

OVERVIEW OF RAVENBURN'S DOCTORATE of ARTS (DA) DEGREE

SECTION 1: Title and Design

Ravenburn's doctorate degree has a general title that is one of the titles provided by the Open Latch Education Foundation (OLEF) and also a specific title that is approved by OLEF but originally provided by the mentor and the mentor's partner. This specific title is called the "focus" or the "focus title."

TITLE: **DA in Cultural Perspectives for Ministry**

FOCUS: <to be determined by student and mentor>

In addition to these titles, the mentor must provide a description of the approach, of the goal of the program, and of the rationale for choosing the content.

APPROACH: Secular material (with some exceptions) because this angle is often ignored or marginalized by current Christian authors. Also, this material is best known by the mentors.

GOAL(S): To inform the Christian minister (lay or professional) about the secular views on issues relevant to the culture, views that may support or oppose current Christian practice; to provide an environment of accountability that will facilitate the development of habits of lifelong reading and writing; to introduce the candidate to strong professional writing skills in books that have been placed in the public market; to help the student develop a professional writing project or platform.

RATIONALE: The guiding question is, "In a group of 200 American adults, how many will be dealing with problems or trials associated with ____?" The headings for our reading modules fill in the blank, and we feel that if at least 10% of the group can be helped through the counsel of a minister conversant in the reading material associated with that module, then the module has a place in our program.

METHOD: This degree program relies heavily on what the Open Latch Education Foundation calls "bottom up" reading. From the details of the nonfiction narrative, the reader abstracts general principles that they can then use to

understand human action in similar situations. These principles should be perennial and “cross category” in the sense that they can be applied to different aspects of human experience. The student of this program will be periodically asked to discuss these principles that they are forming and archiving. The student is expected to archive these insights in the way the student best sees fit (a paper journal, a digital journal, audio recordings, etc.)

SECTION 2: Mentor Group

The doctorate programs in the faculty-school system are required to have one main instructor and at least one ancillary instructor to work with each student. This is known as the “mentor group.”

The main instructor is known as the “mentor,” and the ancillary instructor is known as the “co-mentor.” These mentors must be individually accredited by OLEF or must be part of the permanent faculty group of a faculty-school accredited by OLEF.

The mentor and the student form the main relationship in the doctoral program. However, the co-mentor has an important role to play. The co-mentor must be familiar with the types of books that make up the material for the focus and must be ready to step in and become the mentor for the student should the original mentor be unable to meet these duties due to health reasons or the like. Also, at times the co-mentor will be expected to interact meaningfully with the student even if the mentor is still active simply to give the student a variety of perspective on the material. For Ravenburn, the following faculty make up the mentor group:

Mentor: **Matt Horn**, PhD, Kent State University

Co-mentor: **John Janke**, PhD, Ravenburn Humanities Bible College

SECTION 3: Sponsoring School

Each mentor group must find a faculty-school college to sponsor them. This college must be accredited by OLEF. The school must examine the proposed DA program and endorse the program. At this point, a faculty member from the school will be appointed by the school’s director to monitor the progress of the student through the program. This faculty member must hold a DA or a PhD, and they will not be officially considered part of the mentor group. This faculty member from the sponsoring school is called the “monitor.” The monitor must approve the writing proposal of the student.

Monitor: **Bill Dipuccio**, PhD, Marquette University

That a mentor group must find a sponsoring school is important because no mentor group by itself can offer degrees. The mentor and the co-mentor can offer the content of the degree (the book list, etc.) and can instruct and advise the student through the process, but they cannot actually award degrees. Instead, the sponsoring school tracks the student’s progress through the program and then allows the credits to transfer into that school’s corresponding doctorate program. The sponsoring school can view

the mentor and the co-mentor as affiliated faculty with no continuing obligation of sponsorship and affiliation with the mentors once that particular student-mentor contract has expired.

Some important notes are in order.

1. The sponsoring school must list the DA program on its web site, although it does not have to actively seek enrollment for the degree. This can be left to the individual mentors sponsored by the school.
2. The sponsoring school, since it lists a DA program, must have at least one member of its permanent faculty group that has the DA or PhD and who can be in charge of monitoring the mentors the school sponsors. This monitor must also approve of the writing projects of the candidates of the program.
3. The mentors that the school sponsors can themselves be part of that school's permanent faculty group. In this case, while it does not have to be listed this way, the doctoral degree program will most likely be listed as a regular and active program offered by the school itself.
4. Therefore, given the possibility of No. 3 above, faculty-school colleges can offer a doctoral program if the leader and co-leader of the program both have a DA or PhD. The leader of the program must partner with another faculty holding the DA or PhD, either from that very school or not, and a third faculty member from the school (or another school) also holding the DA or PhD must be in contact with the mentor and the co-mentor, acting in the same capacity that a sponsoring school's faculty member would be in contact with two independent mentors in a mentor group.

The job of this third faculty is simply to safeguard the interests of the sponsoring school, and this is done by making sure the degree program is something that aligns with the school's own vision and goals, that the mentors are faculty that the school can affiliate with in good faith, and that the basic rules of the program (especially the contact rules and the time-to-degree rules) are all followed carefully.

SECTION 4: Degree Requirements (Overview)

1. Before enrolling in a doctoral program in the faculty-school system, the student must show evidence that they have received a MA or MS degree from a college or university. It is up to the mentor group and the sponsoring school both to examine the student's previous transcripts.

The student and mentor group must agree to a **commencement document**. The student and the mentor must create a commencement document which articulates and affirms the following:

- a) That the student has examined the requirements of the specific program, has had a talk with the mentor group about any possible questions about the program, has given copies of their MA or MS transcripts to the mentors, and has agreed to the terms, timeline, tuition, and fees of the program.

- b) That the student's work on the program has started on a specific date, and that the student must finish the program 6 years from that date, barring any obviously reasonable delays (serious medical issues, death in family, etc.).
- c) That if special tuition rates have been negotiated, those special rates must be listed in the email sent to the sponsoring school, OLEF, and COFSA (see below).
- d) That if there are any other special variations or accommodations to the basic requirements, those changes must also be clearly listed in the email that serves as the commencement document.
- e) That the mentor cannot withdraw from the role of guiding the student through the program, once the program has begun, barring obviously reasons like serious medical issues, death in family, etc.).

The commencement document's main purpose is to establish the start date of a student's work on the degree, but the document will also make it clear that since the student is paying the tuition, the mentors who have signed the contract have entered upon a material contract and thus are expected to fulfil the promise of that contract.

The document can be an email that is forwarded through the student and mentor's email boxes and has finally been archived at both OLEF and COFSA.

2. The student must physically meet with the mentor at least twice every calendar year for at least a 4-hour meeting each time, with at least 3 months between the two meetings, or at least once a year with the mentor for an 8-hour meeting. If there is no time during the year when the mentor is in or near the geographic area of the student, the student is expected to travel to the mentor's home area and to pay for the travel and lodgings if necessary. If at any point the mentor is incapacitated and cannot meet, then the student must meet with the co-mentor.
3. In addition to the above requirement, the minimum requirements of student-mentor contact are as follows.
 - a. The student and their mentor must be in email or text communication at least once a week.
 - b. The student and their mentor must be involved with meaningful synchronous communication at least once a month (this is a live video stream or a live phone call).
4. This degree has two stages: the pre-candidate stage and the candidate stage. One earns pre-candidate status simply by enrolling and agreeing to the commencement document. The pre-candidate can specifically be referred to as "student," although sometimes the term "student" will be used in a more general sense in this document. However, the candidate will always be referred to as "candidate."

Pre-candidate obligations. In their time as a pre-candidate, the student must achieve the following:

- a. The student must have their proposal for their writing project(s) approved by both the mentor and the co-mentor, although the mentor will be the one to work with the

student on the project(s). The sponsoring school's monitor must also approve the project.

