Curriculum Vitae

Marco Maria Nicotra

Address: Engineering Center, ECEE 425 UCB, Boulder (CO), 80309

Research Interests

Broad Areas of Interest: Nonlinear Systems, Constrained Control, Optimization

Target Applications: Unmanned Aerial Vehicles, Human-Robot Interaction, Spacecraft, Quantum Systems, Battery Management Systems, Wind Farms

Employment

Assistant Professor University of Colorado Boulder ECEE Department

Postdoctoral Research Fellow University of Michigan <u>Advisor:</u> Ilya Kolmanovsky

Education

Joint Ph.D. Degree Université Libre de Bruxelles Engineering Sciences

University of Bologna Automation and Operational Research

Advisors: Emanuele Garone, Roberto Naldi

T.I.M.E. Double M.S. Degree

Université Libre de Bruxelles Electromechanical Engineering

Politecnico di Milano Mechanical Engineering

B.S. Degree Politecnico di Milano *Mechanical Engineering* August 2018 – Present Boulder, Colorado

October 2016 – July 2018 Ann Arbor, Michigan

> September 2016 Brussels, Belgium

> > Bologna, Italy

September 2012 Brussels, Belgium

Milan, Italy

June 2009 Milan, Italy

Email: <u>marco.nicotra@colorado.edu</u> Telephone: +1 (303) 735-7203

Honors and Awards

- 2023: IEEE Senior Member
- 2023: ECEE Department Outstanding Jr. Faculty
- 2021: NSF Faculty Early Career Development Award "CAREER: Hypersampled Model Predictive Control: Reconciling Analog Systems with Digital Controllers"
- 2019: Finalist for Best Student Paper (Student: D. Liao-McPherson). <u>European Control Conference</u>. Paper: "A Semismooth Predictor Corrector Method for Suboptimal Model Predictive Control"
- **2014: Honourable Mention for the IFAC Young Author Prize**. <u>IFAC World Congress</u>. Paper: *"Taut cable control of a tethered UAV"*
- 2012: FNRS FRIA Doctoral Grant "Control of an Autonomous Tethered Aerial Vehicle for Inspection Applications with Tele-Operation Requirements (CAT-AVIATOR)"

Funding and Grants

Government Funding Agencies

- NASA STRI 2022: "Quantum pathways for Spaceborne Climate Science", Nov. 2023 Nov. 2028. <u>Amount:</u> \$15m (my share: \$720,000), <u>Lead:</u> S. V. Bettadpur (UT Austin), <u>Consortium:</u> UT Austin, CU Boulder, UCSB, Caltech.
- NSF CMMI 2046212: "CAREER: Hypersampled Model Predictive Control: Reconciling Analog Systems with Digital Controllers", Sept. 2021 – Aug. 2026. <u>Amount:</u> \$567,426, <u>PI:</u> M.M. Nicotra, <u>Co-PIs:</u> None.
- NSF QII-TAQS 1936303: "Quantum control of ultracold atoms in optical lattices for space inertial sensing", Jan. 2019 Sept. 2023.
 <u>Amount:</u> \$1,928,242 (my share: \$320,391), <u>PI:</u> D. Anderson, <u>Co-PIs:</u> M. Holland, M.M. Nicotra, P. Axelrad, and A. Zozulya.
- NSF CMMI 1904441: "Collaborative Research: Real-time iteration governor for constrained nonlinear model predictive control", July. 2019 July 2023. <u>Amount:</u> \$431,876, <u>PI:</u> M.M. Nicotra, <u>Co-PIs:</u> Ilya V. Kolmanovsky.

CU Boulder Internal Funding

- **EEF Major Proposal:** *"Modernization of the Control Systems Laboratory"*, May 2019 Aug 2019. <u>Amount:</u> \$101,581.08, <u>PI:</u> M.M. Nicotra, <u>Co-PIs:</u> None.
- QuEST Seed Grant: "Advanced Control Algorithms for Trapped-ion Quantum Metrology", May 2019 Aug. 2019. <u>Amount:</u> \$57,850.00, <u>PI:</u> M.M. Nicotra, <u>Co-PIs:</u> D. Leibrandt.
- ASIRT Seed Grant: "Mobile Sensing Using UAVs to Enable Accurate Wind Field Estimation Across Wind Farms: Extensions to Large Wind Farms, Multiple UAVs, and Time-Varying Wind Fields", Jan 2019 – May 2019. <u>Amount:</u> \$8,000.00, <u>PI:</u> L. Pao, <u>Co-PIs:</u> M.M. Nicotra, C. Dixon.

