

# 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*