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5-23-2021

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### Recommended Citation

Bobilin, Megan, "A Collection of Summer Reading Recommendations from Seattle University Students & Professors" (2021). *The Spectator Online*. 328.

<https://scholarworks.seattleu.edu/spectator-online/328>

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# A Collection of Summer Reading Recommendations from Seattle University Students & Professors

Megan Bobilin, Staff Reporter

As Seattle University wraps up the last few weeks of the 2020-21 academic year, students and professors are looking forward to all the perks of summer vacation, especially the joy of leisure-reading. Students and professors shared their thoughts on the importance of summer reading, as well as their top book recommendations.



Rachel House, Public Affairs and Environmental Studies Major, Third-Year

"I love reading and always have. Since college though, I haven't really had the same desire to read as I used to, especially during the school year," House said. "But during the summer, when I don't have the pressure of looming deadlines, I can take the time to slowly get back into reading. Hopefully I'll be able to get reading back into my routine in the next few months and make it a new habit for next school year."

Reading Recommendations from Rachel House:

Orrin Grey's *Never Bet the Devil and Other Warnings*  
Tom Stoppard's *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*  
Vivien Goldman's *Revenge of the She-Punks*

Marissa Wong, Social Work and Psychology Minor, Fourth-Year

"I love reading in the summer because I have more time to read for fun without the pressure of having school work," Wong said. "I don't like reading as much during the school year because I always feel like I should be doing something more productive for school. I actually run the Young Buddhist Editorial (YBE) Book Club with Allison Tanaka, a junior here at Seattle U, which started last summer. It was a great way to meet new people and be able to discuss the books we read with different perspectives and new insights."

Reading Recommendations from Marissa Wong:

Ocean Vuong's On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous  
Chenxing Han's Be the Refuge

Keira Cruickshank, Sociology and Creative Writing Major, Third-Year

"During the school year, I often collect books that I want to read but don't get to, because I do so much reading for classes instead," Cruickshank said. "By the time summer comes around, I have a whole stack of books I've been wanting to read for months. I especially love sitting outside somewhere nice and sunny and reading a book I've been looking forward to."

Reading Recommendations from Keira Cruickshank:

Dean Spade's Mutual Aid  
The Complete Works of Pat Parker  
Pablo Neruda's Las Uvas Y El Viento  
Angela Davis's Women, Race, and Class

Meilani Mandery, Art History and Arts Leadership Major, Alumni (Class of 2020)

"Reading for fun has always allowed me to explore subjects that I'm interested in but didn't have in my curriculum," Mandery said. "As an Art History and Arts Leadership student, I wasn't reading texts on abolition and radical Asian American history in class. I didn't realize how difficult it was to read for fun during the school year until I graduated."

Reading Recommendations from Meilani Mandery:

Dean Spade's Mutual Aid  
R. F. Kuang's The Poppy War Series  
Bob Santos: Hum Bows, Not Hot Dogs  
Karen Ishizuka's Serve the People  
Erika Lee's The Making of Asian America  
Benjamin Alire Saenz's Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe  
Madeline Miller's The Song of Achilles  
Viet Thanh Nguyen's The Refugees

Tessah Curtis, Communication and Media Major, Fourth-Year

"I try and read during the school year but it's hard to balance with all of the school work so summer reading just feels like a nice little escape after hard work," Curtis said. "I always remember getting so many books as a kid right after school got out for the summer because I finally had time to read."

Reading Recommendations from Tessah Curtis:

Suzanne Collins' The Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes

Marrakech Maxwell, Public Affairs & Environmental Studies Major, Third-Year

"I really enjoy reading, but the truth is that after four academic readings you don't really want to sit down and read for fun," Maxwell said. "I wish I was able to read for pleasure more. Usually I don't enjoy reading during the academic year."

Reading Recommendations from Marrakech Maxwell:

Jeanette Walls' *The Glass Castle*  
Lev Grossman's *The Magicians*

Lila Zuckermann, Communication and Media Major, Fourth-Year

"Reading for me has always been the main way I relax," Zuckermann said. "I love fiction because it allows me to step out of my life and absorb someone else's for a while."

Reading Recommendations from Lila Zuckermann:

Emma Straub's *Collection of Books*.