Teaching Activities

Graduate Courses

- ECEN 5028-ST Constrained Control: S22
- ECEN 5638 Control Systems Laboratory: S20, S21, S22, S23
- ECEN 5738 Theory of Nonlinear Systems: F18, S23

Undergraduate Courses

- ECEN 2260 Circuits as Systems: F22
- ECEN 2310 Programming with Mathematical Software: F19, F20, F21
- ECEN 4638 Control Systems Laboratory: S19, S20, S21, S22, S23

Advising and Mentoring

Doctoral Students		
1.	Victor Freire Melgizo, ECEE	Aug 2022 - present
2.	Yaashia Gautam, ECEE	Aug 2021 - present
3.	Marco Pomponio, ECEE	Jan 2021 - present
4.	Jieqiu Shao, ECEE	Aug 2019 - May 2024 (exp)
5.	Terrence Skibik, ECEE	Aug 2019 - Dec 2023 (exp)
6.	Thomas Dearing, ECEE	Aug 2018 - May 2023
Master Students		
7.	Jonathan Hanson, ECEE	Jan 2021 - May 2022
8.	Anne Cross Theurkauf, AES	Aug 2019 - May 2020
9.	Jieqiu Shao, ME	May 2019 - Aug 2019
10.	David James Pasley, ECEE	Sept 2018 - Mar 2021
Undergraduate Students		
11.	Quinton Corry, ECEE	Oct 2022 - May 2023
12.	Jasleen Batra, ECEE	Aug 2022 - May 2023
13.	Alexis Katrina Palau, ECEE	Aug 2021 - May 2022
14.	Mitchell Crine, ME	Aug 2021 - Dec 2021
Exchange Students		
1.	Andrea Mengozzi, University of Bologna	Sept 2019 - Feb 2020
2.	Kelly Merckaert, Vrije Universiteit Brussel	Feb 2019 - July 2019
3.	Bryan Convens, Vrije Universiteit Brussel	Feb 2019 - July 2019
Co-advised Students (Outside of CU)		
4.	Dominic Liao-McPherson, U. of Michigan	Nov 2016 - May 2020
5.	Kelly Merckaert, Vrije Universiteit Brussel	Sept 2015 - May 2023
6.	Bryan Convens, Vrije Universiteit Brussel	Sept 2015 - May 2023

Service Activities

Professional Service

Technical Program Committee

- *Editorial Board:* IEEE-CSS Technology Conferences (2023-2026)
- Associate Editor: IEEE Conference on Control Tech. and Applications (2020)
- Associate Editor: American Control Conference (2020)

Peer Reviewer

- *Proposals:* NSF Panelist for Foundational Research in Robotics (FRR) program and Dynamics, Control, and Systems Diagnostics (DCSD) program.
- *Journals:* IEEE Transactions on Automatic Control, IEEE Transactions on Control System Technologies, Control System Society Letters, Automatica, Journal of Guidance, Control, and Dynamic
- *Conferences:* American Control Conference, Conference on Decision and Control, IFAC World Congress, International Conference on Robotics and Automation

Technical Committee Member

• IEEE-CSS Technical Committee for Aerospace Controls, Dec. 2018 - present

College Service

- Member of the Quantum Engineering Initiative Advisory Committee, AY 21-22
- Member of the Graduate Robotics Program Executive Committee: AY 21-22
- Reviewer for the CAREER Commit to Submit Program: AY 21-22

Departmental Service

- Chair of the Undergraduate Teaching Laboratory Committee, AY 20-21
- Member of the Social Activities Sub-committee: AY 20-21
- Member of Faculty Search Committee: AY 19, 22
- Member of the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee: AY 18-19, 22
- Member of the Procurement Specialist Hiring Committee: AY 19
- Member of the Climate Committee: AY 18

