Katherine P. Martha

Department of Philosophy | Vanderbilt University | Nashville, TN 37240
Email: katherine.m.pier@vanderbilt.edu

EDUCATION

Ph.D. Candidate in Philosophy | 2021- Present.
Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tennessee, USA.
Dissertation: "In the Name of Love: Love's Public and Private Reasons"
Dissertation Chair: Matthew Congdon
Committee: Robert Talisse, Sarah Raskoff, Diana Heney (outside reader), and Vida Yao (outside reader)

B.A. Philosophy, *summa cum laude* conferred with honors | 2017
Phi Beta Kappa
Boston College, Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts, USA.
Honors Thesis: "Ordered Love: Plato and Augustine on Love as Universal and Particular"

AREAS OF SPECIALIZATION

AOS Ethics (esp. moral psychology), Philosophy of Love
AOC Applied Ethics (esp. medical ethics), Logic and Critical Thinking, Political Philosophy

PUBLICATIONS

Published Papers

2026. "Friendship: A Way Out of Moral Danger." *Southwest Philosophy Review* 46 (1)

Book Chapters

under contract Matthew Congdon and Katherine Martha "Iris Murdoch and Moral Psychology" in *The Oxford Handbook of Iris Murdoch*. Oxford University Press.

Reviews & Replies

2026. "Book Review: Stephen Darwall, *The Heart and Its Attitudes,*" *The Journal of Moral Philosophy*. (published online ahead of print 2026), doi: https://doi.org/10.1163/17455243-20263061

2026. "Playful Sex, Serious Business" in *Syndicate Philosophy Review*. https://syndicate.network/symposia/philosophy/the-virtue-of-playfulness/

In Progress

"Love's Separateness" (under review)
"'Onward into Increasing Privacy': Iris Murdoch and Reasons of Love" (under review)

PRESENTATIONS

Conference Presentations

2026 "Love: A Paradigm Based Account"
The 2026 Central Division Meeting of the American Philosophical Association

2026 "Friendship: A Way Out of Moral Danger"
The 2025 Southwest Philosophical Society Meeting, presented *in absentia* due to illness

2025 "Friendship and Grace: A Way Out of Moral Danger
The 2025 Central Division Meeting of the American Philosophical Association (virtual)

2024 "Narrative, Meaning, and Well-Being: Fact or Fiction?"
Sixth International Conference on Philosophy and Meaning in Life
University of Liverpool

2024 "Where is the 'Justice' In Iris Murdoch's 'Just and Loving Gaze'?"
Mapping Theories of Attention: Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow
University of Galway

2023 "Narrative, Meaning, and Well-Being: Fact or Fiction?"
Tennessee Philosophical Association
Vanderbilt University
2023 "Where is the 'Justice' In Iris Murdoch's 'Just and Loving Gaze'?"
Iris Murdoch Transatlantic Ties (virtual)

Conference Commentaries

2025 Author meets Critic: Response to "Ableism in Aristotelianism" by Kristina Gehrman
Tennessee Philosophical Association
Vanderbilt University
2025 Chair for "The Philosophy, Politics, and Economics Society" Panel
The Central Division Meeting for the American Philosophical Association (virtual)
2024 Commentary on "Nietzsche on Affirmative Love" by Joel Van Fossen
Love and Loneliness Conference
California State University San Bernadino
2024 Commentary on "TMI Christology" by Matthew Baddorf
Tennessee Philosophical Association
Vanderbilt University
2024 Chair, Panel: Morals and Realism
Iris Murdoch: Literature and Philosophy in Dialogue
Sorbonne University
2024 Commentary on "Kantian *Geschichte* and the Trap of a Single 'History of Philosophy.' Or: A reflection on Power and Structural Change" by Huaping Lu-Adler
Vanderbilt Modern Philosophy Group (VAMP) and Vanderbilt's Minorities and Philosophy (MAP) Chapter Spring Speaker Series

Invited Talks

2024 Women in Bioethics
Minorities and Philosophy (MAP)
Vanderbilt University
2022 Expert Teaching Assistant Panel
Teaching Assistant Orientation
Vanderbilt's Center for Teaching (now The Institute for the Achievement of Higher Education)

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Instructor of Record, Vanderbilt University, Nashville, TN, USA.

2026 Introduction to Philosophy—Writing Seminar (Spring)
2025 Introduction to Medical Ethics (Fall)
Introduction to Philosophy—Writing Seminar (Spring)
2023 Introduction to Ethics–Writing Seminar (Fall)

Teaching Assistant, Vanderbilt University, Nashville, TN, USA.

2024 Justice (Fall)
2023 General Logic (Spring)
2022 Introduction to Philosophy (Fall)
Introduction to Ethics (Spring)

Jesuit Volunteer, Substitute Teacher and Tutor, St. Labre Indian Academy High School, Northern Cheyenne Reservation, Ashland Montana

2017-2018 Mathematics and English

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Research Assistant, Vanderbilt University, Nashville, TN, USA.

