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America Seen through Chinese Lenses

Online talk by

Dr. Wang Xi

Professor of History
Indiana University of Pennsylvania

10 a.m. Friday, March 19, 2021



王曦 () is a Professor of History at Indiana University of Pennsylvania (IUP), specializing in 19th century United States history, African American history and American constitutional history. In the past twelve years (2008-2020) he conducted transnational teaching of American history, splitting his time between IUP and Peking University, China, where he held a Changjiang Professorship in the History Department. His publications include: *The Trial of Democracy: Black Suffrage and Northern Republicans, 1860-1910* (1997, 2012) and

Principles and Compromises: The Spirit and Practice of the American Constitution (2000, 2014). He is also the Chinese translator of Eric Foner's *The Story of American Freedom* (2002, 2018) and *Give Me Liberty: An American History* (2010, 2017).

Abstract: How has American studies evolved as an academic field in China? How has its development been shaped by China's domestic politics, as well as the China-US relations? What role did China's Americanists play in helping forge popular understandings of the United States in different periods? How would the current uncertainty of the US-China relationship impact on the future of the field? The talk will review the evolution of American studies in the People's Republic of China from its founding (1949) to the present, with a focus on how Chinese Americanists had constructed three perspectives – "the arch enemy," "a model of modernization," and "a nation among nations" – to guide their interpretations of American history and how different forces, including the opening-up of China, the scholarly exchange between China and US, and the coming of digital age, had shaped the course of the field.

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