Journal Articles

- [J1] J. Shao, M. Naris, J. Hauser, M.M. Nicotra, "How to solve quantum optimal control problems using projection operator-based Newton steps", Phys. Review A, vol 109 (1), pp. 012609, 2024.
- [J2] K. Merckaert, B. Convens, M.M. Nicotra, B. Vanderborght, "Real-time constraintbased planning and control of robotic manipulators for safe human-robot collaboration", Robotics and Computer-Integrated Manufacturing, vol 87, pp 102711, 2024.
- [J3] <u>**T. Skibik**</u>, **D. Liao-McPherson**, M.M. Nicotra, "*A terminal set feasibility governor for linear model predictive control*", IEEE Transactions on Automatic Control, Early Access, 2023.
- [J4] <u>V. Freire</u>, M.M. Nicotra, "Systematic design of discrete-time control barrier functions using maximal output admissible sets", IEEE Control Systems Letters, vol. 7, pp. 1891-1896, 2023.
- [J5] M.M. Nicotra, J. Shao, J. Combes, A. Cross Theurkauf, P. Axelrad, L.-Y. Chih, M. Holland, A.A. Zozulya, C.K. LeDesma, K. Mehling, D.Z. Anderson, "Modeling and control of ultracold atoms trapped in an optical lattice: an example-driven tutorial on quantum control", IEEE Control Systems Magazine, vol. 43(1), pp. 28-43, 2023.
- [J6] <u>**T. Skibik**</u>, M.M. Nicotra, "Analysis of time-distributed model predictive control when using a regularized primal-dual gradient optimizer", IEEE Control Systems Letters, vol. 7, pp. 235-240, 2022.
- [J7] D.S. Zalkind, M.M. Nicotra, L.Y. Pao "Constrained power reference control for wind turbines", Wind Energy, vol. 25(5), pp. 914-934, 2022.
- [J8] <u>**T.L. Dearing**</u>, J. Hauser, X. Chen, M.M. Nicotra, C. Petersen, "*Efficient trajectory optimization for constrained spacecraft attitude maneuvers*", AIAA Journal of Guidance, Control, and Dynamics, vol. 45(4), pp. 638-650, 2022.
- [J9] J. Shao, J. Combes, J. Hauser, M.M. Nicotra, "Projection-operator-based Newton method for the trajectory optimization of closed quantum systems", Physical Review A, vol. 105(3), p. 032605, 2022.
- [J10] **B. Convens, K. Merckaert**, M.M. Nicotra, B. Vanderborght, "Safe, fast, and efficient distributed receding horizon constrained control of aerial robot swarms", IEEE Robotics and Automation Letters, vol. 7(2), pp. 4173-4180, 2022.
- [J11] K. Merckaert, B. Convens, C.-J. Wu, A. Roncone, M.M. Nicotra, B. Vanderborght, *"Real-time motion control of robotic manipulators for safe human-robot coexistence"*, Robotics and Computer-Integrated Manufacturing, vol. 73, p. 102223, 2022.
- [J12] <u>T. Skibik</u>, D. Liao-McPherson, T. Cunis, I.V. Kolmanovsky, M.M. Nicotra, "A feasibility governor for enlarging the region of attraction of linear model predictive controllers", IEEE Trans. on Automatic Control, vol. 67(10), pp. 5501-5508, 2021.
- [J13] D. Liao-McPherson, <u>T. Skibik</u>, J. Leung, I.V. Kolmanovsky, M.M. Nicotra, "An analysis of closed-loop stability for linear model predictive control based on timedistributed optimization", IEEE Transactions on Automatic Control, vol. 67 (5), pp. 2618-2615, 2021.