- i. The proposal must detail a writing project or a collection of projects that either by itself (as a single project) or as a collection (of smaller projects) equals the traditional length and work put into a traditional dissertation.
- ii. The proposal may focus on writing in a strict sense (that is, writing articles or book-length manuscripts) or may extend the concept to include developing communication artifacts that demonstrate structure, unity, design, and composition and that are in a fixed format and repeatedly accessible to a public audience. We consider the both traditional writing like essays and books and the nontraditional type to be "texts" in a broad sense, and the word "text" will be used to denominate this broad sense. Non-exhaustive examples of such texts are as follows (in providing this list we do not mean to suggest that any one of these alone is sufficient for the writing project).
 1. web sites
 2. articles to be sent into a current magazine
 3. the development of a new magazine or journal for public use
 4. textbooks or curriculum development
 5. a book for public use
 6. videos in addition to written content
 7. an audio composition like a radio-drama or collection of pod casts set in a written context like a web site
 8. a curriculum presented in graphic-novel format or in brochure format
 9. a sustained blog
 10. a sustained communication platform servicing a network (like a bulleting or a newsletter)
- b. The student must pass OLEF's Logic exam, which is a written exam that must be submitted to and graded by OLEF. This is the same logic exam given to the undergraduates. If the pre-candidate has already taken the exam, they must take it again to demonstrate sustained mastery. NOTE: The logic exam must be submitted to OLEF at the same time the Candidacy Checklist is submitted (see No. 5 below).
- c. The student must successfully submit the Research Tools Checklist.
- d. The student must meet the Western Philosophy reading requirements. This requirement is set in place here not to try to ensure a deep learning of philosophy before the student achieves candidacy but rather to serve as a strong reminder to the student that core ideas of our Western heritage must be grappled with sooner or later in order for one to

have a truly deep understanding of cultural issues. Here are the philosophy requirements:

- i. Selections from a minimum of 2 popular books (that is, written to a popular audience) about general concepts in Western philosophy. Ideally, these books are to be chosen from a list provided by OLEF. Students may choose their own selections from these books, as long as the selections are of the total length required. Total minimum length of selections = 300 pages. Audiobooks can be used to meet this requirement. (See below for more options in book choice.)
- ii. Selections from an anthology (single volume or multi-volume) that seeks to present a history of Western philosophy. The list of selections will be provided by OLEF. The student will be encouraged to choose from the list. Total minimum length of selections = 200 pages. Audiobooks can be used to meet this requirement. (See below for more options in book choice.)
- iii. Selections from primary philosophical writings (Western philosophy). The list of acceptable selections will be provided by OLEF. Ideally, the student will choose from the list. Total minimum length of selections = 100 pages. Audiobooks can be used to meet this requirement. (See below for more options in book choice.)

If the student has already read a sufficient amount of philosophy not listed by OLEF, then they can send OLEF an email describing this reading to see whether it is sufficient to meet this requirement. Furthermore, if students have already read selections or books listed by OLEF, they can count that material toward this requirement. That is, previous reading can count in the Western Philosophy reading requirements. This is a departure of the requirement that the reading of the primary book list be new to the student.

- e. The student must read at least 33 of the titles listed in the book list and must complete at least 10,000 pages of reading during the pre-candidacy stage. If there is a book on the book list that the student has already read before they enrolled in the program, then that book must be substituted out for a book the student hasn't read yet. Up to 16 of these books can be read as audiobooks.
 - i. Some qualifications are in order. The first qualification refers to actual page count.
 1. To go by page number is to assume that a certain uniformity can be met given all the various sizes, formats, line spaces, and font sized used in book publication. To help develop a sense of this uniformity, OLEF has developed material to illustrate the range of books that can be used in a straightforward way concerning page number. In contrast, some books have pages that are densely lined with text, and others use larger font and larger space between lines. Of the former, the page count needs to be adjusted. For example, 20 pages of a dense book may count as 24 for the page count needed for the degree requirements [this is an increase

of 20%], and of the latter, 20 pages would count as 16 regular pages [a decrease of 25%]). A sense of what constitutes this uniform page must be developed by experience, and the mentors must demonstrate to OLEF that they have developed this sense.

2. The mentor and the student must come to an agreement as to what number of pages can be logged as meeting the requirements of this degree when skimming, speedreading, or skip reading techniques are employed.
 3. If an audiobook is used, then the page count can be ascertained by referring to the hardcopy of choice.
 - a. If the student finishes the whole book by audiobook and the printed version is less than 300 pages, then the actual page count of the book's main text (excluding end notes, etc.) can be used on the page-count log.
 - b. If the student finishes the whole book by audiobook and the printed version is more than 300 pages, then the student must enter only 300 pages in the page-count log for their log toward the primary requirements of the degree. This log is called the "Main Log." This is to ensure that physical reading strategies (slow reading, normal reading, speed reading, skimming, skip reading) are employed in at least half of the book list. The student can then enter log the rest of the pages in order to earn an honorific (cum laude, etc.). This record is called the "Honorifics Log."
 4. The student can read up to 50% of the book list as audiobooks.
- ii. The second qualification refers to logging the page count.
1. The student must keep track of the titles and pages read in order to provide an accurate report on the 10th day of every month.
 2. The report must be a working, cumulative document. That is, each report must contain the information from the previous report as well as the new titles and new pages read up to the date of submission. This is to enable the mentor to get a holistic view of the reading by looking at the most current report.
5. *Candidate obligations.* Once all the above requirements are fulfilled, the student then submits the Candidacy Checklist to OLEF. Upon OLEF's approval of this and upon the student's successful logic comprehensive (to be sent to OLEF at the same time the candidacy checklist is submitted), a student officially becomes a candidate, and they must now go on to fulfil the following requirements within the deadlines set by the time-to-degree requirements (see below) in order to be eligible for their doctoral award.

- a. The candidate must continue to meet the contact requirements listed in No. 2.
- b. The candidate must finish the book list in a way that fulfills all of the following requirements:
 - i. 67 more titles, for a total of at least 100 titles. If there is a book on the book list that the candidate has already read before they enrolled in the program, then that book must be substituted out for a book the candidate hasn't read yet. Up to 34 of these books can be read as audiobooks. (No more than half of the total book list can be read as audiobooks.)
 - ii. 20,000 more pages of reading, for a total of 30,000 pages. This means that the candidate must show that they have worked with 100 titles in such a way that the pages read from those titles equal a minimum of 30,000 pages. More titles or more pages may be involved, but this minimum must be met.
 - iii. There are 30 required films. These films will be picked by the mentor according to the reading choices of the candidate.
- c. The candidate must compile a specialized book list of 20 – 40 books related to their writing project(s) and must successfully pass a written exam concerning the theses and makeup of a random selection of the books.
- d. The candidate must successfully finish and defend their writing project(s).
 - i. The defense takes the form of a live question-answer session between the candidate and the mentor and the co-mentor. The discussion can take place with all three present in live conversation or as two separate conversations between the student and the mentor and then between the student and the co-mentor. Both the mentor and the co-mentor must be convinced after the conversation(s) that the writing requirement of this degree has been adequately fulfilled.
 - ii. The dissertation portfolio must be completed and ready for review. The text(s) that make up the writing requirement must be final drafts or final-product quality, polished on both surface and substance
 - iii. The candidate must show evidence of a collection of writing books (grammar books, books on mechanics or style, books discussing the development of ideas or structure) that the candidate has assembled and used in the process of developing the writing. The candidate does not have to have read this material in its entirety; rather, the idea here is that a collection of reference texts has been assembled that has helped with, and that can continue to help with, lifelong writing skills. Non-exhaustive examples of these texts are as follows:
 - 1. *Eats, Shoots & Leaves*, by Lynne Truss
 - 2. *Punctuation Plain & Simple*, by Edgar and Jean Alward

3. *Style: Ten Lessons in Clarity and Grace*, by Joseph Williams
 4. *The Only Grammar Book You'll Ever Need*, by Susan Thurman
 5. *The Blue Book of Grammar and Punctuation*, by Jane Straus
- e. The candidate must have finish all the requirements of the degree within the deadlines listed in the time-to-degree section of the commencement document. This time-to-degree is describe below (see Section 8).
 - f. All tuition and fees due must be paid before the degree can be awarded to any candidate who has fulfilled 6.a – 6.e listed above. That is, no tuition payment or fee can be in arears.

