

# MATTHEW VESS

## CURRICULUM VITAE

### CONTACT INFORMATION

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Department of Psychology  
Texas A&M University  
4235 TAMU  
College Station, TX 77843-4235

email: vess@tamu.edu

### ACADEMIC POSITIONS

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Associate Professor, Department of Psychology, Texas A&M University (August 2017 – PRESENT)  
Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology, Montana State University (August 2013 – July 2017)  
Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology, Ohio University (September 2010 – July 2013)  
Robert S. Daniel Teaching Fellow, Department of Psychology, University of Missouri (August 2009 – May 2010)

### EDUCATION

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**PhD** University of Missouri (2010), *Social Psychology and Personality*  
**MA** University of Missouri (2007), *Social Psychology and Personality*  
**BA** Ohio University (2004), *Psychology*

### AWARDS

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- *Graduate Student Excellence Award*, University of Missouri (2010)
- *Robert S. Daniel Teaching Fellowship*, University of Missouri (2009-2010)
- *Psychological Sciences Grant Writing Fellowship*, University of Missouri (2008)

### PUBLICATIONS

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\* denotes a current or former graduate student from my lab

^ denotes a current or former undergraduate student from my lab

#### edited books.

Routledge, C., & **Vess, M.** (Eds.). (under contract). *The handbook of terror management theory*. Cambridge, MA: Elsevier, Inc.

#### journal articles.

1. **Vess, M.**, \*Hoeldtke, R., \*Leal, S. A., \*Sanders, C., & Hicks, J.A. (in press). The subjective quality of episodic future thought contributes to the experience of meaning in life. *The Journal of Positive Psychology*.
2. Christy, A. G., Kim, J., **Vess, M.**, Schlegel, R. J., & Hicks, J. A. (in press). Do I know you? Moral information predicts perceived knowledge of others' true selves. *Social Psychological and Personality Science*.
3. **Vess, M.**, \*Rogers, R., Routledge, C., & Hicks, J. A. (2017). When being far away is good: Exploring how mortality salience, regulatory mode, and goal progress affect judgments of meaning in life. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 47, 82-91.
4. Christy, A. G., \*Sanders, C., **Vess, M.**, Schlegel, R. J., & Routledge, C. (2017). The true self and existential structure? Unexpected effects of mortality salience and need for structure on belief in the true self. *Self & Identity*, 16, 335-352.

