



BOSTON COLLEGE

Ricci Institute for Chinese-Western Cultural History

EAST-WEST SCHOLARS IN DIALOGUE:

Ricci Institute Research Seminar Series

**Ricci Institute Conference Room, Boston College
2125 Commonwealth Avenue, Boston, MA 02135**

The Ricci Institute for Chinese-Western Cultural History at Boston College presents two research seminars in February 2023, which will be delivered by the two Luce postdoctoral fellows in residence during the spring semester. Based on different historical studies, the two presentations will offer an opportunity for academic exchange among scholars today who are interested in the study of the history of Christianity in China and in the larger historical context of modern global history. The seminars are free and open to faculty and students at Boston College, and all interested scholars from other institutions.

Seating is limited. Please RSVP by February 15, 2023 at: ricci-institute@bc.edu with the subject as: RSVP to 2023 East-West Scholars in Dialogue series.

SEMINAR I: February 16 (Thursday), 11:00 am – 12:00 noon.

Title: *From Meteorologica to Qixiangxue 氣象學: A Case Study of the Transmission of Western Learning to China in the Modern Era*

Speaker: Dr. WANG Hao 王皓, Associate Professor, Shanghai University

Abstract: The Western Learning of *meteorologica* (meteorology) was first introduced to China by Jesuit missionaries during the Ming-Qing transitional period (16th – 17th centuries), and then presented again to China by both the Jesuit and Protestant missionaries in the 19th century as the result of a centuries-long Scientific Revolution in the West. Although it was translated into different terms such as *kongji gezhi* 空際格致, *cehou* 測候, *tianqixue* 天氣學 and *fengyuxue* 風雨學, etc., none was widely used by the Chinese until the late 19th century, when the expression *Qixiangxue* 氣象學 was introduced to China from Japan and became a popularly accepted term for meteorology. Through an examination of the above history, this presentation suggests that although Western meteorology was introduced to China by missionaries belonging to different Christian denominations, the basic terminology for this important discipline was never accepted by the Chinese, who paid much attention to the utility of meteorology rather than to its theory. The tension between science and faith is one of



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the obstacles for its development, even though modern meteorological observatories had been established by westerners in a number of cities across China. Moreover, the term *qixiang* 氣象 carries multiple layers of connotations in the Chinese language both linguistically and culturally. Thus, the etymology of the term “meteorology” and its evolution in modern Chinese history may provide yet another example of the Sinicization of Western Learning in China.

SEMINAR II: February 28 (Thursday), 11:00 am – 12:00 noon.

Title: *Community and Conflict: Recovering the Lives of Four Chinese Sisters in American Missions in West Hunan, 1924-1951*

Speaker: Dr. WANG Lang 王浪, Associate Professor, Beijing Institute of Technology

Abstract: My presentation uncovers the forgotten lives of four Chinese Sisters of two religious orders, the Sisters of Charity of Convent Station, New Jersey and the Sisters of St. Joseph of Baden, Pennsylvania. While American Sisters from these two orders were sent to West Hunan from the United States between 1924 and 1951 following a papal decree issued by Pope Benedict XV in 1919, most of the Chinese Sisters joined the Orders in China itself. Based on archival sources from the two orders of Sisters and articles published in *The Sign* magazine, my research traces the religious and personal lives of the four Chinese Sisters during the three decades while the missions in West Hunan were primarily conducted by American and European missionaries. This research seeks to identify and define the particular roles played by the Chinese Sisters, including their religious lives, mission responsibilities, and professional activities in the missions. The perception of the Chinese Sisters by the American Sisters, and the manner in which the former acted as a bridge between foreign missionaries and local Chinese women will also be discussed. Ultimately, my research seeks to examine and understand the complex role that the Chinese Sisters played during the early Republican Era. They were often caught between the anti-colonial, anti-imperialistic, and anti-Christian sentiments of their fellow countrymen and their own relationship as Chinese to their native culture and Catholic faith.