

Yair Lior

Curriculum Vitae

Boston University Department of Religion
145, Bay State rd. office 501
Boston, MA 02215
Email: yairlior@bu.edu

Education

Ph.D. Department of Religion, Boston University, Jan. 2015

Dissertation: *Kabbalah and Neo-Confucianism: A Comparative Morphology of Medieval Movements*

Committee: John Berthrong (Advisor), Moshe Idel (second reader), Kimberley Patton (third reader), Robert C. Neville, Diana Lobel (Chair)

Doctoral Fields: Comparative Religion (Kimberley Patton), Neo-Confucianism (John Berthrong), Kabbalah (Moshe Idel), Comparative Religion and Neo-Confucianism (Robert Neville), Medieval Jewish and Islamic Philosophy (Diana Lobel)

M.A. Chinese Traditional Art History, focusing on the religious and philosophical dimensions of Song Dynasty Landscape Painting, Beijing Normal University, Beijing 2008

Thesis: *The Parallel Evolution of the Chinese writing system and Visual Symbolism in Landscape Painting* 中国书写系统绘与画主体的共同演变 (Written in Chinese)

Employment

2023- Senior Lecturer – Boston University, Department of Religion

2020-2022 Research Associate, Center for Mind and Culture, Boston MA

2016-2017 Visiting Researcher at the Department of Religion, Boston University

2016-2018 Post-Doctoral Fellow at the Institute for the Bio-Cultural Study of Religion (IBCSR) Needham, MA

Publications

An Evolutionary-Systems Theory of Religion. Oxford University Press, Forthcoming 2027.

Lior, Yair., & McNamara, Patrick. (2025). Major evolutionary transitions in culture and cognition: The anthropocene and techno-biotic cognition. *Evolutionary Behavioral Sciences*.

“Minds and Cultures.” In *Teaching Handbook in the Global Critical Philosophy of Religion Series*, 2024.

The Routledge Handbook for Evolutionary Approaches to Religion, Yair Lior and Justin Lane eds. London; New York: Routledge, 2023.

“Major Transitions in Religious Evolution: A Dynamic Systems Approach” in *The Routledge Handbook for Evolutionary Approaches to Religion*, 2022

"A Comparative-Informational Approach to the Study of Religion: The Chinese and Jewish Cases," in *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, 2020

“Neo-Confucianism as a Guide to Contemporary Confucian Education” In Xiufeng Liu ed., *Confucianism Reconsidered: Insights for American and Chinese Education in the 21st Century*. SUNY Press, 2018.

“A Matter of Context: Comparing Kabbalah and Neo-Confucianism,” in Michael Zank and Ingrid Anderson eds., *The Value of the Particular: Lessons from Judaism and the Modern Jewish Experience*. Leiden: Brill, 2015.

“The Parallel Evolution of Calligraphy and Landscape Painting” (中国书法和山水画的同发展 — Published in Chinese). *Journal of Traditional Chinese Aesthetics* (中国传统美学), Vol. 3, 2008: 31-48.

Encyclopedia Entries

“Dybbuk,” and “Ibbur,” (forms of possession in Judaism) *Encyclopedia of Possession and Exorcism (ABC-CLIO)*.

Select Presentations and Guest Lectures

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| 2025 | “A Comparative Approach to Religion as a Complex Adaptive System,” Conference of the Israeli Association for the Study of Religion, Bar-Ilan University |
| 2022 | “Overlapping Traditions – Thinking Scientifically about Comparative Religion” Sinai and Synapses, New York |
| 2021 | “Examining Generalizations in World Religions,” Finding Genius Podcast |
| 2019 | “Complexity and Self-Organization in Religious Systems,” Institute for American Religious and Philosophical Thought. Berlin, Germany |

- 2018 “Confucianism in the Age of Globalization” - workshop series UMass Boston.
- 2017 “The Tang-Song Transition in light of Communication Technologies” AAR Annual Conference, Boston MA.
- 2017 “Theoretical Approaches to Religion through Computer Modeling” roundtable AAR Annual Conference, Boston MA
- 2015 Invitation for yearly keynote speaker at Center for East Asian Studies at Pusan National University, South Korea “Western Approaches to Confucianism”
- 2015 “The Buddhist Revolution in China – The ascendancy of the Chan School” Guest lecture, Hunter University NY
- 2015 “Confucianism and Judaism: A Systems Approach,” *Elie Wiesel Center for Judaic Studies - Faculty Forum*, Boston University
- 2014 “Confucianism and Judaism: A Showcase in Comparative Morphology,” *Harvard Comparative Religion Doctoral Colloquium*, Harvard University
- 2014 “The Religious Dimensions of Confucianism,” Guest Lecture, *Confucius Institute at University of Massachusetts*, UMass Boston
- 2014 “The Wisdom of Chinese Art – Literati Painting and Calligraphy” *Boston University Confucian Association (BUCA)*, Boston University
- 2014 “What can Neo-Confucianism Teach us about the Future of Chinese Education,” *International Conference on Confucianism and Education* University at Buffalo, SUNY
- 2013 “A Few Thoughts about Morphology and Emergence,” *Emergent Approaches to Human Sociality and Religion* Conference on Science and Religion, Arizona State University
- 2012 “Confucianism and Rabbinism as Homeostatic Cultural Systems,” Guest lecture, *Center for Judaic and Inter-Religious Studies*, Shandong University, China
- 2012 “The Early Kabbalah in a Comparative Perspective,” *Kabbalah Research: Continuity, Development and Change, Workshop* - Van Leer Institute, Jerusalem
- 2011 “Li: Social Structures, Cosmology, and the Confucian Art of Behaving,” *American Association of Religion (AAR) Mid-Atlantic Region*. Panel: East Asian Religions (received the Honorary Paper Award).

Teaching & Course Selection

RN100 Introduction to Religion

RN239 Religion and Science

RN103 Religions of Asia

RN216 Introduction to Judaism

RN325 Jewish Mysticism

RN326/626/818 The Kabbalah: Mysticism, Ecstasy, and Theosophy

RN211 Chinese Religions

CC101 Core Humanities I: “Ancient Worlds”

CC102 Core Humanities II: “The Way: Antiquity and the Medieval World”

LH111 Modern Hebrew

Languages

Modern and biblical Hebrew	Fluent
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English	Fluent
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Modern Chinese	Fluent, Reading, Writing, Speaking Proficiency
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Traditional Chinese	Reading Proficiency
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French	Reading Proficiency
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