SECTION 5: “10-20-30 Reporting”

There are three main reasons for this reporting, which is called the “10-20-30” method. First, it gives the student a way to set up a routine that will help them consistently do the work of the program. Second, it gives the mentors (that is, the mentor and the co-mentor) a way to track the student’s progress. Third, it gives the accreditation agency and the recognition agency a way to get more directly involved in the DA programs, and this involvement will ultimately benefit both the mentors and the student.

The following describes the reporting the student must do on a regular basis. It is important to remember two things. First, the report must be digital in some way. Second, each report must be submitted by the student via email to 3 places at once—to the mentor, to OLEF, and to COFSA. This will be explained in Section 3, below.

1. On the **10th of every month**, the student has to submit an email report about the page count of the reading they have done since the last 10th.

The subject line of the email should include the following information:

School Name, Full Name of Student, Page Count Report
(for example, RavenburnHBC, John F. Smith, Page Count Report)

The email itself should clearly show the total pages read so far since the start of the program in such a way that the new pages can be identified. This can be done as a spread sheet or simply as an email that reports this information in short paragraphs.

2. On the **20th of every month**, the student must submit an email simply affirming that they have read for at least 5 of the preceding days (that is, they have read for at least 50% of the days between the 10th and the 20th of each month).

The subject line of the email should include the following information:

School Name, Full Name of Student, Reading Affirmation
(for example, RavenburnHBC, John F. Smith, Reading Affirmation)

The purpose of this requirement is to help the student build up the habit of continual and regular reading sessions separated by no more than one full day.

3. On the **30th of every month** (for February, this would be the last day in February), the student must submit a short report detailing what they have been working on concerning the requirements to achieve DA candidacy. This report would work best as a short email simply affirming and detailing that consistent work has been done concerning these requirements.

The subject line of the email should include the following information:

School Name, Full Name of Student, Earning Candidacy
(for example, RavenburnHBC, John F. Smith, Earning Candidacy)

The email can simply quickly say what the student has actually been working on that month besides the reading.

There are some logistical requirements that the student must follow:

1. Each individual report must be simultaneously sent by the student to the following 3 email addresses.
 - a. The student's mentor's email address. In this case, the email address for the mentor (Matthew Horn) is mhravenburn@gmail.com .
 - b. olefservice@gmail.com (as a CC to the above email). (This is the address for the Open Latch Education Foundation, the accrediting agency for Ravenburn's doctoral program.)
 - c. cofsaservice@gmail.com (as a CC to the above email) (This is the address for the Council of Oversight for Faculty School Accreditation, the recognition agency for the Open Latch Education Foundation.)

It is important that the student sends these emails from their own email address. The student should not expect their mentor to forward to OLEF and COFSA the email sent by the student to the mentor.

If the student fails to properly report to these three addresses, OLEF and COFSA reserve the right to contact the student directly. OLEF is authorized by COFSA to suspend the awarding of quarterly and summer-session credit to any student who does not supply the reports.

2. The 3 reports must be submitted every month, starting at the first full month after the student has submitted the commencement document, until the completion of the program or until the mentor declares the reporting requirement met. Students are expected to continue reading and working on the candidacy checklist throughout the summer.

This raises the question of vacation time, time taken up by medical issues, and payments and credits for lapsed time.

- a. Vacation time. If a student wants to skip any part of the 10-20-30 reporting for a month, they must discuss this with the mentor and if the mentor approves, the mentor is to send an email to OLEF and COFSA explaining the short hiatus. It is good for the mentor to keep a copy of this email and to archive it with the other reporting emails from the student.

- i. A student can skip up the 10th-day report up to twice a calendar year as vacation time, pending mentor approval.
 - ii. A student can skip up the 20th-day report up to twice a calendar year as vacation time, pending mentor approval.
 - iii. A student can skip up the 30th-day report up to twice a calendar year as vacation time, pending mentor approval.
 - iv. The skipping of these reports can be piecemeal or bundled. That is, if bundled the student can skip one whole month or even two continuous months if this is approved by the mentor. This bundling is not advisable but will be allowed if the student insists. This is our nod to the fact that at times a solid, extended period of rest is more effective for physical and mental wellbeing than shorter, intermittent breaks.
 - b. Medical leave. A student can take unlimited medical leave as long as the student can confidently assure the mentor that the leave is indeed a medical necessity. The mentor is to send an email to OLEF and COFSA explaining the short hiatus. It is good for the mentor to keep a copy of this email and to archive it with the other reporting emails from the student.
3. The reports must be submitted in digital form so that they can be easily archived by the mentor, the accreditation agency (OLEF), and the recognition agency (COFSA). The need to quickly and efficiently archive the emails is the reason for some of the details required above, like set subject-line titles and so forth.

As mentioned above, each report must be addressed to the mentor and also copied to the accreditation agency and the recognition agency. The one email containing the report must be sent directly from the student's email box and will then automatically be delivered to these three other boxes.
 4. Grade penalties for late reports and missing reports will be applied if the reports are late or never submitted. The mentor will discuss the grade deductions with the student and will act according to an agreed upon course.

SECTION 6: The Book List

The book list is the heartbeat of the Faculty-School System's doctoral programs. The following information has been mentioned above but is reiterated here for easy reference.

1. The main book list must contain a strict minimum of at least 100 titles that can be shown to align with the specific mentor group's focus and approach. It is recommended that this list in fact contain 150 – 200 titles so that the student can have a greater chance at finding books of genuine benefit to the in their own particular situation of personal context and reading ability. This list can also have up to 15 books of fiction as long as the mentor is convinced that the perspective of the novel is beneficial to the church leader.

2. A student must interact with at least 100 titles and must read a total of 30,000 pages. Students must log the pages read in real time and must be able to present/explain the log to their mentors on a regular basis. To count as a title on the transcript, the student must read at least 100 (consecutive or non-consecutive) pages from the book.
3. If an audiobook is used, then the page count can be ascertained by referring to the hardcopy of choice. The student can read up to 50% of the book list as audiobooks.
4. A film list can be included in the book list, and up to 30 films can be required. Films do not have to be a necessary part of the program unless so stated in the specific DA overview document that each mentor group must give their students. If certain films are indeed required by the mentor group, and if the student has already seen those films, then the student does not have to re-watch the film nor does a new film need to be substituted in (this is a departure from the new-to-the-student book requirement of the book list). Finally, films are in addition to the books and the page count. No set number of films can be used to substitute for a book.

For the Ravenburn program, 30 films are required. These will be chosen by the mentor during the course of the program.

The book list is arranged in categories that relate to aspects of culture that are at play in the lives of the majority, or at least in sizeable parts, of a typical church congregation or Christian organization (200 people).

At least 3 books and 900 pages from each of 15 categories chosen by the student must be read by the student seeking a doctorate through Ravenburn. This requirement is in place in order to make the student acquire a range of reading. After this minimum requirement, the student can read from this list according to their own strategies and designs.