Rose Murphy, Public Affairs and Theology & Religious Studies Major, Fourth-Year

"Summer reading is meaningful for me because it's an opportunity to continue learning about issues and topics that were covered throughout the academic year," Murphy said. "I also really appreciate being able to read books during the summer that are written completely differently than academic readings—usually books with more humor or more personal storytelling."

Reading Recommendations from Rose Murphy:

Adrienne Maree Brown's *Emergent Strategy and Pleasure Activism*  
Stacey Abrams' *Our Time is Now*  
Samantha Irby's *Wow, No Thank You*  
Barack Obama's *A Promised Land*  
Priya Parker's *Art of Gathering*  
Bryan Massingale's *Racial Justice and the Catholic Church*  
Rupi Kaur's *Home Body*  
Michelle Alexander's *The New Jim Crow*  
Brene Brown's *Dare to Lead*  
Emmanuel Acho's *Uncomfortable Conversations with a Black Man*

Tara Roth, Senior Instructor, English Department

"I love reading fiction over the summer, both newer works and revisiting favorite authors. I also read nonfiction works on racial justice," Roth said. "Winter and summer breaks are the only time I can pick up a book of fiction that's completely unrelated to my teaching. It's hard for me to separate what I read as a hobby and what I read for school; I'm always thinking about how I might apply what I'm reading and learning to my teaching."

Reading Recommendations from Tara Roth:

Zadie Smith's *Grand Union*  
Brit Bennett's *The Mothers*  
Claudia Rankine's *Just Us*

Juan Reyes, Assistant Professor, English Department

"I always want to make sure that I'm embracing fiction, and stories from many different points of view so that I can sit with somebody else's perspective for a little while," Reyes said. "You have to be intentional to challenge yourself and read other books by authors from another gender or another race or a completely different socioeconomic background. It's an incredibly valuable experience...challenging myself to think outside the box, in terms of communities I've been a part of, or communities I have access to."

Reading Recommendations from Juan Reyes:

Jacqueline Woodson's *Another Brooklyn*  
Angie Cruz's *Dominicana*

Nalini Iyer, Professor, English Department, Asian Studies Program, Women and Gender Studies

"Being an English professor, you read all your round. Read voraciously, read critically, read what grabs your attention," Iyer said. "Reading is a way to build empathy, reading is a way to build understanding. Novelists, in particular poets, literary folks, writers offer us ways of using our imagination to think about the other, to step into somebody else's shoes. That is the reason people should be reading."

Reading Recommendations from Nalini Iyer:

Tana French's Collection of Books  
Ruth Ware's Collection of Books  
Ann Cleeves' Vera Stanhope Series  
Kazuo Ishiguro's *Klara and the Sun*  
Brit Bennet's *The Vanishing Half*  
Ian McEwan's *Machines Like Me*  
Mateo Askaripour's *Black Buck*  
Charles Yu's *Interior Chinatown*  
Viet Thanh Nguyen's *The Committed*  
Sanjena Sathian's *Gold Diggers*

Mary-Antoinette Smith, Associate Professor, English Department, Women and Gender Studies

"I always wish I had more time for leisure summer reading and I collect lots of books with hopes of getting around to reading them," Smith said. "Happily, beginning this September I will be on a year-long academic sabbatical and I will finally have more time to read some of these books... I also have some books on my list because I participate in the Third Place Books Black Lit Book Club."

Reading Recommendations from Mary-Antoinette Smith:

Kacen Callender's *Felix Ever After*

Colson Whitehead's *Sag Harbor*

Talia Hibbert's *Get a Life, Chloe Brown: A Novel*

Brit Bennett's *The Vanishing Half*

Nawal El Saadawi's *Woman at Point Zero*

Maggie O'Farrell's *Hamnet*

Elizabeth Acevedo's *The Poet X*

Jennifer Nansubuga Makumbi's *A Girl Is A Body of Water*

Bernadine Evaristo's *Girl, Woman, Other*

Matt Haig's *The Midnight Library*

Ta-Nehisi Coates' *The Water Dancer*

Karen Swallow Prior's *Booked: Literature in the Soul of Me*

Irin Carmon/Shana Knizhnik's *Notorious RBG: The Life and Times of Ruth Bader Ginsburg*

Fatimah Asghar's *If They Come for Us: Poems*

Tyehimba Jess's *Olio*