

Lewis (Kuizhi) Wang

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Areas of Specialization

German Idealism (esp. Kant), Buddhist Philosophy, Epistemology

Areas of Competence

Early Modern Philosophy, Chinese Philosophy, Political Philosophy, Aesthetics

Education

2019 - 2026 (Expected)	Ph.D. in Philosophy <i>Boston University</i> Dissertation: Towards A Hybrid Reading of Kant's Transcendental Idealism Advisor: Sally Sedgwick
Sept 2024 - Feb 2025	Visiting Student <i>Goethe-Universität Frankfurt</i> Host: Marcus Willaschek
2023 - 2024	Visiting Fellow & Visiting Student Research Collaborator <i>Princeton Project in Philosophy & Religion, Princeton University</i> Host: Andrew Chignell
2017 - 2019	B.Phil in Philosophy <i>University of Oxford</i> Thesis: Kant on Object and Objectivity Advisor: Ralf Bader
2013 - 2017	B.A. in Philosophy and Economics <i>University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign</i> <i>Magna Cum Laude</i>

Publications

Journal Articles

forthcoming	"The Early Development of Kant's Practical Notion of Belief", <i>Inquiry</i>
2025	"On the Epistemic Instrumentalist Solution to the Combinatorial Problem", <i>Synthese</i> 205 (218): 1-15.
2023	"Kant on Propositional Content and Knowledge", <i>Kant Yearbook</i> 15 (1):175-196.

Book Chapters

forthcoming	"Hegelian Sufficiency and Limitarianism as an Anti-Colonial Theory of Justice" (with Joshua Folkerts), in Bernardo Ferro and Paul Giladi (eds.), <i>Hegel's Philosophy of Emancipation</i> . London: Routledge.
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forthcoming	“On the Secondary Quality Analogy”, in <i>Proceedings of XIV International Kant Congress</i> . Berlin: De Gruyter
2025	“Hegel’s Justification of Private Property”, in Andrew A. Davis and Sebastian Rand (eds.), <i>New Perspectives on Hegel’s Philosophy of Right</i> , London: Bloomsbury

Book Review

forthcoming	Review of <i>Kant’s Critique of Pure Reason and the Method of Metaphysics</i> by Gabriele Gava, <i>British Journal for the History of Philosophy</i>
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Works in Progress

Under review	A paper on Buddhist arguments against mind-independent objects in <i>Cheng Weishi Lun</i>
Under review	A paper on Susan Sontag and our duties towards photographs of violence and suffering
Under review	A paper on the role of the Doctrine of Method in the <i>Critique of Pure Reason</i>
Under review	A paper on Kant’s doctrine of Noumenal Ignorance
In progress	“Kant on the Inescapability of the Human Standpoint and the Limit of Metaphysics”
In progress	“Kant on the Norms of Belief” (with Marcus Willaschek)
In progress	“Hegel’s Implicit Solution to the Problem of Poverty”
In progress	“Argument from Ignorance and Buddhist Epistemological Pragmatism”
In progress	“Kant on Sense and Reference” (with Davide Dalla Rosa)

Translation

In progress	Xuanzang’s <i>Cheng Weishi Lun</i> , Books 1 & 2 , translated from Chinese
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Teaching Experience

Primary Instructor, Boston University

Summer 2024	Introduction to Philosophy: Life and Death
Summer 2022	History of Modern Philosophy

Teaching Fellow/Assistant, Boston University

Summer 2023	Politics and Philosophy
Spring 2023	Existentialism
Fall 2022	Medical Ethics
Summer 2022	Business Ethics
Spring 2022	Great Philosophers
Fall 2021	Politics and Philosophy
Spring 2021	Introduction to Philosophy
Fall 2020	Introduction to Ethics

Pedagogy Training

Summer 2023	Center for Canon Expansion and Change (CCEC) Summer Program, University of Minnesota Twin Cities
Summer 2021	American Association of Philosophy Teachers (AAPT) Summer Seminar, Online

Selected Presentations

(* = refereed; ^ = invited)

“Can We Know the Existence of Things in Themselves, Prof. Kant?”

