

Landscape of student discourse around the humanities and liberal arts.

C-14.100 is a [topic model](#) (100 topics) of WE1S's [Collection 14](#) (21,182 articles from college newspapers across the US) reveals a complex landscape of student discourse surrounding the humanities and liberal arts.¹

Many topics relate to disciplines that we might associate with the humanities: History (84), Art (9), Music (59), Literature (33), Creative Writing (5), Languages (16), Film (90), Journalism and Publishing (18), Theater (82), Philosophy and Classics (10), and Media and Communications (71). Sciences also appear, with topics about Digital Technology (54), STEM Fields (93), Engineering and Computer Science (64), and Medicine (75, 78).

Student discourse around the humanities and liberal arts intersects with a number of important social issues, including Campus Protests and Legal Action (61), Tuition and Student Debt (28), Racial and Ethnic Diversity (39), Free Speech (63), Housing and Community Infrastructure (20), International Affairs (96), Political Elections (23), Criminal Justice (29), Environmentalism and Sustainability (50), Feminism and Gender Equality (55), Labor Relations (45), Mental Health and Substances, (49), K-12 Education/Equity (40), Religious Belief and Tolerance (1), Sexual Assault (74), Social Media (53), LGBTQ Rights (89), and Disability and Accessibility (99). Students also grapple with profound questions about the Meaning of Life (94), the Value of Education (8), and the Power of Narrative (4).

University infrastructure accounts for many topics, including Initiatives and Planning (27),

Programming (57), Bureaucratic Process (70), Metrics and Ranking (15), Campus Construction (42), Administration (21, 52), Research (19), Faculty (47), Budgets (72), Enrollment (32), Degree Programs (41), College Sports (56), Donations (25), Funding (6), Graduate Programs (26), Admissions (24), Commencement (35), and Libraries (85). Some topics deal with day-to-day life, such as Sensory Experiences (80), Student Advice and Time Management (60), Police Reports (88), Student Living (30), Food (58), Fashion (36), and Games (86). Other student-focused topics include Student Engagement (69), Advising (22), College Majors and Employment (13), Extracurriculars (73), Student Careers and Job Prospects (62), Majors and Minors (3), Student Government (44, 92), Study Abroad (34), and Standardized Tests and Grading (83). Students debate pedagogical practices in articles associated with Teaching and Learning (11) and General Education (100).

Several topics designate genres of articles, such as Opinions and Editorials (48), Interviews (95), Student Retrospectives (31), Event Announcements (12, 87, 79, 43), Obituaries (77, 65), Open Letters and Statements of Support (46), and Award Announcements (68). Some larger topics are too general for interpretation (98); the smallest are clusters of proper nouns (2, 17, 97, 51, 67, 38, 66, 81, 14, 7, 37). Others are institution-specific (91, 76).

Resources

Collection modeled: [C-14 \(start page\)](#)

Model visualizations: [dfrBrowser](#), [Topic Bubbles](#), [pyLDAvis](#), [Dendrograms](#)

Related writings: C. Henseler, "[The Millennial Perspective](#)," R. Steding "[Reddit Student Discourse](#)"

¹ [Topic models](#) allow us to analyze collections too big for individuals to read by themselves; we can therefore access a "birds-eye-view" of student journalism through and better understand what kinds of themes emerge when undergraduates write articles containing the keywords "humanities" or "liberal arts." All topics in C-14.100 are hand-labeled by WE1S team members.