

LI KANG

Washington and Lee University | 204 West Washington Street, Lexington, VA 24450, USA

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AREAS OF SPECIALIZATION

Metaphysics, Buddhist Philosophy, Chinese Philosophy

AREAS OF COMPETENCE

Philosophy of Artificial Intelligence

APPOINTMENTS

Associate Professor of Philosophy, Washington and Lee University, 2026 – *present*.

Assistant Professor of Philosophy, Washington and Lee University, 2019 – 2026.

Visiting Assistant Professor of Philosophy, Vassar College, 2017 – 2019.

EDUCATION

PhD, Philosophy, Syracuse University, USA, August 2017.

Dissertation: *Spreading Structures*, Chair: Kris McDaniel.

MPhil, Philosophy, University of St Andrews, UK, June 2011.

Thesis: *Coincidence and Modality*, Primary Supervisor: Katherine Hawley.

BA, Philosophy, Wuhan University, China, June 2008.

PUBLICATIONS

Articles

“How It All Depends: A Contemporary Reconstruction of Huayan Buddhism”, *The Oxford Handbook of Chinese Philosophy*, edited by Justin Tiwald, Oxford University Press, 2025.

doi: <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199945498.013.0029>

“From Emptiness to Interconnectedness: Identity and Dependence in Chinese Buddhism”, *Philosophy Compass*, 2025.

doi: <https://doi.org/10.1111/phc3.70024>

“The Relative Identity of All Objects: Tiantai Buddhism Meets Analytic Metaphysics”, *Ergo: An Open Access Journal of Philosophy* 11: 44, 2024.

doi: <https://doi.org/10.3998/ergo.6921>

Edited Collection

A Topical Issue on “[Metaphysics: East and West](#)”, *Asian Journal of Philosophy*, with Michael Clark, Kris McDaniel, and Tuomas Tahko.

SELECTED WORK-IN-PROGRESS

Monographs

After Emptiness: A Metaphysics of Chinese Buddhism

Buddhist Social Metaphysics, Cambridge Elements, Cambridge University Press (Under Contract)

Articles

“A Buddhist Metaphysics of Social Groups” (Invited as the lead article for a symposium, *Asian Journal of Philosophy*)

“Artificial Personhood: Through a Buddhist Lens”

“From *Li* 理 to the Interdependence of All Things?”

“Is There an Ultimate Reality in Huayan Buddhism?”

“Performative Metaphysics: A Chinese Chan Approach”

Book Review

Review of Nicholaos Jones’s *Metaphors for Interdependence: Fazang’s Buddhist Metaphysics*, *Philosophical Review*.

GRANTS, FELLOWSHIPS & AWARDS

External

NEH Summer Institute Participant Stipend, National Endowment for the Humanities, 2026.

The NEH Summer Institute on Self-knowledge for Humans and Artificial Systems, UC Berkeley.

NEH Summer Stipend, National Endowment for the Humanities, 2024.

“Bridging Chinese Buddhism and Contemporary Metaphysics”

Insight Development Grant, The Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC), Canada, 2021 – 2025.

“Social Ontology in Early Confucian Philosophy” (with principal investigator Jennifer Wang)

Internal

Lenfest Summer Research Grant, Washington and Lee University, 2020 – 2026.

Lenfest Summer Faculty-Student Collaborative Research Grant, Washington and Lee University, 2024.

College Mini Grant for Course Enhancement, Washington and Lee University, Fall 2020, Fall 2021.

Humanities Center Dissertation Fellowship, Syracuse University, 2015 – 2016.

Outstanding Teaching Assistant Award, Syracuse University, 2015.

PRESENTATIONS

“What Do Buddhas Believe? Enlightened Cognition in Chinese Sanlun and Tiantai Buddhism”

The Ethics of Empty Beliefs: Conversation with Buddhist Philosophy, The Institute for the Cultural and Intellectual History of Asia of the Austrian Academy of Sciences, Vienna, Austria, June 2027.

“Conventional Personhood in the Age of AI”

The NEH Summer Institute on Self-knowledge for Humans and Artificial Systems, UC Berkeley, Berkeley, CA, USA, June 2026.