Feb 2026	American Philosophical Association (APA) Central Division Meeting, Chicago*
Jan 2025	Frankfurter Kant-Arbeitskreis, Goethe-Universität Frankfurt
Sept 2022	UK Kant Society Conference, London*

“Kant on Sense and Reference”

Nov 2025	Frankfurter Kant-Arbeitskreis, Goethe-Universität Frankfurt (with Davide Dalla Rosa)
Feb 2025	Kant on Language and Cognition Workshop, Goethe-Universität Frankfurt

“Kant on the Norms of Belief” (with Marcus Willaschek)

Oct 2025	Thinking with Assent: Belief and Ethics of Belief between History and Theory, Collegio Ghislieri, Pavia^
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“Kant on *Sinn* and *Bedeutung*” (with Christopher Benzenberg)

Jul 2025	Kant Work in Progress Workshop, Goethe-Universität Frankfurt
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“Xuanzang’s Master Argument Against Mind-Independent Existence in *Cheng Weishi Lun*”

Jul 2025	Society for Asian and Comparative Philosophy Annual Conference, Leiden University*
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“Hegel and the Problem of Poverty”

Mar 2025	Graduate Students Work in Progress Workshop, Boston University
Apr 2022	British Society for the History of Philosophy Annual Conference*
Apr 2022	APA Pacific Division Meeting, Vancouver*
Nov 2021	Oxford Graduate Philosophy Conference, Online*

“Kant’s Theory of Reasons for Belief”

Feb 2025	California Polytechnic State University
Jan 2025	Belief in Kant Workshop, Goethe-Universität Frankfurt^
Dec 2024	Orientation and Disorientation: Kantian Themes in Analytic Philosophy, Reggio-Emilia*
Apr 2024	Princeton Project in Philosophy and Religion Working Group, Princeton University

“On the Secondary Quality Analogy”

Sep 2024	14th International Kant Congress, Bonn*
Feb 2024	APA Central Division Meeting, New Orleans*

“Hegelian Sufficiency as an Anti-Colonial Theory of Justice” (with Joshua Folkerts)

Aug 2024	Emancipation in Hegel’s Metaphysics and Social Theory Conference, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London*
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“The Role and Significance of the Doctrine of Method”

May 2024	North American Kant Society South Study Group Meeting, Columbia, SC*
Dec 2022	Kant Graduate Student Forum, Harvard University^
“Against the Epistemic Instrumentalist Solution to the Combinatorial Problem”	
Jan 2024	APA Eastern Division Meeting, New York*
“Susan Sontag and the Moral Impact of Photographs of Violence and Suffering”	
Nov 2023	American Society of Aesthetics Annual Meeting, Washington D.C.*
Aug 2023	Rocky Mountain Ethics Congress, Boulder, CO*
Jun 2021	European Society of Aesthetics Conference, Online*
“Hegel’s Developmental Justification of Private Property”	
Oct 2022	Biennial Conference of the Hegel Society of America, Nashville*
Jun 2021	33rd International Hegel Congress, Online*
“On the Incoherence of Luck Egalitarianism”	
Jan 2021	APA Eastern Division Meeting, Online*
Sept 2020	Pavia Graduate Conference in Political Philosophy, Online*
Apr 2020	UIUC Philosophy Graduate Conference* (cancelled due to Covid)
“On the Location of Kant’s Refutation of Idealism”	
Jan 2020	APA Eastern Division Meeting, Philadelphia*
Nov 2018	Kant Colloquium, University of Oxford
“Interpretive Method Pluralism”	
Apr 2019	American Society of Aesthetics Eastern Meeting, Philadelphia*
Apr 2019	CUNY Graduate Conference, New York*
“No Duties of Global Distributive Justice: A Kantian Theory”	
Jun 2018	Brave New World Graduate Conference, University of Manchester*
Jun 2018	Kant’s Legal Theory and Global Justice Conference, University of Bayreuth*
Mar 2018	Graduate Conference at University of Tennessee Knoxville*

Awards, Grants, and Fellowships

Spring 2025	Bloom Dissertation Fellowship, Boston University
Fall 2025	Dissertation Fellowship, Boston University Center for the Humanities
2024 – 2025	Graduate Research Abroad Fellowship, Boston University
2025	Professional Development Grant (for Kant on Language and Cognition Workshop), Boston University (\$300)
2024	The Helen G. Allen Humanities Award and the Angela J. and James J. Rallis Memorial Award, Boston University Center for the Humanities (\$5500)
2023	Professional Development Grant (for CCEC summer program), Boston University (\$500)
2021	Graduate Student Organization Travel Grant, Boston University
2021	Summer Research Fellowship, Boston University
2021	Stipendium für Hochschulsommerkurse in Deutschland (Grant for Summer Language Course in Germany), DAAD (German Academic Exchange Service)