THE BOOK LIST

These books have been chosen in order to provide multiple viewpoints on the topic. In no way should a book's inclusion in this list be taken to mean that the mentor group approves or agrees with the book's material.

At the end of some modules, films and contemporary or classic fiction have been placed, and a small dashed rule (---) signals the presence of these materials. We require the student to watch 30 films.

Addiction

Pill City: How Two Teenagers Foiled the Feds and Built a Drug Empire (K. Deutsch)

Gunslinger: The Remarkable, Improbably, Iconic Life of Brett Farve (J. Pearlman)

Tiger Woods (J. Benedick, A. Keteyian)

Sugar: Michael Ray Richardson, Eighties Excess, and the NBA

American Pain: How a Young Felon and His Ring of Doctors Unleashed America's Deadliest Drug Epidemic (J. Temple)

It Was Me All Along: A Memoir (A. Mitchell)

Nicotine (G. Hens)

Dueling with Kings: High Stakes, Killer Sharks, and the Get-Rich Promise of Daily Fantasy Sports (D. Barbarisi)

Game of Shadows: Barry Bonds, BALCO, and the Steroids Scandal That Rocked Professional Sports (M Fainaru-Wada)

Dreamland: The True Tale of America's Opiate Epidemic (S. Quinones)

The Craving Mind: From Cigarettes to Smart-Phones to Love—Why We Get Hooked and How We Can Break Bad Habits (J. Brewer)

Filthy Rich: A Powerful Billionaire, the Sex Scandal That Undid Him, and All the Justice That Money Can Buy (J. Patterson, J. Connolly, T. Malloy)

The Armstrong Lie (documentary, 2013, starring Lance Armstrong)

Weiner (documentary, 2016, starring Anthony Weiner)

Adventure, or Extremely Risky Physical Activity

Deep: Freediving, Renegade Science, and What the Ocean Tells Us about Ourselves (J. Nestor)

Salt, Sweat, and Tears: The Men Who Rowed the Oceans (A. Rackley)

Why We Fight: One Man's Search for Meaning inside the Ring (J. Rosenblatt)

Gironimo: Riding the Very Terrible 1914 Tour of Italy (T. Moore)

The Taliban Shuffle: Strange Days in Afghanistan and Pakistan (K. Barker)

The Ice Balloon: S. A. Andree and the Heroic Age of Artic Exploration (A. Wilkinson)

The Impossible Climb: Alex Honnold, El Capitan, and the Climbing Life (M. Synnott)

Dogtown and Z-Boys (documentary, 2001)

Crisis of Faith

The Gospel of Trees: A Memoir (A. Irving)

Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners (J. Bunyan)

The Boy Kings: A Journey into the Heart of the Social Network (K. Losse)

A Pilgrimage to Eternity: From Canterbury to Rome in Search of a Faith (T. Egan)

Into the Wild (J. Krakauer)

Surprised by Joy (C. Lewis)

Christianity and Liberalism (J. Machen)

Kant and the Nineteenth Century (W. T. Jones) (selections)

Signs (movie, 2002, starring Mel Gibson)

Contact (movie, 1997, starring Jodie Foster)

Life of Pi (movie, 2012, starring Irrfan Kahn)

Notes from the Underground (F. Dostoyevsky) (book, classic fiction)

Cults and Cult-Like Activity

The Road to Jonestown: Jim Jones and the People's Temple (J. Guinn)

Going Clear: Scientology, Hollywood, and the Prison of Belief (L. Wright)

Under the Banner of Heaven: A Story of Violent Faith (J. Krakauer)

Oneida: From the Free Love Utopia to the Well-Set Table (E. Wayland-Smith)

Utopia Drive: A Road Trip through America's Most Radical Idea (E. Reece)

The Cult at the End of the World: The Terrifying Story of the Aum Domsday Cult, from the Subways of Tokyo to the Nuclear Arsenals of Russia (D. Kapland)

American Messiahs: False Prophets of a Damned Nation (A. Morris)

My Story (E. Smart)

Ashes of Waco: An Investigation (D. Reavis)

American Heiress: The Wild Saga of Kidnapping, Crimes, and Trial of Patty Hearse (J. Toobin)

Being Elvis: A Lonely Life (R. Connolly)

Death/Immortality

Natural Causes: An Epidemic of Wellness, the Certainty of Dying, and Killing Ourselves to Live Longer (B. Ehrenreich)

The Book of Immortality: The Science, Belief, and Magic behind Living Forever (A. Gollner)

Death on Earth: Adventures in Evolution and Mortality (J. Howard)

To Be a Machine: Adventures among Cyborgs, Utopians, Hackers and the Futurists Solving the Modest Problem of Death (M. O'Connell)

The Postmortal (D. Magary) (book, modern fiction)

Is Anybody There (movie, 2009, starring Michael Caine)

Wings of Desire (movie, 1987, Bruno Ganz)

Tree of Life (movie, 2011, starring Brad Pitt and Jessica Chastain)

The Seventh Seal (movie, 1957, starring Max von Sydow)

Debt/Debt Industry/Personal Finance

Confessions of a Tax Collector: One Man's Tour of Duty inside the IRS (R. Yancey)

Bad Paper: Chasing Debt from Wall Street to the Underworld (J. Halpern)

Downhill from Here: Retirement Insecurity in the Age of Inequality (K. Newman)

Chain of Title: How Three Ordinary Americans Uncovered Wall Street's Great Foreclosure Fraud (D. Dayen)

The Debt Trap: How Student Loans Became a National Catastrophe (J. Mitchell)

Debt: The First 5000 Years (D. Graeber)

Meltdown (documentary, 2010, produced by CBS Television)

Food/Nutrition/General Health

The Coke Machine: The Dirty Truth behind the World's Favorite Soft Drink (M. Blanding)

Pandora's Lunchbox: How Processed Food Took Over the American Meal (M. Warner)

The Obesity Code: Unlocking the Secrets of Weight Loss (Jason Fung)

The End of Overeating: Taking Control of the Insatiable American Appetite (D. Kessler)

Combat Ready Kitchen: How the U. S. Military Shapes the Way You Eat (A. Marx de Salcedo)

Sugar, Salt, Fat: How the Food Giants Hooked Us (M. Moss)

The Poison Squad: One Chemist's Single-Minded Crusade for Food Safety at the Turn of the Twentieth Century (D. Blum)

The Omnivore's Dilemma: A Natural History of Four Meals (M. Pollan)

Drop Dead Healthy: One Man's Humble Quest for Bodily Perfection (A. Jacobs)

Fed Up (documentary, 2014, produced by Katie Couric et al.)

Home & House/Town & Community/Regional Identity

Nothin' but Blue Skies: The Heyday, Hard Times, and Hopes of America's Industrial Heartland (E. McClelland)

Original Gangstas: Tupac Shakur, Dr. Dre, Eazy-E, Ice Cube, and the Birth of West Coast Rap (B. Westhoff)

Glass House: The 1% Economy and the Shattering of the All-American Town (B. Alexander)

A \$500 House in Detroit: Rebuilding an Abandoned Home and an American City (D. Philp)

Endzone: The Rise, Fall, and Return of Michigan Football

This Town: Two Parties and a Funeral – Plus Plenty of Valet Parking! – in America's Gilded Capital (M. Leibovich)

Janesville: An American Story (A. Goldstein)

House Lust: America's Obsession with Our Homes (D. McGinn)

The End of the Suburbs: Where the American Dream Is Moving (L. Gallagher)

Happy City: Transforming Our Lives through Urban Design (C. Montgomery)

American Graffiti (movie, 1973, starring Ron Howard, et al.)