- [J14] **B. Convens, K. Merckaert**, B. Vanderborght, M.M. Nicotra, "Invariant set distributed explicit reference governors for provably safe on-board control of nanoquadrotor swarms", Frontiers in Robotics and AI, vol. 8, p. 129, 2021.
- [J15] A. Goldar, R. Romagnoli, L.D. Couto, M.M. Nicotra, M. Kinnaert, E. Garone, "Lowcomplexity fast charging strategies based on explicit reference governors for Li-Ion battery cells", IEEE Trans. on Control Sys. Tech., vol. 29(4), pp. 1597-1608, 2020.
- [J16] <u>**T.L. Dearing**</u>, X. Chen, M.M. Nicotra, "Stabilizing formation systems with nonholonomic agents", IEEE Control Systems Letters, vol. 5(2), pp. 403-408, 2020.
- [J17] **D. Liao-McPherson**, M.M. Nicotra, A.L. Dontchev, I.V. Kolmanovsky, V. Veliov, *"Sensitivity-based warmstarting for nonlinear model predictive control with polyhedral state and control constraints"*, IEEE Transactions on Automatic Control, vol. 65(10), pp. 4288-4294, 2020.
- [J18] M.M. Nicotra, **D. Liao-McPherson**, L. Burlion, I.V. Kolmanovsky, "Spacecraft attitude control with nonconvex constraints: an explicit reference governor approach", IEEE Transactions on Automatic Control, vol. 65(8), pp. 3677-3684, 2020.
- [J19] **D. Liao-McPherson**, M.M. Nicotra, I.V. Kolmanovsky, "*Time-distributed optimization for real-time model predictive control: stability, robustness, and constraint satisfaction*", Automatica, vol. 117, p. 108973, 2020.
- [J20] T. Nguyen, M.M. Nicotra, E. Garone, "A geodesic approach for the control of tethered quadrotors", AIAA Journal of Guidance, Control, and Dynamics, vol 43(4), pp. 854-862, 2020.
- [J21] A.L. Dontchev, M. Huang, I.V. Kolmanovsky, M.M. Nicotra, "Inexact Newton-Kantorovich methods for constrained nonlinear model predictive control", IEEE Transactions on Automatic Control, vol 64(9), pp. 3602-3615, 2019.
- [J22] M.M. Nicotra, T. Nguyen, E. Garone, I.V. Kolmanovsky, "*Explicit reference governor for the constrained control of time-delayed linear systems*", IEEE Transactions on Automatic Control, vol. 64(7), pp. 2883-2889, 2019.
- [J23] M.M. Nicotra, D. Liao-McPherson, I.V. Kolmanovsky, "Embedding constrained model predictive control in a continuous-time dynamic feedback", IEEE Transactions on Automatic Control, vol 64(5), pp. 1932-1946, 2019.
- [J24] A.L. Dontchev, I.V. Kolmanovsky, M.I. Krastanov, M.M. Nicotra, V.M. Veliov, *"Lipschitz Stability in discretized optimal control"*, SIAM Journal on Control and Optimization, vol. 57(1), pp. 468-489, 2019.
- [J25] M.M. Nicotra, E. Garone, "The explicit reference governor: a general framework for the closed-form control of constrained nonlinear systems", IEEE Control Systems Magazine, vol. 38(4), pp. 89-107, 2018.
- [J26] E. Garone, M.M. Nicotra, L. Ntogramatzidis, "*Explicit reference governor for linear systems*", International Journal of Control, vol. 91(6), pp. 1415-1430, 2018.
- [J27] M.M. Nicotra, R. Naldi, E. Garone, "Nonlinear control of a tethered UAV: the taut cable case", Automatica, vol. 78, pp 174-184, 2017.
- [J28] M.M. Nicotra, E. Garone, I. V. Kolmanovsky, "A fast reference governor for linear systems subject to convex constraints", AIAA Journal of Guidance, Control, and Dynamics, vol 40, pp. 461-465, 2016.
- [J29] E. Garone, M.M. Nicotra, "*Explicit reference governor for constrained nonlinear systems*", IEEE Trans. on Automatic Control, vol. 61, no. 5, pp. 1379-1384, 2016.

[J30] M.M. Nicotra, R. Naldi, E. Garone, "Sufficient conditions for the stability of a class of second order systems", Systems and Control Letters, vol. 84, pp 1-6, 2015.