2019 – 2020	Dean’s Fellowship, Boston University
2019	Irene H. Chayes Travel Grant, American Society of Aesthetics
2017	Brian Keelan Award in Humanities, China Oxford Scholarship Fund (£7000)
2017	Honorable Mention for Best Undergraduate Student Research, Illinois Program of Research in Humanities Prizes, UIUC
2017	Highest Distinction in Philosophy, UIUC
2016	Lois Shepard Green Award, Department of Philosophy, UIUC (\$500)
2015	Howard F. Crombie Award, Department of Philosophy, UIUC (\$500)

Academic Service and Comments

2025	Reviewer for <i>Nous</i>
Feb 2025	Co-Organizer (with Davide Dalla Rosa), Kant on Language and Cognition Workshop, Goethe-Universität Frankfurt
Jan 2025	Commentator to Bangrui Chen’s paper “Kant, Apperception, and the Unity of Cognition”, APA Eastern Division Meeting
Dec 2024	Commentator to Stefanie Grüne’s Paper “Kant on the Relation between Cognition and Knowledge”, the Annual Jean-Jacques Rousseau Conference, ECPR Standing Group on Kantian Political Thought
2023 - 2024	Alumni & Placement Officer, BU Philosophy Graduate Student Association
May 2023	Commentator to Samantha Matherne’s Paper “Beauty and the Life of the Mind in Kant and Hegel” at “Organism and Life: Herder, Kant, Hegel” Workshop, Boston University
May 2023	Co-Organizer (with Giulia Battistoni), “Organism and Life: Herder, Kant, Hegel” Workshop, Boston University
Apr 2023	Co-Organizer (with Matilde Carrera, Casey Grippo, and Jack Harris), Boston University Graduate Student Philosophy Conference
Nov 2022	Co-Organizer (with Joshua Folkerts), Boston Young Hegelian Workshop
2021 - 2025	Paper Referee, Boston University Graduate Student Philosophy Conference
2021 - 2022	International Student Representative, BU Philosophy Graduate Student Association
2018 – 2019	Founding Member and Executive Officer, Philiminality Oxford
2018 – 2019	Committee Member, the Jowett Society, University of Oxford
2018 – 2019	Committee Member, the Ockham Society, University of Oxford
2018	Co-Organizer and Paper Referee, the 22nd Oxford Graduate Philosophy Conference

Graduate Coursework

(* = audited)

History of Philosophy: German Idealism

- Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason* (Desmond Hogan, Princeton)*
- Kant: Ethics, Religion, Politics (Andrew Chignell & Jason Yonover, Princeton)*
- Hegel’s *Philosophy of Right* (Sally Sedgwick, BU)
- Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason* (Sally Sedgwick, BU)
- Hegel (Mark Wrathall, Oxford)
- Kant’s *Critique of the Power of Judgment* (Alexandra Newton, UIUC)

History of Philosophy: Non-Western

- Buddhist Karma and Causality (Jonathan Gold, Princeton)*
- Classical Indian Thought (Jonathan Gold, Princeton)*
- Buddhist Philosophers and Their Critics (Parimal Patil, Harvard) *
- Buddhist Philosophy (Parimal Patil, Harvard) *
- Buddhist Philosophy (David Eckel, BU)

History of Philosophy: Early Modern European

- Spinoza and Modern German Philosophy (Daniel Garber & Jason Yonover, Princeton)*
- British Empiricism (Jefferey McDonough, Harvard) *

History of Philosophy: 19th & 20th Century European

- Phenomenology (Walter Hopp, BU)
- Heidegger (Daniel Dahlstrom, BU)
- Nietzsche (Paul Katsafanas, BU)
- Phenomenology (Joseph Schear, Oxford)

History of Philosophy: Ancient

- Plato's Meno (Marc Gasser-Wingate, BU) *
- Aristotle's Nichomachean Ethics (Marc Gasser-Wingate, BU)

