



PRESS RELEASE

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## Twenty Greatest Academic Books as Chosen by Academic Publishers and Booksellers

*Top 20 list unveiled in run up to Academic Book Week*

London, 14 October 2015. From *A Brief History of Time* to *A Vindication of the Rights of Women*, a list of the top 20 academic books that have changed the world, as voted for by leading academic booksellers, librarians and publishers, has been revealed.

The list has been unveiled ahead of [Academic Book Week](#) (9-16 November 2015), a week of debate and celebration around the academic book and what its future holds. [Events are taking place across the UK](#) ranging from a seminar questioning where the academic book of the future will 'live', to a debate on whether we should trust Wikipedia.

Spanning subject areas as varied as science, feminism, politics, evolution and philosophy, the top 20 list of academic books that changed the world includes titles by authors as diverse as Stephen Hawking, Germaine Greer, Plato and Charles Darwin, as well as more surprising inclusions like William Shakespeare and George Orwell.

**ACADEMIC BOOK WEEK 2015**

**20 ACADEMIC BOOKS THAT CHANGED THE WORLD**

Which will you choose?  
AcBookWeek.com

#20ABWorld

Einstein	THE PRINCE	DESMOND MORRIS THE NAKED APE	Edward W. Said Orientalism	East-West
STEPHEN HAWKING A BRIEF HISTORY OF TIME	DE BEHAVIOR	Plato	Plato The Republic	Ways of Seeing John Berger
Rachael Carson Silent Spring	Richard Hoagart The Uses of Literacy	George Orwell Nineteen Eighty-Four		

The top 20 academic books that changed the world are:

- ***A Brief History of Time*** by Stephen Hawking
- ***A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*** by Mary Wollstonecraft
- ***Critique of Pure Reason*** by Immanuel Kant
- ***Nineteen Eighty-Four*** by George Orwell
- ***On the Origins of Species*** by Charles Darwin
- ***Orientalism*** by Edward Said
- ***Silent Spring*** by Rachel Carson
- ***The Communist Manifesto*** by Marx & Engels
- ***The Complete Works*** by William Shakespeare
- ***The Female Eunuch*** by Germaine Greer
- ***The Making of the English Working Class*** by E P Thompson
- ***The Meaning of Relativity*** by Albert Einstein
- ***The Naked Ape*** by Desmond Morris
- ***The Prince*** by Niccolò Machiavelli
- ***The Republic*** by Plato
- ***The Rights of Man*** by Thomas Paine
- ***The Second Sex*** by Simone de Beauvoir
- ***The Uses of Literacy*** by Richard Hoggart
- ***The Wealth of Nations*** by Adam Smith
- ***Ways of Seeing*** by John Berger

Chosen from 200 titles submitted by publishers across the UK, the top 20 list was selected by a committee of experts invited to take part by the Booksellers Association and The Academic Book of the Future project. Voting is now open to the public to choose the most influential academic book of all time by visiting <http://acbookweek.com/20abcworld/>. Results of the public vote will be unveiled during Academic Book Week in November, as well as on Twitter at @AcBookFuture #AcBookWeek.

**Dr Samantha Rayner, the Principal Investigator on the AHRC/British Library Academic Book of the Future Project**, said: “This is a fascinating and salutary list for academics – put together by people who work with academic books but who are not themselves academics, it reflects the reality of what a wider public sees as ‘academic’. This may not be what academics agree with – it will be a controversial list – but will, we hope, provoke valuable discussion for the Project about the nature and impact of academic books.”

**Alan Staton, Head of Marketing at the Booksellers Association**, commented: “One of the most interesting things about the list is that it calls into question how we define a book as academic, underlining the fact that when we consider the future of the academic book we must also question our own assumptions. We’re on tenterhooks to find out which book the public chooses as the most influential academic book of all time.”

**Richard Mollet, Chief Executive of The Publishers Association**, added: “This list shows the incredible variety of academic literature, across the sciences, arts and humanities. Each title has in its own way helped shaped our understanding of the world and in supporting these authors, publishers have played their part in making their incredible insights accessible to all.”

**Dr Audrey McCulloch, Chief Executive of the Association of Learned & Professional Society Publishers (ALPSP)** said: “These books represent some of the finest independent thinkers, all of whom generate debate in the pursuit of the development and understanding of science and society. These 20 titles demonstrate the impact that can be achieved when writers and publishers come together.”

**Neil Smyth, Senior Librarian at the Faculty of Arts, University of Nottingham**, and member of the voting committee, added: “Only four women, but all feminist icons. This list of academic books will lead to debate and controversy, but, more importantly, reading. All of these books are available in the University library where I work, and they will be available in libraries and bookshops around the country for people to discover and rediscover.”

Academic Book Week is a key event in The Academic Book of the Future project’s calendar. [The Academic Book of the Future](#) project is a two year initiative exploring the future of the academic book, funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council in collaboration with The British Library.

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### **Notes to Editors:**

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### **About Academic Book Week**

Academic Book Week (#AcBookWeek) is a week-long showcase of academic book excellence aiming to open up a dialogue between the makers and users of academic books. #AcBookWeek takes place 9th-16th November 2015 at venues across the UK, in association with The Publishers’ Association, the Association of Learned & Professional Society Publishers and the Booksellers Association, and is supported by the Arts and Humanities Research Council and the British Library. Participation in events is open to everyone, from academic institutions to bookshops to publishers and those engaged or interested in the world of academic books.

[www.acbookweek.com](http://www.acbookweek.com)

### **The Academic Book of the Future**

The Academic Book of the Future is a two year research project funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council in collaboration with The British Library exploring the future of the academic book. The Academic Book of the Future project aims to encourage discussion around the future of the academic book and looks at how scholarly work in the arts and humanities will be produced and read in coming years.

<http://academicbookfuture.org/>