Conference Proceedings (peer reviewed)

- [C1] <u>Y. Gautam</u>, M.M. Nicotra, "Influence of discretization in dynamically embedded model predictive control", to appear in: Proc. of the 22th IFAC World Congress, IFAC-PapersOnLine, 2023.
- [C2] <u>**T.L. Dearing**</u>, J. Hauser, C. Petersen, M.M. Nicotra, X. Chen, "Attitude trajectory optimization and momentum conservation with control moment gyroscopes", to appear in: Proc. of the 22th IFAC World Congress, IFAC-PapersOnLine, 2023.
- [C3] J. Shao, L.-Y. Chih, M. Naris, M. Holland, M.M. Nicotra, "Application of quantum optimal control to shaken lattice interferometry", to appear in: Proc. of the American Control Conference, pp. 850-855, 2023.
- [C4] J. Shao, M.M. Nicotra, "A Lyapunov-based shaking function for a class of nonbilinear quantum systems", Proc. of the American Control Conference, pp. 850-855, 2022.
- [C5] S. Van Leeuwen, <u>T. Skibik</u>, M.M. Nicotra, I.V. Kolmanovsky, D. Liao-McPherson, "A nonlinear predictive control strategy for landing on an asteroid", Proc. of the American Control Conference, pp. 443-449, 2022.
- [C6] <u>T. Skibik</u>, D. Liao-McPherson, T. Cunis, I.V. Kolmanovsky, M.M. Nicotra, *"feasibility governor for linear model predictive control"*, Proc. of the American Control Conference, pp. 2329-2335, 2021.
- [C7] <u>T.L. Dearing</u>, C.D. Petersen, M.M. Nicotra, X. Chen, "Fuel-balanced formation flight control of underactuated satellites", Proc. of the American Control Conference, pp. 4319-4324, 2020.
- [C8] <u>D.J. Pasley</u>, M.M. Nicotra, L. Pao, J. King, C. Bay, "Mobile sensing for wind field estimation in wind farms", Proc. of the American Control Conference, pp. 4071-4076, 2020.
- [C9] G. Ding, J.J. Koh, K. Merckaert, B. Vanderborght, M.M. Nicotra, C. Heckman, A. Roncone, L. Chen, "Distributed reinforcement learning for cooperative multi-robot object manipulation", Proc. of 19th International Conference on Autonomous Agents and MultiAgent Systems, pp. 1831-1833, 2020.
- [C10] D. Liao-McPherson, M.M. Nicotra, I.V. Kolmanovsky, "A semismooth predictor corrector method for suboptimal model predictive control", Proc. of the IEEE European Control Conference, pp. 2749-2755, 2019.
- [C11] A. Cotorruelo Jiménez, D. Limón, M.M. Nicotra, E. Garone, "Explicit reference governor toolbox (ERGT)", Proc. of IEEE 4th International Forum on Research and Technology for Society and Industry, pp. 1-6, 2018.
- [C12] L. Burlion, M.M. Nicotra, I.V. Kolmanovsky, "A fast reference governor for the constrained control of linear discrete-time systems with parametric uncertainties", Proc. of the IEEE Conference on Decision and Control, pp. 6289-6294, 2018.
- [C13] D. Liao-McPherson, M.M. Nicotra, I.V. Kolmanovsky, "A semismooth predictor corrector method for real-time parametric optimization with applications in model predictive control", Proc. of the IEEE Conference on Decision and Control, pp. 3600-3607, 2018.