5. ^Williams, H., & **Vess, M.** (2016). Daydreams and the true self: Daydreaming styles are related to authenticity. *Imagination, Cognition, & Personality, 36*, 128-149.
6. Christy, A. G., Seto, E., Schlegel, R. J., **Vess, M.**, & Hicks, J. A. (2016). Straying from the righteous path and from ourselves: Moral behaviors and perceived self-knowledge. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 42*, 1538-1550.
7. **Vess, M.**, \*Leal, S. A., & \*Hoeldtke, R., Schlegel, R. J., & Hicks, J.A. (2016). True self-alienation positively predicts mindwandering. *Consciousness and Cognition, 45*, 89-99.
8. \*Rogers, R., **Vess, M.**, & Routledge, C. (2016). Construal level shapes associations between ideology and reactions to male same sex intimacy. *Social Psychology, 47*, 87-97.
9. \*Rogers, R., **Vess, M.**, Routledge, C., & Juhl, J. (2016). An easy feeling: Mortality salience decreases social exploration when examples of cultural value adherence are easy to generate. *Self & Identity, 15*, 62-71.
10. Seto, E., Hicks, J. A., **Vess, M.**, & Geraci, L. (2016). The association between vivid thoughts of death and authenticity. *Motivation and Emotion, 40*, 520-540.
11. Begnoche, J. P., Brooker, R. J., & **Vess, M.** (2016). EEG asymmetry and ERN: Behavioral outcomes in preschoolers. *PLoS ONE, 11*(5), e0155713. PMID: PMC4880182
12. Bench, S. W., Schlegel, R. J., Davis, W. E., & **Vess, M.** (2015). Actor-observer differences in the perceptions of personality changes: The role of self-discovery beliefs. *Social Cognition, 33*, 169-185.
13. McCabe, S., Arndt, J., Goldenberg, J. L., **Vess, M.**, Vail III, K. E., Gibbons, F. X., & \*Rogers, R. (2015). The effect of visualizing healthy eaters and mortality reminders on nutritious grocery purchases: An integrative terror management and prototype willingness analysis. *Health Psychology, 34*, 279-232.
14. Davis, W. E., Hicks, J. A., Schlegel, R. J., Smith, C. M., & **Vess, M.** (2015). Authenticity and self-esteem across temporal horizons. *The Journal of Positive Psychology, 10*, 116-126.
15. **Vess, M.**, Schlegel, R. J., Hicks, J. A., & Arndt, J. (2014). Guilty, but not ashamed: "True" self-conceptions influence affective responses to personal shortcomings. *Journal of Personality, 82*, 213-224.
16. Routledge, C., Juhl, J., **Vess, M.**, Cathey, C., & Liao, J. (2013). Who uses groups to transcend the limits of the individual self? Exploring the effects of interdependent self-construal and mortality salience on investment in social groups. *Social Psychological and Personality Science, 4*, 483-491.
17. Routledge, C., Juhl, J., & **Vess, M.** (2013). Mortality salience increases death-anxiety for individuals low in personal need for structure. *Motivation and Emotion, 37*, 303-307.
18. **Vess, M.** (2012). Warm thoughts: Attachment-anxiety and sensitivity to temperature cues. *Psychological Science, 23*, 472-474.
19. **Vess, M.**, Arndt, J., & Cox, C. R. (2012). Faith and nature: The effect of death-relevant cognitions on the relationship between religious fundamentalism and connectedness to nature. *Social Psychological and Personality Science, 3*, 333-340.
20. **Vess, M.**, Arndt, J., Routledge, C., Sedikides, C., & Wildschut, T. (2012). Nostalgia as a resource for the self. *Self & Identity, 11*, 273-284.
21. Schlegel, R. J., **Vess, M.**, & Arndt, J. (2012). To discover or to create: Metaphors and the true self. *Journal of Personality, 80*, 969-993.
22. Routledge, C., & **Vess, M.** (2012). More than meets the eye: There's more to meaning maintenance than violated expectations. *Psychological Inquiry, 23*, 374-380.