“Performative Metaphysics: A Chan Buddhist Approach”

Metaphysics Workshop, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, MD, USA, April 2026.

The 2026 Midwest Conference on Chinese Thought, Gettysburg College, Gettysburg, PA, USA, April 2026.

“From Conventional Identities to Conceptual Engineering: A Buddhist Approach”

The 2025 Meeting of the Northeast Conferences on Chinese Thought, Duke University, Durham, NC, USA, November 2025.

“Pathway from Causation to Emptiness”

Panel on Causation and Emptiness with Jenny Hung and Mark Siderits, Madhyamaka in South Asia and Beyond Conference, The Institute for the Cultural and Intellectual History of Asia of the Austrian Academy of Sciences, Vienna, Austria, August 2024.

“Is There an Ultimate Reality in Huayan Buddhism?”

The 2024 Meeting of the Northeast Conference on Chinese Thought, Baruch College, City University of New York, New York, NY, USA, November 2024.

Ultimate Reality as the Ground: Exploring the Structure of Reality across Eastern and Western Traditions, University of Birmingham, Birmingham, UK, July 2024.

“Artificial Personhood: Through a Buddhist Lens”

Asian Philosophy Workshop, Simon Fraser University, Vancouver, BC, Canada, April 2024.

“From Emptiness to Interconnectedness: Objects, Identity, and Dependence in Chinese Buddhism”

International Society for Chinese Philosophy Group Session, APA Eastern Division, New York, NY, USA, January 2024.

“A Buddhist Metaphysics of Social Groups”

Lost, Found, or Otherwise: A Cross-Cultural Dialogue on Self and Identity Workshop, Washington and Lee University, Lexington, VA, USA, March 2024.

Panel on Buddhist and Hindu Metaphysics with Jenny Hung and Nicholaos Jones, APA Eastern Division, New York, NY, USA, January 2024.

Princeton-Rutgers Philosophy of Religion Incubator Conference II, Princeton University, New Brunswick, NJ, USA, May 2022.

Women in Metaphysics Research Network Winter Workshop Series, Zoom, March 2022.

“How to Be Free from Oneself: Lessons from Chan Buddhism”

The 2021 Annual Midwest Conference on Chinese Thought, Wright State University, Zoom, May 2021.

Princeton-Rutgers Philosophy of Religion Incubator Conference, Princeton University, Zoom, May 2021.

“The Relative Identity of All Objects: Tiantai Buddhism Meets Analytic Metaphysics” (*Under different titles*)

Commented by Trenton Merricks. Persistence of Goodness: A Celebration of Katherine Hawley, Zoom, June 2021.

Women in Metaphysics Research Network Summer Workshop Series, Zoom, June 2020.

Commented by Jonathan Schaffer. The Fourth Rutgers Workshop on Chinese Philosophy, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ, USA, April 2018.

“The Interdependence of All Things and Degrees of Dependence” (*Under different titles*)

Women in Metaphysics Research Network Fall Workshop Series, Zoom, September 2020.

Mount Holyoke Summer Philosophy Conference, Mount Holyoke College (Conference cancelled due to Covid-19), South Hadley, MA, USA, June 2020.

The 2019 Mentoring Workshop for Pre-Tenure Women in Philosophy, Boston University, Boston, MA, USA, June 2019.

Commented by Bradley Rettler. Early Career Metaphysics Workshop, Lehigh University, Bethlehem, USA, April 2019.

Commented by Bobby Bingle. Colloquium, APA Pacific Division, Seattle, WA, USA, April 2017.

Graduate Women in Metaphysics Workshop, Northampton, MA, USA, May 2016.

The Humanities Center, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY, USA, January 2016.

“Hey Grounding, Meet Structuralism!”

The Metaphysics and Epistemology of Grounding and Fundamentality Conference, CUNY, New York, NY, USA, December 2015.

The Dutch Research School of Philosophy (OZSW) Graduate Conference in Theoretical Philosophy, VU University Amsterdam, Amsterdam, Netherlands, May 2014.

