

CURRICULUM VITAE MIRELA OLIVA

Dr. Mirela Oliva, Professor (tenured)
Director of the Educating for Purpose Program
Rudman Endowed Chair of Philosophy
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ACADEMIC POSITIONS

2021-Present Professor of Philosophy (tenured), University of St. Thomas, Houston
2026-Present Director Educating for Purpose Program, University of St. Thomas, Houston
2026-Present Frank A. Rudman Endowed Chair of Philosophy, University of St. Thomas
2019-2023 Frank A. Rudman Endowed Chair of Philosophy, University of St. Thomas
2016- 2021 Associate Professor of Philosophy (tenured), University of St. Thomas, Houston
2010-2016 Assistant Professor of Philosophy (tenure-track), University of St. Thomas, Houston
2009-2010 Adjunct Professor, Theology Department, Boston College
2009-2010 Adjunct Professor, Philosophy Department, Suffolk University, Boston
1999-2000 Adjunct Professor, Political Sciences Department, Christian University Dimitrie Cantemir, Bucharest

VISITING POSITIONS

2024 Visiting Professor, Philosophy Department, University of Cagliari, Italy (April)
2023 Visiting Researcher, Human Flourishing Program, Harvard University (October)
2021 Visiting Researcher, Catholic Theological Faculty, University of Vienna (June and July)
2017 Visiting Researcher, St. Benet's Hall, University of Oxford (June)
2016 Visiting Researcher, Center for Theology and Modern European Thought,
University of Oxford (June)
2014- Present Member of the Institute of Medieval Studies, University of Navarra, Spain
2013 DAAD Visiting researcher, Thomas Institute, University of Cologne, Germany

EDUCATION

2007-2008 Postdoctoral Fellow in Philosophy, Lonergan Institute, Boston College
2007 Ph.D. in Philosophy, University of Freiburg, Germany (*summa cum laude*)
2000-2002 DAAD Postgraduate research in Philosophy, University of Tübingen
2000 M.A. in Philosophy, University of Bucharest
2000 B.A. in Philosophy, University of Bucharest
1999 M.A. in Political Sciences, Erasmus Program "La Sapienza" University, Rome/University of Bucharest
1998 B.A. in Political Sciences, University of Bucharest

PUBLICATIONS

I. BOOKS

Das innere Verbum in Gadamer's Hermeneutik, Mohr Siebeck, Tübingen, 2009.

In progress: A monograph on the meaning of life.

II. EDITED BOOKS

Philosophy, Faith, and Modernity. Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association, ed. Mirela Oliva and Stephen Striby, vol. 91, 2017.

Justice: Then and Now, Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association, ed. Mirela Oliva & Mary Catherine Sommers, vol. 90, 2016.

Analyzing Catholic Philosophy, Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association, vol. 89, 2015.
Dispositions, Habits and Virtues, Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association, ed. R.E. Houser & Mirela Oliva, vol. 88, 2014.

Paul Ricoeur, *Tradurre l'intraducibile. Sulla traduzione*, transl. and ed. by M.Oliva, Pontificia Urbaniana University Press, Rome, 2008.

III. EDITED SPECIAL ISSUES OF JOURNALS

Words and Images Serving Christianity, ed. Maria Jesus Soto Bruna and Mirela Oliva, special issue of *Religions*, forthcoming 2026.

Medieval Philosophy and Religious Thought, ed. Mirela Oliva, special issue of *Religions*, 2024.

Hermeneutic Realism and Veritative Hermeneutics, ed. Cristiana Freni, Theodore George, and Mirela Oliva, special issue of *Critical Hermeneutics*, 6(2), 2022.

Catholicism and Phenomenology, ed. Michael Bowler and Mirela Oliva, Special Issue of the *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly*, Summer 2021, Volume 95, Number 3.

IV. BOOK CHAPTERS (selections)

“Word”, in Antonio Cimino and Gert-Jan van der Heyden (eds.), *Encyclopedia of Hermeneutics*, Springer, 2026 (forthcoming).

“How Do Living Beings Reveal Things? On Figal’s Aristotelian Hermeneutics of Life”, in Theodore George and Gert-Jan van der Heyden (eds.), *The Future of Hermeneutics*, Tuebingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2026: pp. 47-62.

„Meaning and Evolution“, in *Gadamer: Open Questions*, ed. Facundo Bey, Editorial Universitaria, Universidad Central del Ecuador, 2025, pp. 243-271.

„The Personal Purpose of Life“, in *For Freedom, Set Free. Structure and Telos*, ed. James G. Hanink and Michael D. Torre, Catholic University of America Press, 2024, pp. 78-123.

“Gadamer and Theology”, in *The Gadamerian Mind*, ed. Theodore George and Gert-Jan van der Heiden, Routledge, 2021, pp. 349-363.

„Meaning: Theism“ in *Theism and Atheism. Opposing Arguments in Philosophy*, ed. Joseph W. Koterski and Graham Oppy, Macmillan Reference, 2019, pp. 491-506.