23. Vail III, K. E., Juhl, J., Arndt, J., **Vess, M.**, Routledge, C., & Rutjens, B. T. (2012). When death is good for life: Exploring the positive trajectories of terror management. *Personality and Social Psychology Review, 16*, 303-329.
24. **Vess, M.**, Arndt, J., & Schlegel, R. J. (2011). Abstract construal levels attenuate the reactivity of state self-esteem. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 47*, 861-864.
25. Landau, M. J., **Vess, M.**, Arndt, J., Rothschild, Z. K., Sullivan, D., & Atchley, R. A. (2011). Embodiment and the intrinsic self: Priming entity expansion heightens expression of the intrinsic self-concept in self-perceptions and interpersonal behavior. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 47*, 79-87.
26. Routledge, C., Juhl, J., & **Vess, M.** (2010). Divergent reactions to the terror of terrorism: Personal need for structure moderates the effects of terrorism salience on worldview-related attitudinal rigidity. *Basic and Applied Social Psychology, 32*, 243-249.
27. **Vess, M.**, Routledge, C., Landau, M. J., & Arndt, J. (2009). The dynamics of death and meaning: The effects of death-relevant cognitions and personal need for structure on perceptions of meaning in life. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 97*, 728-744.
28. **Vess, M.**, Arndt, J., Cox, C. R., Routledge, C., & Goldenberg, J. L. (2009). The terror management of medical decisions: The effect of mortality salience and religious fundamentalism on support for faith-based medical intervention. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 97*, 334-350.
29. Arndt, J., **Vess, M.**, Cox, C. R., Goldenberg, J. L., & Lagle, S. (2009). The psychosocial effect of thoughts of personal mortality on cardiac risk assessment by medical students. *Medical Decision Making, 29*, 175-181.
30. Cox, C. R., Cooper, D. P., **Vess, M.**, Arndt, J., Goldenberg, J. L., & Routledge, C. (2009). Bronze is beautiful but pale can be pretty: The effects of appearance standards and mortality salience on sun-tanning outcomes. *Health Psychology, 28*, 746-752.
31. Arndt, J., Cox, C. R., Goldenberg, J. L., **Vess, M.**, Routledge, C., Cooper, D. P., & Cohen, F. (2009). Blowing in the (social) wind: Implications of extrinsic esteem contingencies for terror management and health. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 96*, 1191-1205.
32. **Vess, M.**, & Arndt, J. (2008). The nature of death and the death of nature: The impact of mortality salience on environmental concern. *Journal of Research in Personality, 42*, 1376-1380.
33. **Vess, M.**, & Arndt, J. (2008). Social support, money, and the Chicago Cubs: Toward a deeper understanding of symbolic pain management through metaphor and higher order goals. *Psychological Inquiry, 19*, 199-204.
34. Arndt, J., & **Vess, M.** (2008). Tales from existential oceans: Terror management theory and how the awareness of our mortality affects us all. *Personality and Social Psychology Compass, 2*, 909-928.
35. Routledge, C., Arndt, J., **Vess, M.**, & Sheldon, K. (2008). The life and death of creativity: The effects of mortality salience on self vs. social-directed creative expression. *Motivation & Emotion, 32*, 331-338.

#### **book chapters.**

- Vess, M.** (2013). Foundations of meaning: Death, the need for unambiguous knowledge, and the construction and maintenance of multi-level meaning. In J. A. Hicks & C. Routledge (Eds.), *The experience of meaning in life: Emerging themes and controversies* (pp. 271-283). New York: Springer Press.
- Arndt, J., Landau, M. J., Vail III, K.E., & **Vess, M.** (2013). An edifice for enduring personal value: A terror management perspective on the human quest for multi-level meaning. In K. Markman, T. Proulx, & M. Lindberg (Eds.), *The Psychology of Meaning*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Vail, III, K. E., Kosloff, S., **Vess, M.**, & Ashish, D. (2012). Faith and finitude: Exhuming the death-denying function of religious belief. To appear in P. McNamara & W. J. Wildman (Eds.), *Science and the world's religions: Volume 3: Religions and controversies* (pp. 291-320). Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger Publishers.

Lieberman, J. D., Arndt, J., & **Vess, M.** (2009). Inadmissible evidence and pretrial publicity: The effects (and ineffectiveness) of admonitions to disregard. In J. D. Lieberman & D. Krauss (Eds.), *Psychology in the courtroom* (pp. 67-95). Hampshire, England: Ashgate Publishing Limited.

## **GRANT ACTIVITY**

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### **funded grant proposals.**

- **Genetics and Human Agency Initiative (John Templeton Foundation), \$523,485 (2016-2019)**  
**Role: Primary Investigator**  
 Co-Investigators: Rebecca Brooker, Matt Stichter, & Jenae Neiderhiser  
 “Understanding Virtue and Virtue Development in the Context of Heritability Information”
- **Montana State University VPRED Grant, \$10,000 (2016-2017)**  
**Role: Co-Investigator**  
 Primary Investigator: Tricia Seifert  
 “Understanding and Advancing Student Success and Well-Being”
- **Montana State University Faculty Excellence Grant, \$4,500 (2014-2015)**
- **Ohio University Research Challenge Grant [PI], \$5,000 (2012-2013)**  
 “Weight Stigma and Cancer Risk: A Terror Management Health Model Account”

