

The Top 20 Books Being Taught at Today's Colleges

The [Open Syllabus Project](#) has collected over 1 million college syllabi, according to the [New York Times](#). Analyzing that data, they have compiled a database of texts used in college classrooms and just how often they are used.

The architects of the project hope their data will shed new light on “teaching, publishing and intellectual history.” It will also allow all of us to better compare today's college curricula to those of the past.

Below are the top 20 most taught works in college classrooms. Visit the [Syllabus Explorer](#) to see the full list.

1. **The Elements of Style**

Strunk, William, 1869-1946

2. **Republic**

Plato

3. **The Communist Manifesto**

Marx, Karl, 1818-1883

4. **Biology**

Campbell, Neil A., 1946

5. Frankenstein

Shelley, Mary Wollstonecraft, 1797-1851

6. Ethics

Aristotle

7. Leviathan

Hobbes, Thomas, 1588-1679

8. The Prince

Machiavelli, Niccolò, 1469-1527

9. Oedipus

Sophocles

10. Hamlet

Shakespeare, William, 1564-1616

11. The Odyssey

Homer

12. Orientalism

Said, Edward W.

13. A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations

Turabian, Kate L.

14. The Iliad

Homer

15. Heart of Darkness

Conrad, Joseph, 1857-1924

16. Canterbury Tales

Chaucer, Geoffrey, -1400

17. Antigone

Sophocles

18. Letter from the Birmingham Jail

King, Martin Luther, Jr., 1929-1968

19. On Liberty

Mill, John Stuart, 1806-1873

20. **The Structure of Scientific Revolutions**

Kuhn, Thomas S.

What this list can't tell us is how many students actually bothered to read the assigned works. And given the state of education in this country, I'm guessing quite a few bought the CliffNotes version.

Image: Skylar Lester/Pierce College News