

# Mat Messerschmidt

## Curriculum Vitae

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### EDUCATION

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- 2022            PhD, University of Chicago, Committee on Social Thought, with focus in philosophy
- Dissertation:* “The Guiding Thread of Modernity: Nietzsche’s Death of God as a Physiological Event.”
- Committee:* Robert Pippin (co-chair), Ryan Coyne (co-chair), David Wellbery, Jean-Luc Marion
- 2010            B.A., Philosophy and English, University of Michigan – Ann Arbor, with Highest Honors
- Study abroad: Albert-Ludwigs-Universität, Freiburg, Germany (full year)

### EMPLOYMENT

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- 2022-2024      Teaching Fellow, Committee on Social Thought and the Division of the Social Sciences, University of Chicago

### RESEARCH

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- AOS    Nietzsche, Heidegger, Phenomenology, Philosophy of Religion  
AOC    Literature & Philosophy, Theology, Deconstruction, Existentialism

### DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

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"Physiology" is fundamental to Nietzsche's understanding of the human. I pose the question of how the death of God, the modern event that fundamentally alters the Western human being, can be understood physiologically. The death of God, I argue, is triggered by modernity's awakening of a physiological awareness that Christianity had suppressed, but God's death in turn catalyzes a physiological crisis: the unfettered exposure to limitless new possible values, data, and paradigms, no longer regulated by the strictures of faith, overruns the capacities of the finite, embodied human, in nihilistic modernity. Since, for Nietzsche, physiology is the study of the will to power realized as drives, the death of God and of Christianity must be understood as the death of a certain epoch of desire. I read Nietzsche's new divinity, Dionysus, as the figurehead of a new desire in humanity, the desire for the always-already-departed source of being – namely, "Becoming." Nietzsche's ultimate decision to define Dionysus as the "unnameable" and necessarily "unknown" god that is more-than-Being complicates his relationship to Christianity, suggesting an affinity with certain strains of apophatic theology. The death of God is not only a death, but also a rebirth, of divinity.

## PUBLICATIONS

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- Volume forthcoming, 2023      “Nietzsche’s Misogyny and a Feminine Philosophy of the Future.” In *Nietzsche on Women and the Eternal-Feminine: A Critique of Truth and Values*, ed. Michael McNeal, Bloomsbury Academic Press.
- Forthcoming April 2023      “Nietzsche’s Confrontation with Christianity via the Body and History,” *Journal of Religion*, Volume 103, No. 2, [187-208](#).
- 2022      “The Body and the Completion of Metaphysics: A Critical Analysis of Heidegger’s Nietzsche,” *Nietzsche-Studien*, vol. 51, no. 1, 2022, [251-270](#).
- 2019      “Mircea Eliade and the Death of God in America,” *Hermeneia* 22, [147-156](#).
- (In progress, to submit Spring 2023)      “‘The Presence of the Unhomely in the Home’: Reading Wordsworth with Heidegger.”
- (In progress, to submit Summer 2023)      “Nietzsche’s Ambivalent Twilight of the Subject.”

## HONORS AND GRANTS

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- 2021-2022      Mellon Dissertation Completion Fellowship
- 2021-2022      Martin Marty Junior Fellowship
- 2021      Council on Advanced Studies Research Grant
- 2021      Grad Council Academic & Professional Fund for Conference Coordination
- 2020      Nicholson Graduate Initiative for Digital Gatherings
- 2020-2021      Social Sciences Peer Mentoring Stipend
- 2020      Social Sciences Peer Mentoring Research Grant
- 2016-2019      Nef Summer Travel Grants 2016-2019

## TALKS AND CONFERENCE ACTIVITY

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### *Conference co-organized:*

- 2021      “Heidegger: Politics, History, Modernity,” University of Chicago. May 28-29.  
<https://heideggermodernity.wordpress.com/>