### **unfunded grant proposals.**

- **National Science Foundation [PI], (2016)**  
 “The True Self-Concept and Mental Time Travel”
- **John Templeton Foundation Funding Inquiry [PI], (2015)**  
 “The Development of Faith as a Buffer: How Thoughts of God Affect Neural Signs of Distress in Children”
- **John Templeton Foundation Funding Inquiry [PI], (2015)**  
 “An Integrative Exploration of How Mental Time Travel and Authenticity Give Rise to Purposeful Living”
- **NIH (R03): Research to Characterize and Reduce Stigma to Improve Health [PI], (2014).**  
 “Weight Stigma, Self-Control, and the Prediction of Cancer Screening Avoidance”
- **MSU Research Expansion Funds Proposal [Co-PI; Nic Ward, PI], (2014).**  
 “The Measurement of Traffic Safety Culture in Young Drivers”
- **NIH (R03): NCI Small Grants for Behavioral Research in Cancer Control [PI], (2012).**  
 “Weight Stigma and Cancer Risk: A Terror Management Health Model Account”
- **NIH (F31): NRSA Predoctoral Fellowship [PI], (2009).**  
 “Contingencies and Stability of Self-Esteem and Adjustment to College”

## **CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS and INVITED TALKS**

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Meade, M. L., Perga, V. A., Pust, T. J., Hart, K. M., & Vess, M. (2016, July). Personal characteristics influence the social contagion of memory. Invited talk to be presented at the International Conference on Memory. Budapest, Hungary.

- Vess, M. (2016, May). When low progress is good: Being farther away from long-term goal completion protects meaning in life in the face of death concerns. Paper presented at the 28<sup>th</sup> annual Association for Psychological Science Convention, Chicago, IL.
- \*Hoeldtke, R., & Vess, M. (2016, January). Finding meaning in fantasy: Fantasy proneness attenuates the relationship between true self-knowledge and meaning in life. Poster presented at the 17th Annual Meeting of the Society for Personality and Social Psychology, San Diego, CA.
- \*Rogers, R., & Vess, M. (2016, January). Give me something to do: Mortality salience and aversion to idleness. Poster presented at the 17th Annual Meeting of the Society for Personality and Social Psychology, San Diego, CA.
- Kim, J., Arndt, A. N., Hicks, J. A., Schlegel, R. J., & Vess, M. (2016, January). A wonderful read: Reading literature predicts enhanced true self-knowledge and well-being. Poster presented at the 17th Annual Meeting of the Society for Personality and Social Psychology, San Diego, CA.
- Vess, M., & Hicks, J. A. (2015, May). *The search for meaning in life: Exploring it's interface with cognition, motivation, and emotion*. Symposium chaired at the 27<sup>th</sup> annual Association for Psychological Science Convention, New York, NY.
- Vess, M., \*Leal, S., & \*Hoeldtke, R. (2015, May). *When does the mind go when it searches for meaning?* Paper presented at the 27<sup>th</sup> annual Association for Psychological Science Convention, New York, NY.
- \*Rogers, R., & Vess, M. (2015, February). *Recall perspective affects nostalgia's influence on positive mood*. Poster presented at the 16th Annual Meeting of the Society for Personality and Social Psychology, Long Beach, CA.
- Seto, E., Hicks, J.A., Vess, M., & Geraci, L. (2015, February). *Live like you're dying: Thinking about mortality informs authentic engagement*. Poster presented at the 16th Annual Meeting of the Society for Personality and Social Psychology, Long Beach, CA.
- Vess, M. (2014, May). *Abstract construal levels attenuate state self-esteem reactivity*. Paper presented at the 26<sup>th</sup> annual Association for Psychological Science Convention, San Francisco, CA.
- Vess, M. (2014, April). *Grave matters: Exploring how the awareness of mortality shapes meaning in life*. Invited talk given at Texas A&M University Social Psychology Seminar.
- Vess, M., & Schlegel, R. J. (2014, February). *Knowing one's self to be one's self: Self-concept clarity and authentic living*. Paper presented at the 15<sup>th</sup> annual Society for Personality and Social Psychology Conference, Austin, TX.
- \*Rogers, R., Vess, M., & Routledge, C. (2014, February). *Construal level moderates the relationship between political ideology and moral reactions to physical intimacy between gay men*. Poster presented at the 15<sup>th</sup> annual Society for Personality and Social Psychology Conference, Austin, TX.
- Vess, M. (2013, February). *How death thoughts affect judgments of life's meaning*. Invited talk given at the University of Georgia, Athens, GA.
- Vess, M. (2013, January). *How death-relevant thoughts affect well-being*. Invited talk given at the University of Utah, Salt Lake City, UT.
- Vess, M. (2013, January). *Grave matters: How death-relevant thoughts affect psychological and physical well-being*. Invited talk given at Montana State University, Bozeman, MT.
- Davis, W. E., Hicks, J. A., Schlegel, R. J., Smith, C. M., & Vess, M. (2013, January). *Authenticity and self-esteem across temporal horizons*. Paper presented at the 14<sup>th</sup> annual Society for Personality and Social Psychology Conference, New Orleans, LA.

