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The CATALYSIS SOCIETY of Metropolitan New York
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(914) 785-3818
xiaoming.wang@basf.com

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FUAT CELIK
(848) 445-5558
fuat.celik@rutgers.edu

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JOHN BRODY
(908) 730-2932
(262) 313-4051 (FAX)
John.f.brody@exxonmobil.com

Director-Membership
TAEJIN KIM
(631) 632-8433
taejin.kim@stonybrook.edu

Student Representative
KE XIONG
(302) 562-5785
kexiong88@gmail.com

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La Quinta Inn & Suites, Somerset, NJ

Note new location

José A. Rodriguez
Senior Chemist
Chemistry Department
Brookhaven National Laboratory
Upton, NY 11973
rodriguez@bnl.gov

The role of the metal-oxide interface in catalysts for the water-gas shift

In this talk, it will be shown how a series of in-situ techniques {X-ray diffraction (XRD), pair-distribution-function analysis (PDF), X-ray absorption spectroscopy (XAS), environmental scanning tunneling microscopy (ESTM), infrared spectroscopy (IR), ambient-pressure X-ray photoelectron spectroscopy (AP-XPS)} can be combined to perform detailed studies of the structural, electronic and chemical properties of metal/oxide catalysts used for the production of hydrogen through the water-gas shift reaction (WGS, $\text{CO} + \text{H}_2\text{O} \rightarrow \text{H}_2 + \text{CO}_2$). Under reaction conditions most WGS catalysts undergo chemical transformations that drastically modify their composition with respect to that obtained during the synthesis process. The active phase of catalysts which combine Cu, Au or Pt with oxides such as ZnO, CeO₂, TiO₂, CeO_x/TiO₂ and Fe₂O₃ essentially involves nanoparticles of the reduced noble metals. The oxide support undergoes partial reduction and is not a simple spectator, facilitating the dissociation of water and in some cases modifying the chemical properties of the supported metal. Therefore, to optimize the performance of these catalysts one must take into consideration the properties of the metal-oxide interface. IR and AP-XPS have been used to study the reaction mechanism for the WGS on the metal/oxide catalysts. Data of IR spectroscopy indicate that formate species are not necessarily involved in the main reaction path for the water-gas shift on Cu-, Au- and Pt-based catalysts. Thus, a pure redox mechanism or associative mechanisms that involve either carbonate-like (CO₃, HCO₃) or carboxyl (HOCO) species should be considered. In the last two decades, there have been tremendous advances in our ability to study catalytic materials under reaction conditions and we are moving towards the major goal of fully understanding how the active sites for the production of hydrogen through the WGS actually work.