Illegal Drugs

The Short and Tragic Life of Robert Peace: A Brilliant Young Man Who Left Newark for the Ivy League (J. Hobbs)

American Kingpin: The Epic Hunt for the Criminal Mastermind behind the Silk Road (N. Bilton)

The Most Dangerous Man in America: Timothy Leary, Richard Nixon and the Hunt for the Fugitive King of LSD (B. Minutaglio, S. Davis)

The Last Narco: Inside the Hunt for El Chapo, the World's Most Wanted Drug Lord (M. Beith)

Seeds of Terror: How Heroin Is Bankrolling the Taliban and Al Qaeda (G. Peters)

Amy (documentary, 2015)

Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas (movie, 1998, starring Johnny Depp)

Bad Lieutenant (movie, 1992, starring Harvey Keitel)

American Gangster (movie, 2007, starring Denzel Washington)

Trainspotting (movie, 1996, starring Ewan McGregor)

Requiem for a Dream (movie, 2000, starring Ellen Burstyn and Jared Leto)

Immigration/Migrant Workers/Subjugated Peoples

The Chain: Farm, Factory, and the Fate of Our Food (T. Genoways)

Coyotes: A Journey across Borders with America's Illegal Aliens (T. Conover)

The Devil's Highway: A True Story (L. Urrea)

Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee: An Indian History of the American West (D. Brown)

Yellow Dirt: A Poisoned Land and the Betrayal of the Navajos (J. Pasternak)

Blood Earth: Modern Slavery, Ecocide, and the Secret to Saving the World (K. Bales)

Blood Brothers: The Story of the Strange Friendship between Sitting Bull and Buffalo Bill (D. Stillman)

The Jungle (U. Sinclair) (book, classic fiction)

Hostiles (movie, 2017, starring Christian Bale)

Salt of the Earth (documentary, 2014)

Internet/Information/Social Networks

Hatching Twitter: A True Story of Money, Power, Friendship, and Betrayal (N. Bilton)

The Dark Net: Inside the Digital Underworld (J. Bartlett)

American Kingpin: The Epic Hunt for the Criminal Mastermind behind the Silk Road (N. Bilton)

So You've Been Publically Shamed (J. Ronson)

Permanent Record (E. Snowden)

The Information: A History, a Theory, a Flood (J. Gleick)

The Victorian Internet: The Remarkable Story of the Telegraph and the Nineteenth Century's On-line Pioneers (T. Standage)

Love/Romance/Sex and Sexuality

American Fire: Love, Arson, and Life in a Vanishing Land (M. Hesse)

American Hookup: The New Culture of Sex on Campus (L. Wade)

Modern Romance: An Investigation (A. Ansari, E. Klinenberg)

When Harry Became Sally: Responding to the Transgender Moment (R. Anderson)

Missoula: Rape and the Justice System in a College Town (J. Krakauer)

Filthy Rich: A Powerful Billionaire, the Sex Scandal that Undid Him, and All the Justice that Money Can Buy: The Shocking True Story of Jeffrey Epstein (J. Paterson, J. Connolly, T. Malloy)

People Who Eat Darkness: The True Story of a Young Woman Who Vanished from the Streets of Tokyo--and the Evil That Swallowed Her Up (R. Perry)

Pageboy: A Memoir (E. Page)

The Mountain between Us (movie, 2017, starring Kate Winslet)

Kajillionaire (movie, 2020, starring Evan Rachel Wood)

History Boys (movie, 2006, starring Stephen Moore)

We the Animals (movie, 2018, starring Evan Rosado)

The Worst Person in the World (movie, 2021, starring Renate Reinsve)

Mystery in the Moonlight (movie, 2014, starring Emma Stone)

It's All about Love (movie, 2003, starring Joaquin Phoenix)

The Bridges of Madison County (movie, 1995, starring Clint Eastwood)

The Phantom Thread (movie, 2017, starring Daniel Day-Lewis)

Weiner (documentary, 2016)

Strangerland (movie, 2015, starring Nicole Kidman)

Manipulative People/Extreme Personalities

Them: Adventures with Extremists (J. Ronson)

In Sheep's Clothing: Understanding and Dealing with Manipulative People (G. Simon)

Elon Musk: Tesla, SpaceX, and the Quest for a Fantastic Future (A. Vance)

Bad Blood: Secrets and Lies in a Silicon Valley Startup (J. Carreyou)

Catching the Wolf of Wall Street: More Incredible True Stories of Fortunes, Schemes, Parties, and Prison (J. Belfort)

The Psychopath Test: A Journey through the Madness Industry (J. Ronson)

The Rasputin File (E. Radzinsky)

The Sociopath Next Door (M. Stout)

Steve Jobs (W. Isaacson)

Big Eyes (movie, 2014, starring Amy Adams)

Foxcatcher (movie, 2014, starring Steve Carell)

The Founder (movie, 2016, starring Michael Keating)

Changing Lanes (movie, 2002, starring Ben Affleck)

Medicine/Public Health and Safety (excluding Mental Health)

America's Bitter Pill: Money, Politics, Backroom Deals, and the Fight to Fix Our Broken Healthcare System (S. Brill)

Do No Harm: Stories of Life, Death, and Brain Surgery (H. Marsh)

Big Pharma: How Drug Companies Mislead Doctors and Harm Patients (B. Goldacre)

The Truth about the Drug Companies: How They Deceive Us and What to Do about It (M. Angell)

Bad Faith: When Religious Belief Undermines Modern Medicine (P. Offit)

The Panic Virus: A True Story of Medicine, Science, and Fear (S. Mnookin)

The Emperor of All Maladies: A Biography of Cancer (S. Mukherjee)

Civil Warriors: The Legal Siege on the Tobacco Industry (D. Zegart)

League of Denial: The NFL, Concussions, and the Battle for Truth (M. Fainaru-Wada, S. Fainaru)

Bottlemania: How Water Went on Sale and Why We Bought It (E. Royte)

Saudi America: The Truth about Fracking and How It's Changing the World (B. McLean)

No Apparent Distress: A Doctor's Coming of Age on the Front Lines of American Medicine (R. Pearson)

Gasland (documentary, 2010, produced by John Fox)

Deepwater Horizon (movie, 2016, starring Mark Wahlberg)

Mental Health/Psychology

Geography of Madness: Penis Thieves, Voodoo Death, and the Search for Meaning in the World's Strangest Syndromes (F. Bures)

Artificial Happiness: The Dark Side of the New Happy Class (R. Dworkin)

The Book of Woe: The DSM and the Unmaking of Psychiatry (G. Greenberg)

The Man Who Wasn't There: Investigations into the Strange New Science of the Self (A. Ananthaswamy)

The Man Who Couldn't Stop: OCD and the True Story of a Life Lost in Thought (D. Adam)

The Center Cannot Hold: My Journey through Madness (E. Saks)

The Personality Brokers: The Strange History of Myers-Briggs and the Birth of Personality Testing (M. Emre)

The Psychopathy Test: My Journey through the Madness Industry (J. Ronson)

A First-Rate Madness: Discovering the Links between Leadership and Mental Illness (N. Ghaemi)

The Edge of Every Day: Sketches of Schizophrenia (M. Sardy)

A Beautiful Mind (movie, 2001, starring Russell Crowe)

The Beaver (movie, 2011, starring Mel Gibson)

The Walk (movie, 2015, starring Jordon Gordon-Levitt)

The King of California (movie, 2007, starring Michael Douglas)

Awakenings (movie, 1990, starring Robert De Niro and Robin Williams)

The Father (movie, 2020, starring Anthony Hopkins)

A Woman Under the Influence (movie, 1974, starring Gena Rowlands and Peter Falk)

Eternal Beauty (movie, 2017, starring Sally Hawkins)

Military Service

Thank You for Your Service (D. Finkel)