- \*Rogers, R., & Vess, M. (2013, January). *An easy feeling: Death-thoughts decrease the search for meaning in life when examples of cultural value adherence are easy to generate*. Poster presented at the 14<sup>th</sup> annual Society for Personality and Social Psychology Conference, New Orleans, LA.
- Vess, M. (2012, May). *Foundations of meaning: Death-relevant thought, unambiguous structure, and the experience of meaning in life*. Paper presented at the annual Midwestern Psychological Association Conference, Chicago, IL.
- Vess, M., (2012, April). *Separating the core from the shell: Distinguishing intrinsically and extrinsically derived self-conceptions*. Invited colloquium presented at North Dakota State University, Fargo, ND.
- Vess, M., Routledge, C., & Arndt, J. (2012, January). *The creative spark of death: The effects of personal need for structure and mortality salience on divergent thinking*. Paper presented at the 13th annual Society for Personality and Social Psychology Conference, San Diego, CA.
- Vess, M., Routledge, C., Landau, M. J., & Arndt, J. (2010). *Dynamics of death and meaning: Death-relevant cognitions, personal need for structure, and perceptions of meaning in life*. Poster presented at the 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Society for Personality and Social Psychology, Las Vegas, NV.
- Vess, M., Routledge, C., Landau, M. J., & Arndt, J. (2009). *Dynamics of death and meaning: Death-relevant cognitions, personal need for structure, and perceptions of meaning in life*. Paper presented at the annual conference for the Society of Experimental Social Psychology, Portland, ME.
- Vess, M., Arndt, J., Landau, M. J., & Greenberg, J. (2009). *Conceptual metaphor and the self: Evidence that metaphors shape the representation of the intrinsic self*. Poster presented at the 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Society for Personality and Social Psychology, Tampa, FL.
- Vess, M., & Arndt, J. (2008). *Coming out of my shell: Activating the intrinsic self through perceptual metaphor*. Poster presented at the 1<sup>st</sup> annual Forum for Psychological Sciences at Mizzou, Columbia, MO.
- Vess, M., Arndt, J., Cox, C.R., Routledge, C. D., & Goldenberg, J. L. (2008). *The terror management of medical decisions: The effect of mortality salience and religious fundamentalism on support for faith-based medical intervention*. Paper presented at the annual Research and Creative Arts Forum, Columbia, MO.
- Vess, M., & Arndt, J. (2008). *Death and nature: The impact of mortality salience on environmental concern*. Poster presented at the 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Society for Personality and Social Psychologists, Albuquerque, NM.
- Vess, M., Arndt, J., Cox, C. R., Routledge, C. D., & Goldenberg, J. L. (2007). *Give thanks and praise to the Lord and I will feel alright: Mortality salience, religious fundamentalism, and medical decisions*. Poster presented at the 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Society for Personality and Social Psychology, Memphis, TN.
- Lagle, S., Vess, M., Cox, C., & Arndt, J. (2007). *The effects of religion and existential anxiety on medical decision-making: A terror management approach*. Poster presented at the 79<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Midwestern Psychological Association, Chicago, IL.

