What We’re Reading

With spring comes the hope of warmth, renewal, and finding that last bit of energy to complete everything you need to do by the end of the semester. If you manage to find some time for “fun” reading, whether in print or on a Kindle, let us know what you’re reading.

The Blazing World by Siri Hustvedt  POP PS3558 .U813 B53 2014

Released in 2014, Hustvedt’s novel is about Harriet Burden, a female artist who has been ignored by critics and so recruits three men to present her work as their own. The story is told after Burden’s death by a writer interested in uncovering the scheme, and so we learn about Burden through interviews with many of those who knew her, as well as through her own notebooks. Burden and those around her are really fascinating characters – most are artists who talk a lot about truth, vision, and representation, yet the novel never becomes weighed down by these ponderous topics because Hustvedt is so skillful at integrating them into the stories of their lives. It’s an engrossing and enjoyable read. ~ Julie Amberg

Everything I Never Told You by Celeste Ng  POP PS3614 .G83 E94 2014

It is hard to believe this is Celeste Ng’s first novel. She is a master storyweaver, seamlessly switching between past, present, and perspective in this study of expectations and cultural acceptance of a blended Chinese-American family. You are thrust into this small Ohio college town in the 1970’s and begin to know each member of the Lee family as if they were your own. You feel the turmoil, passion, anxiety, and grief as they learn their eldest daughter, Lydia, is dead. The story itself is atypical in that you already know the end result, but the haunting question throughout is how did they end up this way. ~ CaseyAnn Salanova

Prescription for Life by Dr. Richard Furman  POP RA776.75 .F87 2014

This book is an easy read in layman’s terms. Dr. Furman presents overwhelming data that shows the importance of proper nutrition and exercise. I consider myself a very healthy and physically fit person, and this book opened my eyes. ~ Bob Graffin
**The Jewel** by Amy Ewing

While the reader won’t exactly find anything new in the Jewel, the synopsis itself is reminiscent of Margaret Atwood’s *The Handmaid’s Tale*, and the dramatic makeovers are eerily like the *Hunger Games*. The book is a quick, enjoyable read. Ewing creates a beautiful world for the reader to explore. The plot is a little slow for the majority of the novel and the romance is forced, but the final twist will have you yearning for the next installation.

~ Chrissie Powers

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**Love in the Time of Cholera** by Gabriel García Márquez

*(Translation of *El amor en los tiempos del cólera)* SHELVES PQ8180.17 .A73A813 1988

*Love in the Time of Cholera* is a chronicle of love and life set in a class-conscious Caribbean city at the turn of the century. At the core of the book is the romance between Fermina Daza and Florentino Ariza. Theirs is a love story with many obstacles and repercussions. Márquez is a master of capturing life’s intricacies on paper. I highly recommend reading this book, which I felt was full of warmth, vitality, and unexpected humor. ~ Allison Jurgensen

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**Two Old Women: An Alaska Legend of Betrayal, Courage, and Survival**


This was a most thought-provoking story to read as our area struggles through the grip of an unusually cold winter. Hard times had fallen on The People as they struggled to survive a brutal winter. Their food supplies were dwindling, the hunters were having no success, and starvation was looming. The decision was made to move on, but the two oldest tribe members would be left behind so they wouldn’t slow the trek or be a further drain on the food supplies. The situation looks dire as the two women are left behind. Their day-to-day struggles are related in a well-paced, uncluttered style that reveals their personalities as well as insights into their way of life. This legend is timeless, because it could morph into a modern story about how we treat our elders, roles in gender, society, hierarchy, welfare, and how we survive when times are tough. ~ Roberta Rishel
Vanessa and Her Sister: A Novel by Priya Parmar
POP PS3616 .A757 V36 2014

Literature, art and sexual intrigue mix in Vanessa and Her Sister: A Novel by Priya Parmar. Virginia Woolf and her sister, artist Vanessa Bell are inseparable until betrayal tears them apart. Diary entries and letters provide a glimpse of the eccentric Bohemian lifestyle of the Bloomsbury Group in early 20th Century London. ~ Joy Rusonis

Sutton by J.R. Moehringer

The fictional account of infamous banker robber Willie Sutton’s first day out of prison, January 1, 1969, after he had served a nineteen year sentence. The author adeptly weaves together Sutton’s unique narrative with the travails of a young reporter and disillusioned photographer as they travel throughout New York City trying to nail down Sutton’s story. It is an engaging tale with a surprise at the end that makes a pleasant read something special. It was a good summer read and is definitely on my recommended list. ~ Paul Doutrich

Silence: The Power of Quiet in a World Full of Noise
by Thich Nhat Nanh SHELVES BQ5612 .N43 2015

For those who want to explore the Buddhist practice of mindfulness. Hanh, a Vietnamese Zen Buddhist monk, presents concepts in simple analogies and offers brief meditation stanzas to help one find joy in the present moment. “We can’t be happy without space for silence.” ~ Beth Jacoby


I really loved this book. I loved it way more than The Fault in our Stars. I picked the perfect time to read this book too because the setting takes place in this month and the main character is graduating and so am I. In a lot of way I could really relate to Quentin, and his friends and how he was feeling. I recommend this book to anyone. ~ Courtney Hengel

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The next What We’re Reading will be published in September. Please submit your brief reviews to bjacob@ycp.edu by September 18.