

MATTHEW VESS

CURRICULUM VITAE

CONTACT INFORMATION

Department of Psychological and Brain Sciences
Texas A&M University
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College Station, TX 77843-4235

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ACADEMIC POSITIONS

Associate Professor, Department of Psychological and Brain Sciences, Texas A&M University (August 2017 –)
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

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

AWARDS

- *Elected Member, Society of Experimental Social Psychology* (2015)
- *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

* denotes a current or former graduate student from my lab (i.e., I served as primary mentor)

^{ug} denotes a current or former undergraduate student from my lab (i.e., I served as primary mentor)

edited books.

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

journal articles.

Vess, M. (in press). A broader look at terror management, death, and belief in the supernatural. *Religion, Brain, and Behavior*.

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*.

Christy, A. G., Kim, J., **Vess, M.**, Schlegel, R. J., & Hicks, J. A. (2017). The reciprocal relationship between perceptions of moral goodness and knowledge of others' true selves. *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, 8, 910-917.

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.

- 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.
- ^uBWilliams, H., & **Vess, M.** (2016). Daydreams and the true self: Daydreaming styles are related to authenticity. *Imagination, Cognition, & Personality, 36*, 128-149.
- 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.
- 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.
- *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.
- *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.
- 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.
- Begnoche, J. P., Brooker, R. J., & **Vess, M.** (2016). EEG asymmetry and ERN: Behavioral outcomes in preschoolers. *PLoS ONE, 11*(5), e0155713. PMID: PMC4880182
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- Vess, M.** (2012). Warm thoughts: Attachment-anxiety and sensitivity to temperature cues. *Psychological Science, 23*, 472-474.
- 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.
- Vess, M.**, Arndt, J., Routledge, C., Sedikides, C., & Wildschut, T. (2012). Nostalgia as a resource for the self. *Self & Identity, 11*, 273-284.
- Schlegel, R. J., **Vess, M.**, & Arndt, J. (2012). To discover or to create: Metaphors and the true self. *Journal of Personality, 80*, 969-993.

- Routledge, C., & **Vess, M.** (2012). More than meets the eye: There's more to meaning maintenance than violated expectations. *Psychological Inquiry*, *23*, 374-380.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.

- *Rogers, R., *Sanders, C. S., & **Vess, M.** (in press). The terror management of meaning and growth: How mortality salience affects growth-oriented processes and the meaningfulness of life. In Routledge, C., & **Vess, M.** (Eds.). *The handbook of terror management theory*. Cambridge, MA: Elsevier, Inc.

- 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.

papers under review.

- Vess, M.**, Brooker, R. J., Stichter, M., & Neiderhiser, J. M. (under review). Genes and virtue: Exploring how heritability beliefs shape conceptions of virtue and its development. *Behavior Genetics*.
- Vess, M.** (under review). Varieties of conscious experience and the subjective awareness of one's true self.

papers in prep.

- Rivera, G. N., **Vess, M.**, Brooker, R. J., Stichter, M., & Neiderhiser, J. M. (xxx) Viewing virtue as determined by genes relates to beliefs about the nature and the type of parenting practices that promote virtuous character.
- Vess, M.**, Rivera, G. N., Hicks, J. A., Routledge, C., & *Hoeldtke, R. (xxx) Awe and meaning: Elucidating opposing mechanisms that link awe to the experience of meaning in life.
- *Rogers, R., & **Vess, M.** (xxx) Shuffling deck chairs on the Titanic: A terror management perspective on idleness aversion.
- *Rogers, R., & **Vess, M.** (xxx) Death and virtue: Considering the interface between terror management and virtuous behavior.

GRANT ACTIVITY

pending grant proposals.

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 Rapid Response Research Program (RAPID), \$199,962 (2017-2018)**
Role: Co-Primary Investigator
Primary Investigator: Joshua A. Hicks
“RAPID: Finding Meaning in Hurricane Harvey: Advancing Theory on Meaning-Making During Recovery from Collective Trauma”
- **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

- Vess, M. (January, 2018). Recognizing Bad Faith: Exploring how people subjectively experience the awareness of authentic selves. Invited colloquium presented to the psychology department at Ohio University.
- Vess, M. (2017). Varieties of conscious experience and true self-awareness. Talk presented as part of the Bryan/College Station Science Café Series.
- Vess, M., Arndt, J., Cox, C. R., Routledge, C., & Goldenberg, J. (2017, October). Faith alone: How mortality concerns shape (false) beliefs about the efficacy of prayer alone as a medical intervention. Paper presented at the annual Society of Experimental Social Psychology conference. Boston, MA.
- 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 28th 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 27th 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 27th 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 26th 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 15th 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 15th 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 14th 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 14th 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 11th 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 10th 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 1st 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 9th 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 8th 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 79th Annual Meeting of the Midwestern Psychological Association, Chicago, IL.

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)

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

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)

editorial board membership.

Journal of Research in Personality (2018-2020)

ad hoc reviewer, grants.

National Science Foundation, RUI Reviewer (2013)

National Science Foundation, GRF Panelist (2014)

Leverhume Trust (England)

ad hoc reviewer, journals.

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

Review of General Psychology