- [C14] K. Merckaert, M.M. Nicotra, B. Vanderborght, E. Garone, "Constrained control of robotic manipulators using the explicit reference governor", Proc. of the IEEE/RSJ International Conference on Intelligent Robots and Systems, pp. 5155- 5162, 2018.
- [C15] M.M. Nicotra, D. Liao-McPherson, I.V. Kolmanovsky, "Dynamically embedded model predictive control", Proc. of the American Control Conference, pp. 4957-4962, 2018.
- [C16] R. Romagnoli, L.D. Couto, M.M. Nicotra, M. Kinnaert, E. Garone, "Computationally-efficient constrained control of the state-of-charge of a Li-ion battery cell", Proc. of the IEEE Conference on Decision and Control, pp. 1433-1439, 2017.
- [C17] B. Convens, K. Merckaert, M.M. Nicotra, R. Naldi, E. Garone, "Control of fully actuated unmanned aerial vehicles with actuator saturation", Proc. of the 20th IFAC World Congress, IFAC-PapersOnLine, vol. 50, pp. 12715-12720, 2017.
- [C18] M.M. Nicotra, E. Garone, "An explicit reference governor for the robust constrained control of nonlinear systems", Proc. of the IEEE Conference on Decision and Control, pp. 1502-1507, 2016.
- [C19] M.M. Nicotra, R. Naldi, E. Garone, "A robust explicit reference governor for the constrained control of unmanned aerial vehicles", Proc. of the American Control Conference, pp. 6284-6289, 2016.
- [C20] L.D. Couto, J. Schorsh, M.M. Nicotra, M. Kinnaert, "SOC and SOH estimation for Li-ion batteries based on an equivalent hydraulic model. Part I: SOC and surface concentration estimation", Proc. of the American Control Conference, pp. 4022-4028, 2016.
- [C21] M.M. Nicotra, E. Garone, "Control of Euler-Lagrange systems subject to constraints: an explicit reference governor approach", Proc. of the IEEE Conference on Decision and Control, pp. 1154-1159, 2015.
- [C22] M.M. Nicotra, E. Garone, "Explicit reference governor for continuous time nonlinear systems subject to convex constraints", Proc. of the American Control Conference, pp. 4561-4566, 2015.
- [C23] M.M. Nicotra, M. Bartulovic, E. Garone, B. Sinopoli, "A distributed explicit reference governor for constrained control of multiple UAVs", Proc. of the 5th IFAC Workshop on Distributed Estimation and Control in Networked Systems, IFAC Proceedings Volumes, vol. 48 (22), pp. 156-161, 2015.
- [C24] M.M. Nicotra, R. Naldi, E. Garone, "Taut cable control of a tethered UAV", Proc. of the 19th IFAC World Congress, IFAC Proceedings Volumes, vol. 47(3), pp. 3190-3195, 2014.
- [C25] S. Eeckout, M.M. Nicotra, R. Naldi, E. Garone, "Nonlinear control of an actuated tethered airfoil", Proc. of the 22nd Mediterranean Conference on Control and Automation, pp. 1412-1417, 2014.
- [C26] M.M. Nicotra, E. Garone, R. Naldi, "Nested saturation control of an UAV carrying a suspended load", Proc. of American Control Conference, pp. 3585-3590, 2014.
- [C27] M.M. Nicotra, A. Buttafuoco, M. Kinnaert, "Hybrid model for haptic lung palpation", Proc. of the 16th IFAC Symposium on System Identification, IFAC Proceedings Volumes, vol. 16 (1), pp. 1431-1436, 2012.

Under Review

- [J31] <u>**T.L. Dearing**</u>, J. Hauser, X. Chen, M.M. Nicotra, C. Petersen, "*Energy-optimal attitude control strategies with control moment gyroscopes*", AIAA Journal of Guidance, Control, and Dynamics.
- [J32] C.K. LeDesma, K. Mehling, <u>J. Shao</u>, J.D. Wilson, P. Axelrad, M.M. Nicotra, M. Holland, D.Z. Anderson, "A machine-designed optical lattice atom interferometer", Science.
- [J33] **B. Convens, D. Liao-McPherson, K. Merckaert**, B. Vanderborght, M.M. Nicotra, *"An explicit terminal set feasibility governor for real-time nonlinear model predictive control over arbitrary horizons"*, IEEE Trans. on Automatic Control.
- [J34] G. Tartaglione, M.M. Nicotra, R. Naldi, E. Garone, "A systematic constrained control framework for unmanned aerial vehicles based on explicit reference governor", Automatica.
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- [C28] <u>Y. Gautam</u>, M.M. Nicotra, "Stability Analysis of Hypersampled Model Predictive Control", American Control Conference.
- [C29] <u>**T. Skibik**</u>, M.M. Nicotra, "A Terminal Set Feasibility Governor for Nonlinear Model Predictive Control", American Control Conference.

Select Seminars

- 2021 PickNik Robotics: "Explicit Reference Governor for Safe Human Robot Interaction"
- 2021 CU Boulder: "Theory and Applications of Real-Time Constrained Control"
- 2020 AFRL: "Real-time Optimization for Constrained Control and Autonomy"
- 2018 NREL: "Safe Fast-Charging of Li-ion Batteries"
- 2017 CU Boulder: "Constrained Control of Nonlinear Systems"