„Beauty and Meaning: From Aquinas to Gadamer and Nancy“, in Maria Jesus Soto-Bruna (ed.), *Causality and Similarity. Medieval Ways of Explaining Nature*, Olms, Bern, 2018, pp. 159-171.

“The Challenge of the Thomistic 'sensus communis': A Hermeneutic View”, in *Thomas Aquinas: Teacher of Humanity*, ed. J. Hittinger, Cambridge Scholars, 2015, pp. 255-270.

V. ARTICLES (selections)

“Mental Language and Life’s Self-Movement”, in *Journal of Gadamer Studies*, Volume 1, Issue 2, 2026, pp. 1-26.

“Does God Intervene in Human Lives? Special Divine Action in Aquinas”, in *Medieval Philosophy and Religious Thought*, special issue of *Religions*, 15: 417, 2024.

“Fine-Tuning and the Afterlife in Aquinas”, in *Revista Portuguesa de Filosofia*, Vol. 79, Issue 3, 2023, pp. 233-260.

“Realist Meaning”, in *Critical Hermeneutics*, Special Issue “Hermeneutic Realism and Veritative Hermeneutics”, 6(2), 2022, pp. 211-234.

“The Experience of Prophecy and the Metaphysics of Providence in Aquinas”, in *Religions*, Special Issue “Religious Experience and Metaphysics”, 13: 921, 2022.

„Meaning and Causation“, in *Internationales Jahrbuch für Hermeneutik*, 2022, pp. 127-142.

„Causation and Narrative Meaning in Life“, in *Journal of Philosophy of Life*, Vol.11, No.1, 2021, pp. 24-42.

“On Immortality in Heidegger”, in *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly*, special issue “Catholicism and Phenomenology”, Volume 95, Summer 2021, pp. 571-594.

“No Meaning for Believers? A Reply to Joshua Hochschild”, in *Studia Gilsoniana*, Volume 10, Issue 3, 2021, pp. 517-544.

“How to Reasonably Wait for the End of the World. Aquinas and Heidegger on the *Thessalonians*”, in *Open Theology*, special issue “(Ir)Rationality and Religiosity During Pandemics, Vol. 7, 2021, pp. 461-474.

“The Depth of Life in Hildebrand”, in *Magazzino di Filosofia*, Volume 37, 2021, pp. 9-29.

„The Relational Nature of the Meaning of Life in Nozick“, in *Disputatio*, vol. 8, no. 11, 2019, pp. 469-494.

„Hermeneutics and the Meaning of Life“, in *Epoché*, Vol. 22/2, Spring 2018, pp. 523-539.

“The Metaphysics of Language in Cusanus and Gadamer”, in *Anuario Filosófico*, Vol. 49, No. 2 (2016), pp. 401-422.

“Trinity and Difference: Gadamer and Heidegger on Aquinas”, in *Philosophy of Religion Annual/Internationales Jahrbuch für Religionsphilosophie*, Alber, Freiburg, Vol.13, 2014, pp. 195-221.

“Gadamer and Cusanus on Creation”, in *Philosophy Today*, Chicago, May 2011, pp. 184-191.

“Gadamer’s Hermeneutics and Thomism”, in *Internationales Jahrbuch für Hermeneutik*, Mohr Siebeck, Tübingen, 2011, pp. 97-105.

VI. BOOK REVIEWS (selections)

Michael Rosen, *The Shadow of God. Kant, Hegel, and the Passage from Heaven to History*, Harvard University Press, 2022, in *The Thomist*, Volume 88, Issue 3, 2024.

Robert J. Dostal, *Gadamer's Hermeneutics: Between Phenomenology and Dialectic*, Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2022, in *Existenz*, 18/2, 2023.

R. Matthew Shockey, *The Bounds of Self. An Essay on Heidegger's Being and Time*, 2021, in *Journal of Phenomenological Psychology* Vol. 54, Issue 2, 2023.

Dietrich von Hildebrand, *Ethics*, Hildebrand Project, 2020, in *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly*, 2021.

Lawrence J. Hatab, *Proto-Phenomenology, Language Acquisition, Orality, and Literacy*, Volume II: *Dwelling in Speech II*, Rowman & Littlefield, 2020, 312 pp, in *Notre Dame Philosophical Reviews*, 2020.

TALKS

I. KEYNOTE TALKS

“AI and Warfare: A Catholic View”, COST Conference, University of Insubria, Como, Italy, June 13-15, 2026

“The Meaning of Life: A Genealogy”, Conference “In Search of the Meaning of Life”, University of Gdansk, June, 16-17, 2023

“The Personal Purpose of Life”, Del Mar College, November 23, 2023

“The Individual Purpose of Life”, Annual meeting American Maritain Association, March 19-20, 2020 (online)

“Causality in the Human Life”, Aquinas Lecture at the Dominican School for Philosophy and Theology, Berkeley, February 20th, 2019

“Hermeneutics and the Meaning of Life”, annual meeting of the North American Society for Philosophical Hermeneutics, Texas A&M University, September 29-October 1, 2016

II. CONFERENCE TALKS (selections)

“Mental Language and Life’s Self-Movement: A Biological Account of *verbum interius* in Aquinas and Gadamer”, ACPA annual meeting, Washington DC, November 12-15, 2026