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## FORMAL RESEARCH ADVISING

### graduate students.

- Ross Rogers, Ph.D. candidate, Ohio University (2011 – Present)
- Courtney Sanders, Ph.D. student, Montana State University (2016 – 2017)
- Russell Hoeldtke, M.S. student, Montana State University (2014 – 2016)
- Stephanie Leal, M. S. student, Montana State University (2014 – 2015)
- Travis Whitacre, M.S. student, Montana State University (2014 – 2015)

**undergraduate students.**

Rose Dormanen, Undergraduate Scholars Program, Montana State University (2016)  
 Coleen Trottier, McNair Scholars Program, Montana State University (2015-2016)  
 Jade Threefingers, BRIDGES student, Montana State University (Summer, 2015)  
 Julie Theis, McNair Scholars Program, Montana State University (2014-2015)  
 Timothy (Will) Bernard, Undergraduate Scholars Program, Montana State University (2014-2015)

**TEACHING**

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**courses taught.**Undergraduate.

*Research Methods in Psychology*  
*Introduction to Social Psychology*  
*Undergraduate Research in Psychology*  
*Senior Seminar: The Self*

Graduate

*Emerging Themes in Social Psychology*  
*Advanced Social Psychology*  
*Experimental Existential Psychology*  
*A Survey of Social Psychological Science*

**SERVICE**

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**departmental committees.**

Montana State University, Department of Psychology, Graduate Handbook Committee, *member* (2016)  
 Montana State University, Department of Psychology, Outstanding Undergraduate Award Committee (2015)  
 Montana State University, Department of Psychology, Faculty Search Committee, *member* (2015-2016)  
 Montana State University, Department of Psychology, Faculty Search Committee, *Chair* (2014-2015)  
 Montana State University, Department of Psychology, Lea Miller Scholarship Committee (2013)  
 Ohio University, Department of Psychology Policy, Procedures, and Advisory Committee, *elected* (2012-2013)  
 Ohio University, Department of Psychology Evaluation Committee, *elected* (2011-2013)  
 Ohio University, Social Psychology Area Comprehensive Exam Committee, *appointed* (2010-2013)  
 Ohio University, Department of Psychology Admissions Committee, *appointed* (2010-2012)

**other selected departmental, college, and university service.**

Montana State University, Department of Psychology Subject Pool Coordinator (2016-Present)  
 Montana State University Undergraduate Scholars Program Advisory Board, *member* (2015-Present)  
 Advisor, Montana State University Chapter of PSI CHI (2014 – 2016)  
 Montana State University Department of Psychology Qualtrics Coordinator (2013-Present)  
 Montana State University Department of Psychology Pre-Screen Coordinator (2013-Present)

**professional affiliations.**

Society of Experimental Social Psychology (elected member)  
 Society for Personality and Social Psychology  
 Association for Psychological Science  
 PSI CHI (International Honor Society in Psychology)

**professional service, ad hoc reviewer.**

*National Science Foundation, GRF Panelist*  
*Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*  
*Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*  
*Personality and Social Psychology Review*  
*Perspectives on Psychological Science*  
*Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*  
*Journal of Personality*

*Journal of Research in Personality*  
*European Journal of Social Psychology*  
*Self & Identity*  
*Journal of Social Psychology*  
*International Journal for the Psychology of Religion*  
*Journal of Applied Social Psychology*  
*British Journal of Social Psychology*  
*Personality and Social Psychology Compass*

*Environment & Behavior*

*Basic and Applied Social Psychology*

*Motivation & Emotion*

*Journal of Experimental Psychology: Applied*

*Analyses Social Issues and Public Policy*

*Religion, Brain, & Behavior*