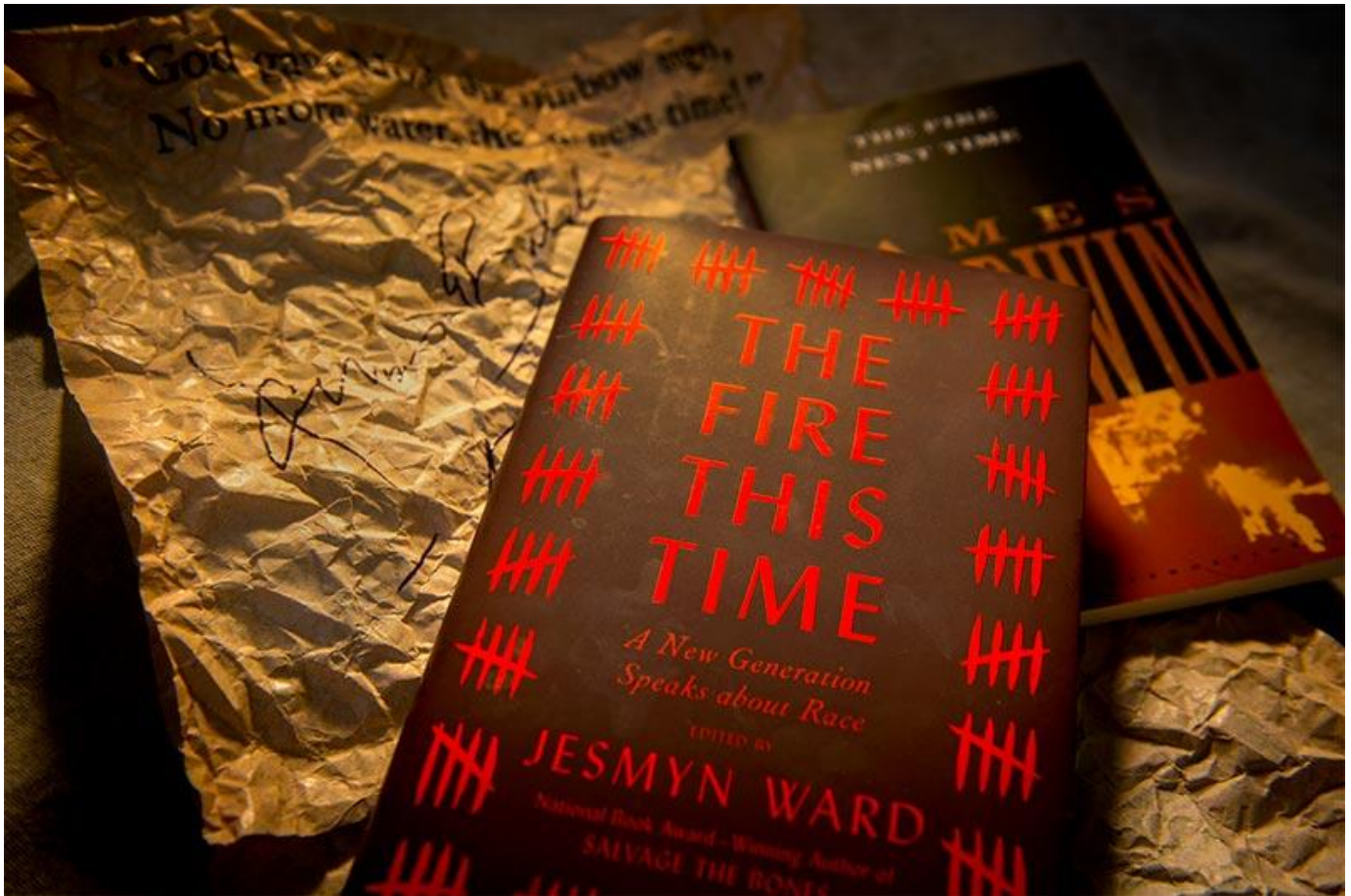


## Tulane professor's new book rekindles the conversation of race in America

September 02, 2016 10:00 AM Roger Dunaway

roger@tulane.edu

504-862-8240



"The Fire This Time" written by Tulane associate professor of English Jesmyn Ward, features a collection of essays and poems about race. (Photo by Paula Burch-Celentano)

Jesmyn Ward, an associate professor of English at Tulane and award-winning author, has published a new book— *The Fire This Time: A Generation Speaks About Race*.

*The Fire This Time* is a collection of essays and poems about race from Ward along with observations from 17 other writers gathered from social media. The book essentially picks up from James Baldwin's essay-driven examination of race in

America in the 1963 landmark book: *The Fire Next Time*.

Ward was reminded of Baldwin's focus on racial tensions in America during the turbulent 1960s some 50 years later with several deaths, including those of Trayvon Martin in 2012 and Tamir Rice in 2014.

"What inspired me to pursue this project were the interesting and insightful observations by many different writers on Twitter about Martin, Rice and others," Ward said. "But those messages often disappear quickly in the feed. When I felt like I didn't have constant access to this sense of community that I saw on Twitter, I immediately turned to James Baldwin. He came right into my head because I admire him so much as a writer. It was at that point that I thought it would be a great idea to collect these works and put them in a book."

Ward has also authored three other publications, including *Where the Line Bleeds* (2008), *Salvage the Bones* (2011), which won the National Book Award in the Fiction category, and *Men We Reaped* (2013), named one of the best books of 2013 by *The New York Times Book Review*.

This past January, Ward was named one of two winners of the prestigious Strauss Living prize for literary excellence, which allows her to devote two years to writing in lieu of her work on campus.

"What inspired me to pursue this project were the interesting and insightful observations by many different writers on Twitter about Martin, Rice and others."

Jesmyn Ward