mississippi as a space for thoughtful exploration of the human condition.

Literary Mississippi and the Closed Society

EN 3533: Selected Authors
Spring 2020
T.Th. 3:30-4:45
Dr. Ted Atkinson

