

Confucius Institute of Rutgers University (CIRU) Distinguished Lecture Series Spring 2014

“Ecologies of Asian Empires: The Qing Empire in World History”

Peter C. Perdue
Yale University

Tuesday, March 11, 4:30 p.m.
Pane Room, Alexander Library



Peter C. Perdue is a professor of history at Yale University. After graduating from Harvard University with a Ph.D. (1981) in the field of History and East Asian Languages he taught for many years at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) before joining the Yale History Department. His research focuses on East Asian environmental and frontier history. He is the author of *Exhausting the Earth: State and Peasant in Hunan, 1500-1850 A.D.* (1987); *China Marches West: The Qing Conquest of Central Eurasia* (2005; Winner of the 2007 Levenson Book Prize of the Association for Asian Studies); and he is coeditor of two books on empires: *Imperial Formations* (2007) and *Shared Histories of Modernity: China, India, and the Ottoman Empire* (2008). His current research projects include a comparative study of Chinese frontiers, Eurasia in world history, and a global history of tea.

Abstract: The Qing empire of China (1636-1911) endured for over two centuries, spanning a vast variety of climatic and vegetation zones and many diverse peoples. One reason for its success was the flexibility of its environmental and regional cultural policies. Modern biologists argue that diversity is the key to long term sustainability of ecological regimes, and the same principle applies to empires. Nation states, with more single-minded, homogeneous developmental policies often violate ecological principles and alienate many of their peoples. A comparison of the Qing with modern nation-states will illustrate divergent paths of empires and nations and multiple possibilities for the use of environmental history.

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