“AI and Warfare: A Catholic Perspective”, Conference “The Yeses and Noes of Transhumanism”, Pontifical Faculty of Theology Wroclaw, Poland, October 3, 2026

“Meaning and Value”, APA Pacific annual meeting, online, April 6-9, 2026

“On Divine Purpose: An Experiential Approach”, International Conference “Philosophy of Meaning in Life”, University of Oklahoma, March 23-26, 2026

“On Cosmic Meaning”, New-Mexico Texas Philosophical Society, Houston, March 2025

“Life: From Aristotle to Phenomenology. Figal on How Living Beings Reveal Things”, SPEP, Rochester, September 26-28, 2024

“Meaning and Value”, the World Congress of Philosophy, Rome, August 2-8, 2024

“Darwinian Hermeneutics”, University of Cagliari, April 2023

“Is Life a Story?”, APA Central, New Orleans, February 21-24, 2023

“The Meaning of Life”, Harvard University, October 30, 2023

“Fine-Tuning and Life’s Cosmic Meaning”, at the Fifth International Conference on Meaning in Life, Tohoku University, June 25-28, 2023

“Should We Ask about Life’s Cosmic Significance?”, Annual Meeting of the American Philosophical Association- Pacific Division, San Francisco, April 5-8, 2023

“Fine-Tuning and the Afterlife in Aquinas”, New Heavens and a New Earth: Scientific and Theological Eschatology, Thomistic Institute – Rome, March 10-11, 2023

Panel Discussion on Robert Dostal’s book *Gadamer’s Hermeneutics: Between Phenomenology and Dialectic*, Annual Meeting of the American Philosophical Association-Central Division, Denver, February 22-25, 2023

“Meaning: from Medieval *sensus* to modern *Sinn*” at the Annual Meeting of the American Catholic Philosophical Association”, New Orleans, November 17-20, 2022

“Meaning: from Medieval *sensus* to modern *Sinn*” at the Annual Meeting of the North American Society for Hermeneutics, University of Dallas, September 22-24, 2022

“The Experience of Prophecy and the Metaphysics of Providence”, in the Session of the Society for the Phenomenology of Religious Experience, APA Central, Chicago, February 23-26, 2022

“Displacement and Life Changes”, at the annual meeting of the North American Society for Hermeneutics, October 6-8, 2021 (online)

“Purpose and Destiny in Frankl and Aquinas”, at the World Congress of the Viktor Frankl Institute of Logotherapy, October 21-23, 2021 (online)

“Dispositionalism and Responsiveness to Value in Hildebrand”, at the conference “Hildebrand's Ethics”, University of St. Thomas, Houston, April 23-24, 2021 (online)

“How to Reasonably Wait for the End of the World. Aquinas and Heidegger on the Thessalonians”, conference “(Ir)Rationality and Religiosity during Pandemics”, University of Vienna, September 16-17, 2020 (online)

“Causality and the Narrative Meaning of Life”, the Third International Conference on Philosophy and Meaning in Life, University of Birmingham, UK, June 16-19, 2020 (online)

“Technology and the Meaning of Life”, together with Elham Mousavadin, University of St. Thomas, Houston, February 27, 2020

“The Depth of Life in Hildebrand”, Hildebrand Conference, *First Things* Headquarters, New York City, November 14-16, 2019

“Special Divine Action in Aquinas”, Symposium Thomisticum, Rome, July 4-6, 2019

“The Relational Nature of the Meaning of Life. A Defense of Nozick”, University of Haifa, Israel, June 11-12, 2019

“God's Word and the Meaning of Life”, at the annual meeting of the American Catholic Philosophical Association, San Diego, November 8-11, 2018

“Waiting for the End of the World: Aquinas and Heidegger on the *Thessalonians*”, at the annual meeting of the American Catholic Philosophical Association, Dallas, November 16-19, 2017

“On Immortality in Heidegger”, at the annual meeting of the American Catholic Philosophical Association, Dallas, November 16-19, 2017

“Providence, Causality and Narrativity”, at the annual meeting of the American Catholic Philosophical Association, San Francisco, November 3-6, 2016

“The Meaning of Life in Heidegger”, at the North Texas Heidegger Symposium, Dallas, May 1-2, 2015

III. COMMUNITY TALKS

“The Value of Living Beings”, Philosophically Drinking, Rudyard's Pub, May 28, 2024

“Philosophy and Interdisciplinary Communication”, at the DAAD and A. v. Humboldt alumni meeting, Atlanta, October 5-7, 2018

HONORS AND AWARDS

Acton Grant for the development of the Philosophy, Politics, and Economics (PPE) course (2023)
DAAD Research Grant at the University of Cologne, Germany, May-August 2013

LANGUAGES

English, French, German, Italian – very good (reading, writing, speaking)
Latin – very good (reading)
Spanish – good (reading and speaking)
Romanian – mother tongue

MEMBERSHIPS

American Philosophical Association
American Catholic Philosophical Association
North American Society for Philosophical Hermeneutics