

# Kan (Kevin) Zhang

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## Education

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BASIS International School Park Lane Harbour, Huizhou, China G9 – Present

- GPA: 4.0 (unweighted), 4.74 (weighted)
- SAT: 1580
- TOEFL: 120
- AP exams (all 5s): Literature, Art History, World History, European History, Psychology, Calculus AB, Physics 1, Physics 2, Macroeconomics, Microeconomics
- G11 courses: Post-AP Literature, AP Human Geography, AP US History, AP Calculus BC, AP Physics C: Mech and E&M, AP Comparative Gov & Politics (self-study)

## Honors and Distinctions

- Four-Year Full Merit Scholarship (\$160,000)
- Scholar of the Year (1st place in 180; highest academic award)
- Student of the Year, Speech & Debate Society (1st place in 100)
- Distinguished Academic Achievement in Economics (1st place in 50)
- House Representative, Student Council (representing 250)
- Chair, Climate Week (serving 1,200), National Honor Society
- First and only student in school history to take AP Literature in G10

## Research

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UC Santa Barbara, Research Mentorship Program (RMP), *Student Researcher* G10

- Worked one-on-one with PhD student Baker on Plato; grade of 97%; earned 8 credits
- Authored a 50-page essay with >120 references, the most in RMP's 26-year history
- Lived in UCSB for 6 weeks; RMP accepts 3% of applicants, most of whom are in G11

Pioneer Research Program, *Student Researcher* G10

- Proposed a novel theory of free will under Prof. Dudrick; final grade of A+ (top 5%)
- Nominated for publication (top 6%); earned 4 credits and perfect ratings (all "Excellent")
- Formally recognized by Prof. Dudrick for graduate-level, original work in philosophy

Noah's Ark, *Research Team Leader* G10

- Led team to design, build, and pitch a smart growth chamber for endangered plants
- Won Global First Place at the Young Talents World (YTW) Innovation Challenge (\$300)
- Selected as a National Finalist (top 10%) in the Conrad Challenge's environment track

The Nature Conservancy (TNC), Climate Resilience Program, *Research Team Leader* G10

- Led team to model greening modules; won Green Coalition Award (national top 2)
- Selected to attend the UN Climate Conference COP28; interviewed by the IAEA
- Led team for Asia Envir. Innova. Forum youth initiative supported by TNC and CUHK

*The Dialectic of Equality: A Critical History, Author* G9 – 10

- Wrote a 310-page academic book based on weekly meetings with Oxford Prof. Kail
- Published in Seattle; contracted with China's largest academic book importer, CEPIEC
- Had a 17,000-word chapter on Nietzsche and equality in China with >100 references

Brown University, Summer@Brown, *Student* G9

- Studied quantum theory and mechanics (with linear algebra) under PhD student Seo
- Received perfect ratings (all "Always"); won National Gold in the Physics Bowl (div. 1)
- Won Global Gold in the British Astronomy and Astrophysics Olympiad (BAAO, junior)

China Thinks Big (CTB), Global Round, *Research Team Leader* G9

- Won team 3rd Prize (top 1%), hackathon 2nd Prize (top 0.5%), individual 2nd Prize
- Named Outstanding Case in China (top 4); presented research to 900+ students
- First-author in Harvard's *YSA Journal*; editor praised as "phenomenally well-written"

CIS Moral and Political Philosophy Research Program, *Research Team Leader* G9

- Led team of five to develop a utilitarian case for affirmative action in *SFFA v. Harvard*
- Studied texts in the history of philosophy under Penn Carey Law Prof. Finkelstein
- Elected as the paper's first and corresponding author; earned classwork grade of A

PATH Academics Capstone Research Seminar, *Research Team Leader* G9

- Led team of college students under Prof. Brest, Former Dean of Stanford Law School
- Final grade of A (top 25%); youngest presenter at ICIHCS; individually published in CPCI
- Paper cited by scholars in Ukraine and included as course material for a college class

## Awards

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John Locke Institute, Global Essay Prize, *Grand Prize, Philosophy 1st Place* G10

- Defended doxastic norms; 1st place among >34,800 contestants across 8 subject areas
- Award presented by former UK prime minister Liz Truss before 2,000 guests in London
- Received a \$12,000 Honorary Junior Fellowship from the John Locke Institute at Oxford

The Royal Institute of Philosophy (TRIP), Think Essay Prize, *Shortlisted* G10

- Showed that one of the essay questions can't be answered; shortlisted (top 5 from 330)
- Awarded subscription to *Think* and TRIP merchandise; the only top 20 entry from China
- Founded in 1925, TRIP had Oxford philosopher Stephen Law lead academics in judging