Absolutely American: Four Years at West Point (D. Lipsky)

The Operators: The Wild and Terrifying Inside Story of America's War in Afghanistan (M. Hastings)

Where Men Win Glory: The Odyssey of Pat Tillman (J. Krakauer)

Blackwater: The Rise of the World's Most Powerful Mercenary Army (J. Scahill)

War Is a Force That Gives Us Meaning (C. Hedges)

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Jarhead (movie, 2005, starring Jake Gyllenhaal and Jamie Foxx)

Apocalypse Now (movie, 1979, starring Martin Sheen and Marlon Brando)

Full Metal Jacket (movie, 1987, starring Matthew Modine)

Paths to Glory (movie, 1957, starring Kirk Douglas)

Born on the 4th of July (movie, 1989, starring Tom Cruise)

The Pianist (movie, 2002, starring Adrian Brody)

Non-Christian Spirituality

On the Ganges: Encounters with Saints and Sinners along India's Mythic River (G. Black)

The Secrets of Happiness: Three Thousand Years of Searching for the Good Life (R. Schoch)

Blood Brothers: The Story of the Strange Friendship Sitting Bull and Buffalo Bill (D. Stillman)

The Apparitionists: A Tale of Phantoms, Fraud, Photography, and the Man Who Captured Lincoln's Ghost (P. Manseau)

Chasing Ghosts, Texas Style: On the Road with Everyday Paranormal (B. Klinge and B. Kling)

Why Buddhism Is True: The Science and Philosophy of Meditation and Enlightenment (R. Wright)

Origin Story: The Big History of Everything (D. Christian)

The In-Betweens: The Spiritualists, Mediums, and Legends of Camp Etna (M. Ptacin)

Strange Rites: New Religions for a Godless World (T. Burton)

The Varieties of Religious Experience (W. James)

Hereafter (movie, 2010, starring Matt Damon)

Collateral Beauty (movie, 2016, starring Will Smith)

Parenting/Marriage/Modern Family

Boys Adrift: The Five Factors Driving the Growing Epidemic of Unmotivated Boys and Underachieving Young Men (L. Sax)

Girls on the Edge: The Four Factors Driving the New Crisis for Girls (L. Sax)

Small Animals: Parenting in the Age of Fear (K. Brooks)

The New Childhood: Raising Kids to Thrive in a Connected World (J. Shapiro)

Beyond Measure: Rescuing an Overscheduled, Overtested, Underestimated Generation (V. Abeles)

Overwhelmed: Work, Love, and Play When No One Has the Time (B. Schulte)

Sticks and Stones: Defeating the Culture of Bullying and Rediscovering the Power of Character and Empathy (E. Bazelon)

Cribsheet: A Data-Driven Guide to Better, More Relaxing Parenting, from Birth to Preschool (E. Oster)

Lion (movie, 2016, starring Sunny Pawar)

The Room (movie, 2015, starring Brie Larson)

Big Fish (movie, 2003)

A River Runs through It (movie, 1992, starring Brad Pitt)

The Great Santini (movie, 1979, starring Robert Duvall)

Wonder Wheel (movie, 2017, starring Kate Winslet)

The Prize Winner of Defiance, OH (movie, 2005, starring Julianne Moore and Woody Harrelson)

Personal Philosophy/Memoir/Meaningful Life

Arbitrary Stupid Goal (T. Shopsin)

The Long Haul: A Trucker's Take of Life on the Road (F. Murphy)

Every Last Tie: The Story of the Unabomber and His Family (D. Kaczynski)

Living with a Wild God: A Nonbeliever's Search for the Truth about Everything (B. Ehrenreich)

Dead End Gene Pool: A Memoir (W. Burden)

Radical Ritual: How Burning Man Changed the World (N. Shister)

Barbarian Days: A Surfing Life (W. Finnegan)

Dragonslayer (documentary, 2011)

Free Solo (documentary, 2018)

They Shoot Horses, Don't They (movie, 1969, starring Jane Fonda)

The Truman Show (movie, 1998, starring Jim Carrey)

Fire of Love (documentary, 2022)

Perfect Days (movie, 2023, starring Koji Yakusho)

Politics

As Goes Texas . . . : How the Lone Star State Hijacked the American Agenda (G. Collins)

The Nine: Inside the Secret World of the Supreme Court (J. Toobin)

Shadowlands: Fear and Freedom at the Oregon Standoff (A. McCann)

Shattered: Inside Hillary Clinton's Doomed Campaign (A. Parnes, J. Allen)

Unbelievable: My Front-Row Seat to the Craziest Campaign in American History (K. Tur)

Tension City: Inside the Presidential Debates (J. Lehrer)

Chappaquiddick: Power, Privilege, and the Ted Kennedy Cover-Up (L. Damore)

The Brothers Bulger: How They Terrorized and Corrupted Boston for a Quarter Century (H. Carr)

The Missile Next Door: The Minuteman in the American Heartland (G. Heefner)

The Watergate: Inside America's Most Infamous Address (J. Rodota)

Last Call: The Rise and Fall of Prohibition (D. Okrent)

The Fifth Risk (M. Lewis)

This Town: Two Parties and a Funeral-Plus, Plenty of Valet Parking!-in America's Gilded Capital (M. Leibovich)

1983: The World at the Brink (T. Downing)

Born Red: A Chronicle of the Cultural Revolution (Y. Gao)

All the Way (movie, 2016, starring Brian Cranston)

Being There (movie, 1979, starring Peter Sellers)

The Ides of March (movie, 2011, starring George Clooney)

Lincoln (movie, 2012, starring Daniel Day-Lewis)

Poverty

Nickle and Dimed: On Getting by in America (B. Ehrenreich)

\$2 a Day: Living on Almost Nothing in America (H. L. Shaefer and K. Edin)

Hand to Mouth: Living in Bootstrap America (L. Tirado)

Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City (M. Desmond)

Gang Leader for a Day: A Rogue Sociologist Takes to the Streets (S. Venkatesh)

White Trash: The 400-Year Untold History of Class in America (N. Isenberg)

Hillbilly Elegy: A Memoir of Family and Culture in Crisis (J. Vance)

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Changing Lanes (movie, 2002, starring Ben Affleck and Samuel Jackson)

The Glass Castle (movie, 2017, starring Brie Larson and Woody Harrelson)

The Last Black Man in San Francisco (movie, 2017, starring Jimmie Fails and Jonathan Majors)

Blue Jasmine (movie, 2013, starring Cate Blanchett and Sally Hawkins)

Prison and Criminality

Newjack: Guarding Sing Sing (T. Connover)

Orange Is the New Black: My Year in a Women's Prison (P. Kerman)

Courtroom 302: A Year behind the Scenes in an American Criminal Courthouse (S. Bogira)

American Prison: A Reporter's Undercover Journey into the Business of Punishment (S. Bauer)

In My Father's House: A New View on How Crime Runs in the Family (F. Butterfield)

Al Capone and the 1933 World's Fair: The End of the Gangster Era in Chicago (W. Hazelgrove)

The Devil in the White City: Murder, Magic, and Madness at the Fair That Changed America (E. Larson)

Criminal That I Am: A Memoir (J. Ridha)

Rikers: An Oral History (G. Rayman and R. Blau)

Shawshank Redemption (movie, 1994, starring Tim Robbins)

16 Blocks (movie, 2006, starring Bruce Willis)

One Day in the Live of Ivan Denisovich (A. Solzhenitsyn)

Social Work/Social Justice/Conservation

Blood and Earth: Modern Slavery, Ecocide, and the Secret to Saving the World (K. Bales)

White Man's Game: Saving Animals, Rebuilding Eden, and Other Myths of Conservation in Africa (S. Hanes)

Whale Warriors: The Battle at the Bottom of the World to Save the Planet's Largest Mammals (P. Heller)

Mountains Beyond Mountains: The Quest of Dr. Paul Farmer, a Man Who Would Cure the World (T. Kidder)

Three Cups of Deceit: Three Cups of Deceit: How Greg Mortenson, Humanitarian Hero, Lost His Way (J. Krakauer)

Roman J. Israel (movie, 2017, starring Denzel Washington)

Sports, Athletes, and Sport Culture

Football for a Buck: The Crazy Rise and Crazier Demise of the USFL (J. Pearlman)

Return of the King: LeBron James, the Cleveland Cavaliers and the Greatest Comeback in NBA History (B. Windhorst, D. McMenamin)

Tiger Woods (J. Benedict et al.)