2025 Compiled Index for *American Ethics: An Introduction to Pragmatist Moral Philosophy* (2026) by Diana Heney. Oxford University Press.

2024 Assisted in proofreading and editing for *Recognition: Historical and Philosophical Perspectives* (2026) ed. Matthew Congdon and Thomas Khurana. Routledge.

2022 Compiled Index for *Moral Articulation: On the Development of New Moral Concepts* (2023) by Matthew Congdon. Oxford University Press.

Development Associate, All Our Kin Inc., New Haven, CT, USA

2018-2021

AWARDS & CERTIFICATES

2026 Berry Teaching Award
Vanderbilt University

Berry Graduate Student Publication Prize
Vanderbilt University

Berry Graduate Student Departmental Service Prize
Vanderbilt University

2025 Kendall Berry Ethics Dissertation Prospectus Prize
Vanderbilt University

Berry Graduate Student Departmental Service Prize
Vanderbilt University

Provost's Pathbreaking Discovery Award, awarded to doctoral students who demonstrate truly exceptional research and outstanding scholarship.
Vanderbilt University

2024 Louise A. Taylor Scholarship, awarded to the most promising dissertation research in the humanities.
Vanderbilt University

2023 Certificate in College Teaching
Vanderbilt Center for Teaching (now The Institute for the Achievement of Higher Education)

2022 First Year Graduate Student Excellence in Teaching Award
Vanderbilt University

2017 John Bapst, SJ, Philosophy Medal, awarded to the student whose overall performance in philosophy courses has been outstanding.
Boston College

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES & SERVICE

American Philosophical Association, Member (2021-Present); Vanderbilt University Graduate Student Association (PGSA), President (2024-Present), Teaching Committee (2022-Present), Secretary (2022-2023); Minorities and Philosophy (MAP) Vanderbilt Chapter, Member (2023-Present), Treasurer (2024-2025); Center for Teaching at Vanderbilt University (now The Institute for the Advancement of Higher Education), Teaching Affiliate (Summer 2023).

GRADUATE COURSEWORK

Ethics, Moral Philosophy, and Value Theory

- Kant's Ethics (Julian Wuerth)
- Theories of Well-Being (Diana Heney)
- Moral Psychology (Matthew Congdon)
- Narrative Medicine (*Independent Study,* Diana Heney)

Metaphysics

- Early Modern Substance (Emanuele Costa)

History of Philosophy

- Plato (Lenn E. Goodman)
- Aristotle (Lenn E. Goodman)
- Maimonides and Friends (Lenn E. Goodman)
- Spinoza's *Ethics* (Emanuele Costa)
- Marx (Karen Ng)
- Adorno (Idit Dobbs-Weinstein)
- Iris Murdoch and 20th Century Philosophy (*Independent Study,* Matthew Congdon)

Political Philosophy

- Egalitarianism (Robert Talisse)

Philosophy of Language

- Wittgenstein, Skepticism, and Language (Matthew Congdon)

Unofficial Audited Courses

- Feminist Philosophy (Kelly Oliver)

DESCRIPTION OF DISSERTATION

In my dissertation, "In the Name of Love: Love's Public and Private Reasons," I contribute to the growing body of literature surrounding the reasons of love debate—which asks whether or not reasons of love are moral reasons—by arguing that love's normativity is fundamentally ethical, though not exhaustively captured by the public norms through which we ordinarily justify action. The public and private faces of love thus complicate love's ability to feature in our practices of justification. This argument proceeds in four parts: (1) In the first chapter, I present my own paradigm account of love, which stipulates four paradigmatic features of love that I contend are present in each of the conflict cases that animate the reasons of love debate. (2) In the second chapter, I defend the claim that reasons of love are ethical reasons by rejecting impartialist conceptions of morality found in the work of Susan Wolf, Harry Frankfurt, Dean Cocking and Jeannette Kennett in favor of a virtue-ethical framework. (3) In the third chapter, I argue for a kind of separateness of love's normativity born of its intimacy and privacy that cannot be fully captured in ethical language by drawing from post-Wittgensteinian moral philosophers like Iris Murdoch, Stanley Cavell, and Cora Diamond. (4) In the fourth and final chapter, I demonstrate the strengths of this view by applying the duality of love's normativity as public and private to understanding the fittingness of remorse in the wake of lost love. The account offered in this dissertation fundamentally shifts the terrain of the debate by moving past merely asking whether or not reasons of love are moral reasons to asking deeper philosophical questions about the role love plays in human flourishing, in making us fundamentally who we are, and the limitations that love can play in practices of accountability and justification.

LANGUAGES

French, basic reading