*Off-campus:*

- 2023 “Sensuousness, Asceticism, Style.” Friedrich Nietzsche Society Annual Conference, “Nietzsche and the Lyric.” University of Lausanne, September 14-16.
- 2023 “Nietzsche’s Ambivalent Twilight of the Subject.” Warwick Continental Philosophy Conference 2022/2023: The Subject and Identity. University of Warwick, June 8-9.
- 2022 “*Wissenschaft*, Life, Becoming,” Friedrich Nietzsche Society Annual Conference, “Science, Art, Life.” University of Dundee, September 16-17.
- 2021 “Metaphysics as Racial Contamination by Nietzsche and Heidegger,” on the panel “Sensuality, Rationality, Race,” Clemson Embodiment & Race Conference II. Clemson University November 4-6.
- 2021 “Ariadne and Gender in Nietzsche’s Thought,” Friedrich Nietzsche Society Annual Conference, “What if Truth Were a Woman: on Nietzsche, Women, and Philosophy.” Zoom, September 14-16.
- 2019 “Genealogy and Revaluation in Nietzsche,” Historical Sociology Conference, Charles University, Prague. June 14-15.
- 2018 “Nietzsche: The Death of God and the Future of Historical Interpretation,” The Making of the Humanities Conference. Panel title: “Nietzsche and History. University of Amsterdam. November 15-17.
- 2018 “Mircea Eliade and the Death of God in America,” Gânditori Români în Cultura Universală (Romanian Thinkers in Universal Culture) Conference, University of Bucharest. November 2.

*Campus talks:*

- 2023 “‘The Presence of the Unhomely in the Home’: Reading Wordsworth With Heidegger,” Literature & Philosophy Workshop, University of Chicago. February 23.
- 2022 “The Guiding Thread of Modernity: Nietzsche’s Death of God.” Social Thought Doctoral Lecture, University of Chicago. November 1.
- 2022 “The Idol and Modernity in Nietzsche and Marion,” Philosophy of Religions Workshop, University of Chicago, February 8.
- 2021 “Nietzsche’s Ariadne: Myth, Gender, Physiology,” Social Thought Colloquium, University of Chicago, November 30.
- 2020 “Heidegger, the Nietzschean Body, and ‘Incorporation,’” Philosophy of Religions Workshop, University of Chicago. October 13.

- 2020 “Nietzsche and Christianity: The Body and History,” Literature & Philosophy Workshop, University of Chicago. February 13.
- 2018 “Wordsworth and Suspicion Hermeneutics,” Literature & Philosophy Workshop, University of Chicago. February 15.

## TEACHING EXPERIENCE

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*Instructor of Record, University of Chicago:*

(Confirmed) “Self, Culture, and Society II.” Winter 2023 (2 sections).

“Self, Culture, and Society I.” Fall 2022 (2 sections).

“Narratives of the End of Faith.” Fall 2021.

“Philosophie: Heidegger’s History of Being” (taught in German). Spring 2020.

“Philosophie: Nietzsche’s Death of God” (taught in German). Spring 2019.

*Teaching assistant, University of Chicago:*

“Self, Culture, and Society,” Fall, Winter, and Spring 2017-2018.

*K-12 educational experience:*

ACT test prep classroom instructor, Academic Approach/Urban Prep Schools, Chicago, 2014-2015.

English instructor, Laude-Reut Educational Complex, Bucharest, Romania, 2010-2014.

## LANGUAGE SKILLS

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English – native

German – fluent (C2 certificates for Reading, Speaking, Listening)

Romanian – fluent, spoken at home

French – intermediate (strong for academic reading)

Greek (reading) – intermediate

Spanish - intermediate

## PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

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American Academy of Religion

American Philosophical Association  
Friedrich Nietzsche Society  
North American Nietzsche Society  
German Studies Association  
Alumni Association, University of Michigan

#### DEPARTMENTAL / UNIVERSITY SERVICE

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Graduate Assistant to the faculty, Committee on Social Thought, University of Chicago (paid position), 2020-2021.  
Peer Mentor, Division of the Social Sciences, University of Chicago, 2020-2021.  
Graduate Council Representative, University of Chicago student government, 2019-2021.  
Social chair, Committee on Social Thought, University of Chicago, 2017-2018.

#### OTHER EDUCATIONAL SERVICE

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2017- present Board of Trustees, Laude-Reut Educational Complex (K-12 Jewish school, Bucharest, Romania)

#### REFERENCES

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Robert Pippin, Evelyn Stefansson Nef Distinguished Service Professor, Social Thought and Philosophy, University of Chicago.  
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David Wellbery, LeRoy T. and Margaret Deffenbaugh Carlson University Professor of Germanic Studies and Social Thought, University of Chicago.  
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Maeve Hooper (teaching reference), Assistant Senior Instructional Professor and Director of the German Language Program, University of Chicago.  
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