Open: An Autobiography (A. Agassi)

Michael Jordan: The Life (R. Lazenby)

Showboat: The Life of Kobe Bryant (R. Lazenby)

The Arena: Inside the Tailgating, Ticket-Scalping, Mascot-Racing, Dubiously Funded, and Possibly Haunted Monuments of American Sport (R. Kohan)

Big Game: The NFL in Dangerous Times (M. Leibovich)

Fanaticus: Mischief and Madness in the Modern Sports Fan (J. Gubar)

Phil: The Rip-Roaring (and Unauthorized!) Biography of Golf's Most Colorful Superstar (A. Shipnuck)

Gunslinger: The Remarkable, Improbable, Iconic Life of Brett Favre (J. Pearlman)

The League: How Five Rivals Created the NFL and Launched a Sports Empire (J. Eisenberg)

Ali: A Life (J. Eig)

Path Lit by Lightning: The Life of Jim Thorpe (D. Maraniss)

When the Game Was Ours: (J. MacMullan et al)

Story Creators in Entertainment and Media

Creativity, Inc.: Overcoming the Unseen Forces That Stand in the Way of True Inspiration (A. Wallace, E. Catmull)

Street Gang: The Complete History of Sesame Street (M. Davis)

Stan Lee: The Man behind Marvel (B. Batchelor)

Walt Disney: The Triumph of the American Imagination (N. Gabler)

Seinfeldia: How a Show about Nothing Changed Everything (J. Armstrong)

Andy and Don: The Making of a Friendship and a Classic American TV Show (D. de Vise)

George Lucas: A Life (B. Jones)

Charlie Chaplin: A Brief Life (P. Ackroyd)

Frank: The Voice (J. Kaplan)

Kubrick: An Odyssey (R. Kolker and N. Abrams)

Mark Twain (R. Chernow)

Sonny Boy: A Memoir (A. Pacino)

Superman: The High-Flying History of America's Most Enduring Hero (L. Tye)

Those Guys Have All the Fun: Inside the World of ESPN (J. Miller, T. Shales)

The Voice of America: Lowell Thomas and the Invention of 20th-Century Journalism (M. Stephens)

War at the Wall Street Journal: Inside the Struggle to Control an American Business Empire (S. Ellison)

An Untidy Life: What I Saw at the Media Revolution (L. Hinton)

#Newsfail: Climate Change, Feminism, Gun Control, and Other Fun Stuff We Talk About Because Nobody Else Will (J. Kilstein, A. Kilkenny)

News of the World (movie, 2020, starring Tom Hanks)

Saving Mr. Banks (movie, 2013, starring Tom Hanks)

Be Kind, Please Rewind (movie, 2008, starring Mos Def and Jack Black)

The Truman Show (movie, 1998, starring Jim Carrey)

Birdman (movie, 2014, starring Michael Keaton)

Trauma/Grief/Personal Loss

Wild: From Lost to Found on the Pacific Crest Trail (C. Strayed)

1000 Naked Strangers: A Paramedic's Wild Ride to the Edge and Back (K. Hazzard)

Chernobyl: The History of a Nuclear Disaster (S. Plokhy)

Voices from Chernobyl: The Oral History of a Nuclear Disaster (S. Alexievich)

The Great Halifax Explosion: A World War I Story of Treachery, Tragedy, and Extraordinary Heroism (J. Bacon)

The Johnstown Flood (D. McCullough)

The Worst Hard Time: The Untold Story of Those Who Survived the Great American Dust Bowl (T. Egan)

Dead Wake: The Last Crossing of the Lusitania (E. Larson)

Columbine (D. Cullen)

The Mystery of the Lone Wolf Killer: Behring Breivik and the Threat of Terror in Plain Sight (U. Turrettini)

The Diving Bell and the Butterfly (J. Bauby)

Suicidal: Why We Kill Ourselves (J. Bering)

Life after Suicide: Finding Courage, Comfort, and Community after Unthinkable Loss (J. Ashton)

The Pianist (movie, 2002, starring Adrien Brody)

The Diving Bell and the Butterfly (movie, 2007, starring Mathieu Amalric)

Seven Pounds (movie, 2008, starring Will Smith)

Gravity (movie, 2013, starring Sandra Bullock)

Is Anybody There (movie, 2009, starring Michael Caine)

The Sea of Trees (movie, 2015, starring Matthew McConaughey)

Another Earth (movie, 2011, starring Brit Marling)

Wall Street, Wealth, Investments

The Zeroes: My Misadventures in the Decade Wall Street Went Insane (R. Lane)

The Smartest Guys in the Room: The Amazing Rise and Scandalous Fall of Enron (B. McLean, P. Elkind)

Whiteout: Lost in Aspen (T. Conover)

The Asylum: The Renegades Who Hijacked the World's Oil Market (L. Goodman)

Black Edge: Inside Information, Dirty Money, and the Quest to Bring Down the Most Wanted Man on Wall Street (S. Kolhatkar)

Den of Thieves (J. Stewart)

Liar's Poker: Rising through the Wreckage on Wall Street (M. Lewis)

Flashboys: A Wall Street Revolt (M. Lewis)

The New New Thing: A Silicon Valley Story (M. Lewis)

Wizard of Lies: Bernie Madoff and the Death of Trust (D. Henriques)

Meet You in Hell: Andrew Carnegie, Henry Clay Frick, and the Bitter Partnership That Changed America (L. Standiford)

Painfully Rich: The Outrageous Fortune and Misfortune of the Heirs of J. Paul Getty (J. Pearson)

Digital Gold: Bitcoin and the Inside Story of the Misfits and Millionaires Trying to Reinvent Money (N. Popper)

The Plaza: The Secret Life of America's Most Famous Hotel (J. Satow)

All the Money in the World (movie, 2017, starring Christopher Plummer)

There Will Be Blood (movie, 2007, starring Daniel Day-Lewis)

The Pursuit of Happyness (movie, 2006, starring Will Smith)

Work

Lab Rats: How Silicon Valley Made Work Miserable for the Rest of Us (D. Lyons)

Disrupted: My Misadventure in the Start-Up Bubble (D. Lyons)

Eat, Work, Work, Work, Die: A Journey into the Savage Heart of Silicon Valley (C. Pein)

Rise of the Robots: Technology and the Thread of a Jobless Future (M. Ford)

The Job: Work and Its Future in a Time of Radical Change (E. Shell)

The Wal-Mart Effect: How the World's Most Powerful Company Really Works—And How Its Transforming the American Economy (C. Fishman)

The Adjunct Underclass: How America's Colleges Betrayed Their Faculty, Their Students, and Their Mission (H. Childress)

Cubed: The Secret History of the Workplace (N. Saval)

It's All Downhill from Here: Retirement Insecurity in the Age of Inequality (K. Newman)

Two Days, One Night (movie, 2014, starring Marion Cotillard)

Falling Down (movie, 1993, starring Michael Douglas)

Miscellaneous

The books listed here are generally good to know in that they can give one a foundation of information or thought that can then support practical application among a congregation's particularized needs. A rationale in italics is provided by each selection.