Theoretical Philosophy

- Recent Epistemology (Thomas Kelly, Princeton)*
- Wittgenstein (Juliet Floyd, BU) *
- Quine (Peter Hylton, BU) *
- Symbolic Logic (Peter Hylton, BU)
- Self-Consciousness, Agency, and Time (Anil Gomes & Jennifer Hornsby, Oxford)
- Experimental Philosophy (Jonathan Livengood, UIUC) *

Ethics, Aesthetics, and Political Philosophy

- Reasons, Value, Rationality, and Metanormativity (Daniel Star, BU)
- Contemporary Aesthetics and the Philosophy of Photography (Daniel Star, BU)
- Philosophy of Love (Daniel Star, BU)
- Luck and Credit (Daniel Star, BU)
- Philosophy and Literature (Stephen Mulhall & Alice Crary, Oxford)
- Aesthetics (Alison Hills, Oxford)
- Population Ethics (Ralf Bader, Oxford)
- Metaethics (Ralf Bader, Oxford)
- Political Philosophy (Cecile Fabre & Thomas Sinclair, Oxford)

Language

Chinese (native, incl. Classical Chinese), English (fluent), German (B2), Sanskrit (intermediate)

Dissertation Title: Towards a Hybrid Reading of Kant's Transcendental Idealism

In my dissertation, I propose a novel reading of Kant's transcendental idealism that I call the hybrid reading. Roughly put, transcendental idealism is the doctrine that the objects we can experience, which Kant calls appearances, are in some way mind-dependent, and that we cannot know how things are in themselves. Current interpretations of this doctrine fall into two main camps. Metaphysical readers take transcendental idealism to posit distinct sets of beings that occupy different levels of reality: things in themselves are what are ultimately real, while appearances are less real. Epistemic readers, in contrast, take transcendental idealism to be a doctrine about knowledge. More specifically, they interpret it to amount to the thesis that there are certain a priori conditions under which alone knowledge is possible for us, and we cannot know anything about things that do not conform to those conditions.

My interpretation of Kant's transcendental idealism combines elements from both of these two camps and steers a middle course between them. On one hand, I share the view of metaphysical readers that transcendental idealism offers a description of reality as having a hierarchical structure, in which things in themselves are metaphysically more fundamental than appearances. But this description, on my reading, is not a standpoint-independent truth. Instead, it is something we must think and hold to be true from the human standpoint, which is defined by the conditions of our knowledge, i.e., the categories and space and time. To put it differently, I agree with epistemic readers that things in themselves are not how the world really or ultimately is from "the view from nowhere", but merely what we posit in thought as the objects that make up the mind-independent material reality underlying appearances. I thus read transcendental idealism as primarily concerned with providing a radically anthropocentric metaphysics: while it aims to describe the way the world is, it also regards any human metaphysical endeavor as fundamentally dependent upon and limited by the human conditions for knowledge. In contemporary terms, my hybrid reading takes Kant's transcendental idealism to be a form of meta-metaphysical idealism that concerns specifically the limit of metaphysics as a human enterprise.

This dissertation is organized around four questions that are central to the debate between metaphysical and epistemic readers, which I identify in the Introduction. These questions include whether Kant takes appearances and things in themselves to be two distinct sets of beings, whether he regards things in themselves to be ultimately real independently of any standpoint, whether he allows any knowledge of things in themselves, and whether he takes our empirical objects to be mind-dependent. In Chapter 1, I present the answers to these four interpretive questions by two of the most famous representatives of metaphysical and epistemic readers, namely Karl Ameriks and Henry Allison. Then, in Chapter 2, I show that Kant takes appearances and things in themselves to be two distinct sets of beings by arguing against Allison's view to the contrary. In Chapter 3, I argue against the view of Ameriks and other metaphysical readers that things in themselves are how the world ultimately is from "the view from nowhere". I suggest that, for Kant, we cannot even think about what is ultimately real independently of any standpoint, because our thinking is fundamentally limited by both the sensible and the intellectual conditions for human knowledge. In Chapter 4, I show that Kant forbids us to have any knowledge about things in themselves. I contend, however, that he nevertheless allows us to have some practically justified beliefs, which he names *Glauben*, about things in themselves. Finally, in chapter 5, I argue that Kant holds a robust idealism about appearances. Through a close reading of the B-Deduction, I show that, for Kant, our understanding and its acts are what give our empirical objects or appearances their form.

References

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