International Philosophy Olympiad (IPO), China Finals, *Third Prize* G10

- Selected by professional philosophers at the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences
- Defended the KK thesis; won Third Prize (national top 12) as the youngest prize-winner
- Founded in 1993 with UN support, IPO is an official International Science Olympiad

Competitive Debate Tournaments, *Various Awards* G9 – G10

- Harvard National Speech & Debate Tournament, Global Open Division, *Semifinalist*
- Tournament of Champions (TOC), *Champion in Asia, Best Speaker* (\$4,000 in prizes)
- National HS Debate League (the largest tournament in China), *National Champion*

## Service

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*Philosopher's Compass, Managing Editor* G11 – Present

- Led 20 editors (mostly postgrads and professors); managed meetings; built official site
- Published by ECOSOC consultative; partnered with UWA and Malaysian Philos. Society
- Featured by Williams College; received 15+ articles, including from Žižek and professors

*Spectrum Arts, Founder* G10 – Present

- Led large-scale art exhibits for children with autism across cities, made \$930 in sales
- Conceived and wrote a bilingual play on autism, performed in school and public theaters
- Partnered with the Minai Institute for Special Children; ran volunteer trips and seminars

*Education for Burmese Refugees, Founder* G9 – Present

- Fundraised \$2,700 for a rural Thai school serving refugees from the Myanmar coup
- Interviewed 20+ refugees, scholars, and nonprofits; findings reported by a national NGO
- Collected and analyzed ethnographic data with journalists in Bangkok, Mae Sot, and Dali

*Zeitgeist: High School Journal of Ethics, Editor-in-Chief* G9 – Present

- Led team of 10 to professionally publish numerous ethics essays from 5 schools
- *Zeitgeist* is becoming *PhiloSophie: The Youth Journal of PLATO* (a UNESCO partner)
- Hosted Opinionate, an ethics podcast featuring activists, students, and academics

*Philosophy Club, Founding President* G9 – Present

- Organized 7 schoolwide events, programs, and symposiums to popularize philosophy
- Delivered over 90 weekly hour-long lectures on philosophy; created 300+ PPT slides
- Cofounded OpenEdu; 510 registered students from over 20 schools and universities

*SC BASIS Schools, Head of Academics, Columnist* G9 – Present

- Directed the largest division of a student-led weekly magazine with 3,000+ followers
- Led several interviews and investigations on academic scandals, events, and charities
- Wrote a series of popular articles exploring ideas such as death, free will, and chance

*Additional Academic Engagements* G9 – Present

- American Philosophical Association (APA), Live Webinar, *Moderator, Panelist*
- Philosophy Learning and Teaching Organization, Student Advisory Council, *Member*
- BIBSC Interscholastic Model United Nations, Academic Department, *Chair*

## Testimonials

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*R Baker, PhD Student in English, UC Santa Barbara* Aug 2024

- Despite his formidable intelligence and the seriousness with which he approaches his work, he is humble, inquisitive, compassionate, and in possession of a genuine sense of wit and humor, making even the heaviest topics a delight to discuss and explore.
- I do not exaggerate when I contend that, in my 15+ years' experience as an instructor and mentor, Kevin is one of the finest students I have ever had the privilege to teach.
- I have no doubt that he will make a positive and tangible impact on the world; and, truth be told, I have no doubt that he already has.

- Kan's work here is remarkable. I haven't taught graduate students, but I expect his work in this program is the sort for which one would hope for one's graduate students.
- His is among the most impressive work I've had from a student in my over-twenty years as a professor. Kan is a special student, and his research was nothing short of superb.
- Kan does independent research at an extremely high level. He shows deep and thorough understanding of difficult material and is able to make original contributions to long-standing philosophical discourse.
- He takes criticism well and incorporates such critiques to improve his work. He is as strong a student as I can recall coming across in my years as a professor.

## Hobbies

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- **Translating and annotating.** Translated Chinese metaphysics; annotated three 450-page volumes in analytic epistemology and metaphysics.
- **Writing poetry.** Authored chapbook *Let Sleeping Dogs Lie* and 12-page paper on Palestine for anthology *Signs of Life*; published in *Crashtest* and *Skipping Stones* (founded in 1988).
- **Reading.** Read 30+ philosophy classics; studied 9 college textbooks, including *Formal Epistemology*, *Metaphysics*, *Ontology and Metaontology*, and *Quantum Theory*.
- **Varsity rowing, frisbee, and fencing.** 1st place in district-level double sculls competition; #2 on ultimate frisbee varsity team; professional level II for épée.
- **Traveling.** Been to 15+ countries, including Nietzsche's homes in Switzerland and Italy; dream of visiting Mars one day.