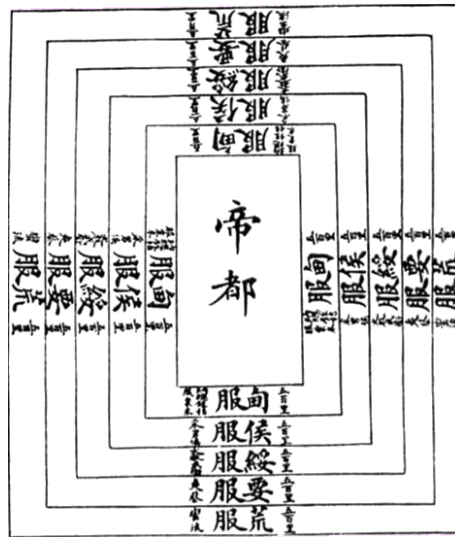




EARLY CHINA SEMINAR LECTURE SERIES

Coining Chinese Civilization: The Emergence of Civilizational Consciousness in Early China

Uffe Bergeton · University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill



Drawing on his book *The Emergence Of Civilizational Consciousness In Early China: History Word By Word* (Routledge, 2019), Uffe Bergeton's presentation traces the emergence of civilizational consciousness in pre-Qin China. He approaches this question in ways that establish a fresh hermeneutical dialogue between ancient Chinese and modern European concepts of 'civilization.' New mappings of diachronic changes in the meanings of Old Chinese words are used to determine when pre-Qin thinkers first began to think of themselves as belonging to a 'civilization.' Beyond the word *wen* 文, which is sometimes translated into English as *culture* or *civilization*, semantic histories of other key terms, such as *yi* 夷 and *Xia* 夏, are also proposed. The key argument is that a language-specific form of civilizational consciousness took shape around the middle of the first millennium BCE when the word *wen* was coined (or lexicalized) in the meaning 'civility/civilization' and a contrast between the 'great ones' (*Xia*) and the 'civilizationally inferior others' (*yi*) emerged.

September 20, 2019, 4:30–6:30pm

Faculty House, 64 Morningside Drive, Columbia University

*please check the announcement board in the first floor lobby for room information

Seminar Co-Chairs:

Jue Guo, Barnard College, Columbia University

Glenda Chao, Ursinus College

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