



# Common Reading Project

[2009-2010]

## About the Project

- The program will start in the fall of 2009
- Mission: to provide a common academic experience for all new students (first-years and transfers) by selecting a book for all incoming students to read prior to arriving at Purdue
- The common reading will be connected throughout the 2009-10 academic year with an array of campus curricular and co-curricular activities
- The project will provide a common first-year experience for Purdue's newest students
- The inaugural book was selected by a University-wide committee
- Project committee is co-chaired by Drew Koch, Director, Student Access, Transition, and Success Programs, and Marianne Ryan, Associate Dean for Learning, Purdue Libraries



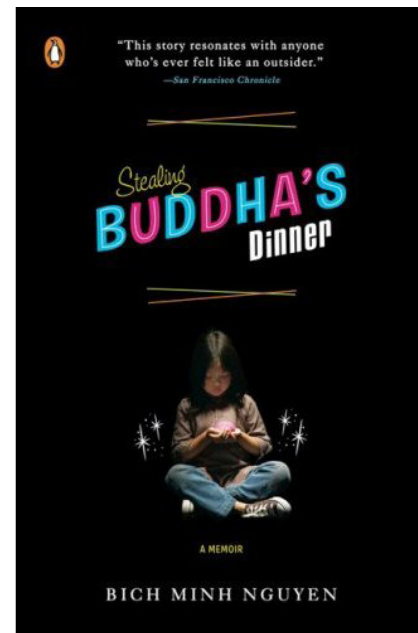
Bich Minh Nguyen, associate professor of English at Purdue

## About the Book

The first book in Purdue's Common Reading Project, *Stealing Buddha's Dinner* by Bich Minh Nguyen, was selected from a list of over 100 titles submitted by members of the Purdue community.

The memoir shares Nguyen's story about growing up a Vietnamese immigrant in the Midwest in the 1980s and how she tried to be "more American" by consuming snack food, pop culture and music. Nguyen's family left Vietnam in April 1975 when she was 8 months old. The family eventually relocated to Grand Rapids, Mich., where Nguyen grew up surrounded by images of the idealized blonde-haired American girl.

Her stories are about trying to fit in with American children, especially by eating American junk food such as Pringles, bubble gum and Hostess cupcakes instead of the traditional Vietnamese fare that her grandmother made.



## This experience will:

- Provide a common first-year experience for Purdue's newest students
- Set high academic expectations for incoming students
- Connect students to their faculty/instructors
- Connect students to their peers
- Foster involvement in campus activities by linking programs and events to the common reading
- Promote meaningful learning by encouraging intra- and inter-disciplinary dialogue
- Foster first-year student teaching-focused discussions among/between faculty
- Foster greater and intentional connection between the University and the community (public libraries, cultural events, etc.)
- Create synergies within the University and across the greater West Lafayette/Lafayette community

*Books will be distributed free of charge to all first year and transfer students during the Summer Transition, Advising and Registration (STAR) program in June-July 2009. International students and students unable to attend STAR for extenuating reasons will receive an electronic copy of the book during the same period.*

**For more information, resources, and links, visit [www.purdue.edu/sats/commonreading](http://www.purdue.edu/sats/commonreading).**