Hyper-Intensionality Workshop. Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY, USA, November 2013.

“In Defense of Nomic Structuralism”

The First Annual Conference of the Society for the Metaphysics of Science, Rutgers University, Newark, NJ, USA, September 2015.

Arché Philosophical Research Centre, University of St Andrews, St Andrews, UK, June 2015.

Women in Metaphysics Workshop, Rochester, VT, USA, May 2013.

“Yet Another Attempt at Grounding Modality”

Postgraduate Session, The Joint Session of the Aristotelian Society and the Mind Association, Dublin, Ireland, July 2010.

“Contrastive Dispositions”

A.H.R.C Metaphysics of Science Project Conference, Nottingham, UK, September 2009.

COMMENTS

Comments on Nicholaos Jones, *Metaphors for Interdependence: Fazang’s Buddhist Metaphysics*.

Author-meets-critics Session, 2025 Alabama Philosophical Society, Pensacola Beach, FL, USA, September 2025.

Comments on Aaron Griffith, *Truth and Social Reality*.

Mid Atlantic Social Metaphysics, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA, USA, July 2025.

Comments on Andrew Lee, “Dimensionality”.

Metaphysics in the Blue Ridge, Blacksburg, VA, USA, June 2025.

Comments on Trenton Merricks, *Self and Identity*.

Author-meets-critics Session, APA Eastern Division, New York, NY, USA, January 2024.

Comments on Elanor Taylor, “Social Essentialism and Social Inquiry”.

The 4th Annual Social Metaphysics Workshop, Durham, NC, USA, June 2023.

Comments on Helen Han Wei Luo, “Gendered Material Objects”.

American Philosophical Association Pacific Division, San Francisco, CA, USA, April 2023.

Comments on Raul Saucedo, “Nirvana: Unconditioned Awareness as a Transformative Experience?”.

Transformative Experience Pre-conference, American Philosophical Association Pacific Division, Seattle, WA, USA, April 2017.

Comments on Jennifer Wang, “Fundamentality and Modal Freedom”.

Midsummer Philosophy Conference, Edinburgh, UK, June 2015.

Comments on Scott Dixon, “Grounding, Determinables, and Supplementation”.

American Philosophical Association Central Division, St. Louis, MO, USA, February 2015.

Comments on David Sanson, “Worlds Enough for Junk”.

Western Canadian Philosophical Association Conference, Winnipeg, Canada, October 2013.

ACTIVITIES & WORKSHOPS

Organizer

Organizer (with Maegan Fairchild), Women in Metaphysics Workshop Series, 2020 – present.

Organizer, Panel on Chinese Social Metaphysics, The 2025 Meeting of the Northeast Conferences on Chinese Thought, Duke University, November 2025.

Organizer, Lost, Found, or Otherwise: A Cross-Cultural Dialogue on Self and Identity (Workshop), Washington and Lee University, March 2024.

Fellow

Fellow, The Center for Liberal Arts and AI (CLAAI), University of Richmond, 2026 – 2027.

Fellow, Memory, Mind, and Morality: The Future of Remembrance in the Age of Neuro-Ethics and AI, the Mudd Center for Ethics, Washington and Lee University, 2026 – 2027.

Fellow, Taking Place: Land Use and Environmental Impact, the Mudd Center for Ethics, Washington and Lee University, 2025 – 2026.

Fellow, How We Live and Die, the Mudd Center for Ethics, Washington and Lee University, 2024 – 2025.

Fellow, Ethics of Design, the Mudd Center for Ethics, Washington and Lee University, 2023 – 2024.

Fellow, Ethical Reasoning in Action, the Mudd Center for Ethics, Washington and Lee University, 2023 – 2024.

Visitor

Visitor, Department of Philosophy, Rutgers University–New Brunswick, Spring 2023.

Visitor, Arché Philosophical Research Centre, University of St Andrews, UK, Summer 2015.

Participant

Participant, The NEH Summer Institute on Self-knowledge for Humans and Artificial Systems, UC Berkeley, June 2026.

Participant, Digital Humanities Bootcamp, Washington and Lee University, Fall 2021.

