



INDIANA UNIVERSITY

RESEARCH CENTER FOR CHINESE  
POLITICS AND BUSINESS

中国政治与商务研究中心

RCCPB Colloquium Series

Presents

**Dr. Ethan Michelson**

Associate Professor, Sociology, East Asian Languages and Cultures, and Law  
Indiana University

## **Is Rural China More Harmonious? Assessing Change in Five Counties, 2002-2010**

Thursday, September 23, 12:00-1:30 pm

Maurer School of Law, Room 335  
211 S. Indiana Ave., IU-Bloomington Campus

In this talk Professor Michelson will unveil preliminary findings from a new rural survey completed in February 2010. A rural survey he helped conduct eight years earlier, in 2002, on grievances and conflict painted a poignant picture of popular discontent and popular resistance in rural China. New central government policies launched beginning in 2004 designed to “construct a new socialist countryside” take direct aim at the root causes of conflict and discontent, and thus present a unique opportunity to study a natural experiment that affects the lives of hundreds of millions of China’s villagers. These two surveys allow us to measure changes in the volume and character of disputes, the help-seeking patterns, and the attitudes of over 2,200 villagers in 23 villages between 2002 and 2010. The data suggest that, on the whole, the new policies have been a resounding success. Grievances of all kinds have roughly halved. However, despite improvements in local state-society relations, a huge trust gap between local and central levels of government persists. With the financial support of a Fulbright-Hays grant he spent the 2009-10 academic year at Renmin University of China conducting the research on which this talk is based.

*The event is free and open to the public. No RSVP necessary.*