The Gunning of America: Business and the Making of American Gun Culture (P. Haag). *This can help a minister deal with the polarizing issue of gun control.*

Barbarians at the Gate: The Fall of RJR Nabisco (B. Burrough, J. Helyar). *Shows the pressures and work expectations within larger national companies, especially during a takeover.*

The Gene: An Intimate History (S. Mukherjee). *Prepares one to deal with the current questions of what role the genome plays in behavior like homosexuality, criminality, etc.*

The Violinist's Thumb: And Other Lost Tales of Love, War, and Genius, as Written by Our Genetic Code (S. Kean). *Prepares one to deal with the current questions of what role the genome plays in behavior like homosexuality, criminality, etc.*

Richard Nixon: The Life (J. Farrell), *Shows how almost-absolute political power can corrupt and confuse.*

The Power Broker: Robert Moses and the Fall of New York (R. Caro). *Shows how almost-absolute political power can corrupt and confuse even on a municipal level.*

Routes of Man: How Roads Are Changing the World and the Way We Live Today (T. Conover). *Provides a global view of how socio-material necessities like transportation, travel, and roads affect quality of life.*

Crash Course: The American Automobile Industry's Road to Bankruptcy and Bailout – and Beyond (P. Ingrassia) (all, audio version permitted). *Provides a national view of how socio-material necessities like cars and factory work affect quality of life.*

Private Empire: ExxonMobile and American Power (S. Coll) (all, audio version permitted). *Provides a global view of how socio-material necessities like oil and fuel affect quality of life.*

THE ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS FOR HONORIFIC TITLES

The following material is not required for the DA degree. However, if the student wants to go beyond the basic degree in order to add honorific titles to the degree, then this is the guideline to be used.

Cum laude

5,000 extra pages on top of the 30,000 required pages. (All extra pages can be read via audiobook.)

Magna cum laude

10,000 extra pages on top of the 30,000 required pages. (All extra pages can be read via audiobook.)

Summa cum laude

20,000 extra pages on top of the 30,000 required pages. (All extra pages can be read via audiobook.)

SECTION 7: Time to Degree

The following time-frame is designed to ensure that a student spends adequate time maturing in a formal way as a thinker and yet is able to see a clear end to the process.

Duration of Pre-Candidacy

- 1) No fewer than 2 year from the date listed in the commencement document.
- 2) No more than 4 years from the date listed in the commencement document.

Duration of Candidacy

- 1) No fewer than 3 years from the date listed in the commencement document.
- 2) No more than 7 years from the date listed in the commencement document.
- 3) Students are highly encouraged to finish the degree in 5 years.

SECTION 8: Credit Load

The Ravenburn doctorate degree comprises 130 credits beyond the Master of Arts degrees, the candidacy requirements, and a completed and defended dissertation portfolio. The candidacy and writing requirements have been discussed above. What follows below is a description of how the credits are distributed.

1. 60 of the 120 credits are **reading credits**. A student earns and then “declares for” reading credits in the following manner:
 - a. To earn 1 credit, a student must:
 - i. Read 500 pages
 - ii. Write a minimum of 100 words relating to that reading in their journal
 - iii. Log 2 “discussion events” about that readings

1. A discussion event between the student and the mentor (or between students and the mentor as a group discussion) can be any of the following:
 - a. A phone call with the mentor
 - b. A series of texts with the mentor that form a discussion
 - c. An email discussion
 - d. A live discussion with the mentor
 - e. A series of posts to an online discussion
- b. Students can earn 2 or more credits at once by multiplying the above requirements by the number of credits they want to declare for. This may allow a student to write 1000 words, 1500 words, 2000 words or more on a reading topic that they want to extend upon.
- c. To declare credits, which is the act of reporting work to the mentor in order to have the mentor put the credits on the official transcript, the student must simply contact the mentor and affirm:
 - i. That the student has read 500 pp for each credit being declared.
 - ii. That the student has written at least 100 words in a journal of some sort (paper or digital) about the reading for each credit being declared.
 - iii. A quick log or description of at least 2 discussion events for each credit.
2. 10 of the 130 credits are **reporting credits**. These are described in Section 5 above. Students must complete 2 full academic years of 10-, 20-, and 30-day reporting. Students do not need to declare for reporting credits. The mentor will track the credits independently.
3. 20 of the 130 credits are either **teaching credits** or **publication credits**. Teaching credits are earned as DA students help facilitate Ravenburn's online undergraduate general-learning classes. Students will have to do all the reading required for these classes in addition to the reading they are already doing. Teaching credits are earned over the course of two full academic years. Publication credits are earned as students work with the flagship journal for Ravenburn, which is LATCH: The Journal for the Study of the Literary Artifact in Theory, Culture, or History. LATCH is archived as full-text documents at the Ravenburn College web site. (www.ravenburncollege.org) and also in Ebsco's Humanities International Complete database, which is available world-wide in many public and academic libraries (conservative estimate of 10,000 libraries). Students must work as assistant editors of LATCH for a minimum of two full academic years. NOTE: Students can earn 10 teaching credits and 10 publishing credits if they wish to experience both types of work.
4. 20 of the 130 credits are earned through **candidacy credits**. Students must declare for candidacy credits by submitting an email to the mentor requesting credit for completed requirements.
5. 20 of the 130 credits are earned through **writing credits**. Students earn all 20 credits when they submit their final writing project

SECTION 9: Tuition and Fees

In accordance with the rules set by OLEF, no degree in the Faculty-School System can exceed \$15,000 (this price can be revised no sooner than January 2025). Therefore, the doctorate cannot exceed a total of \$15,000.

Ravenburn has the right to set the price of its degrees at this price or at a price lower. We prefer to keep the prices of our degrees more or less the same, in order to set up a stable situation so that students who go from a BA program to an MA program and possibly to a doctoral program in Ravenburn schools do not have to re-think their budget.

Breakdown of Fees (next scheduled change, if any, is 2025)

- 1) \$50 paid to the mentor per credit declared, for 90 credits. Total: \$4,500.
- 2) \$200 to the sponsoring school every year (4 quarters & 1 summer session) that the student spends earning the degree. Total (assuming 5 years): \$1,000
- 3) \$200 paid directly to OLEF for the accreditation fee every year. Total (assuming 5 years): \$1000
- 4) \$350 total to the sponsoring school's monitor (2 reviews during the student's first and second year at \$50 dollars each and then 1 review per year after that for 5 years, at \$50 a review)
- 5) \$50 for the OLEF Logic Exam and the OLEF Candidacy Checklist (submitted simultaneously via an online platform)
- 6) \$50 for the co-mentor's role in the Writing Proposal assessment (the mentor does not get paid for this)
- 7) \$150 for the co-mentor's role in the defense (mentor does not get paid for this)

Grand Total: \$7,100 (this does not include travel expenses and books). Per year (assuming 5 years), this is \$1,420.

NOTE: This does not include travel expenses to have the annual (or semi-annual) face-to-face meeting(s) with the mentor.

SECTION 10: Recourse to Mediation

If students believe they are being treated unfairly, unprofessionally, or unduly harshly by the mentor group, the student must be able to contact the sponsoring school's monitor, the director at OLEF, or anyone listed on the panel of oversight at the Council of Oversight for Faculty School Accreditation. Contact information must be listed in the commencement document. All discussions will be kept strictly confidential unless matters of illegality are involved or the discussion reaches a point where all parties must be in direct communication with each other. Discussion that is preliminary is called a "concern" and is expressed in live, non-recorded conversation. If the issue remains unresolved as a concern, it may be elevated to the level of "complaint," which means that from that point on all discussion is to be in a recordable form and is to be considered official.