Participant, The Mellon Philosophy as a Way of Life Network, University of Notre Dame, 2019 – 2021.

Participant, Pre-tenure Women in Philosophy Workshop, Boston, MA, 2019.

Participant, Vancouver Summer Philosophy Conference, University of British Columbia, 2016.

Participant, Bellingham Summer Philosophy Conference, Western Washington University, 2015.

Participant, Metaphysical Mayhem Summer Seminar, Rutgers University–New Brunswick, 2014.

Participant, Truthmaker Semantics Summer Seminar, Hamburg University, Germany, 2013.

Participant, Meaning, Context, and Intention Summer Seminar, Central European University, Hungary, 2010.

TEACHING

Washington and Lee University

Introduction to Theories of Knowledge and Reality (Fall 2019, Winter 2020, Fall 2020, Winter 2021, Fall 2021, Winter 2022, Fall 2022, Fall 2023, Fall 2024, Winter 2025, Fall 2025, Winter 2026, Fall 2026)

Classical Chinese Philosophy (Winter 2020, Winter 2022, Fall 2026)

Buddhist Philosophy (Winter 2021, Fall 2022, Winter 2024, Winter 2025, Winter 2026)

Metaphysics: Existence and Reality (Fall 2020, Fall 2021, Fall 2023, Fall 2024, Fall 2025)
An Investigation of Self (Spring 2021)
Chinese Buddhist Philosophy (Fall 2019)
ChatGPT and Philosophy (Winter 2024, Spring 2025)
Philosophy Honors Thesis (Fall 2024, Winter 2025)

Vassar College

Knowledge and Reality (Spring 2018)
Early Chinese Philosophy (Fall 2017, Fall 2018)
Introduction to Zen: Literature and Culture (Fall 2017)
Introduction to Chinese and Japanese Literature (Fall 2018)
Philosophy as a Way of Life (Spring 2019)
Metaphysics (Spring 2018, Spring 2019)
Mahayana Buddhism (Spring 2018)
Classical Chinese (Spring 2019)

Syracuse University

Introduction to Philosophy for Honors (Spring 2017)
Theories of Knowledge and Reality (Fall 2013, Spring 2014, Fall 2014, Spring 2017)
Introduction to Moral Theory (Spring 2015, Fall 2016)

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

Program Committee Member, American Philosophical Association Eastern Division, 2026 – 2028.
Board Member, The Association of Chinese Philosophers in America, 2026 – 2031.
Organizer (with Maegan Fairchild), Women in Metaphysics Workshop Series, 2020 – present.
Editor, The Tiantai School of Chinese Buddhism, PhilPapers.
Assistant Organizer, California Metaphysics Conference, University of Southern California, 2013 – 2015.
Reviewer, *Analysis*; *Dao: A Journal of Comparative Philosophy*; *The Journal of American Association of Philosophy*; *The Journal of Buddhist Philosophy*; *The Philosophical Quarterly*; *Philosophical Studies*; *Philosophy East and West*; *The Oxford Handbook of Chinese Philosophy*; Oxford University Press.

DEPARTMENT AND UNIVERSITY SERVICE

Member, Grade Distribution, Inflation, and Compression Working Group, Washington and Lee University, 2026 – 2027.
Advisory Board Member, The Roger Mudd Center for Ethics, Washington and Lee University, 2024 – 2027.
Committee Member, Student Financial Aid Committee, Washington and Lee University, 2020 – 2025.

Faculty Advisor for Student Clubs, Badminton Club, Table Tennis Club, Washington and Lee University, 2023 – 2025.

Committee Member, Assistant Professor of Philosophy Search Committee, Fall 2021 – Winter 2022.

Organizer (with Nathaniel Goldberg), Indian Philosophy Reading Group, Washington and Lee University, Summer 2020.

Committee Member, Graduate Student Conference Internal Speaker Committee, Department of Philosophy, Syracuse University, 2015.

Committee Member, Graduate Student Conference External Speaker Committee, Department of Philosophy, Syracuse University, 2014.

LANGUAGES

Chinese Mandarin (Native), Classical Chinese (Proficient)