



EARLY CHINA SEMINAR
LECTURE SERIES

***Spring and Autumn* Historiography: Formulaic Phrasing and Hierarchical Display in *Spring and Autumn* Records**

Newell Ann Van Auken · University of Iowa

This study examines the *Spring and Autumn* (*Chūnqiū* 春秋), and takes as its starting point the view that all historiography—that is, history-writing—is fundamentally interpretive. This is true even of the terse, impersonal, and ostensibly objective *Spring and Autumn* records. These records are highly formulaic, a point that has given rise to an extensive commentarial tradition focusing on individual records that pose exceptions to the regular form. My approach takes the opposite tack, examining and analyzing regular recording patterns, with the aim of exposing the values and priorities that the *Spring and Autumn* imposes onto the events it records. The formulaic nature of the records suggests a link between the *Spring and Autumn* and ritual or religious practice. Ritual conveys its message through form, such as patterned movement or material display; art historian Jessica Rawson has proposed that the rituals of early China “enable the family structure and the political order to be seen.” The “form” employed by the *Spring and Autumn* is linguistic, and in this study I show how its records use patterned phrasing to mark the relative importance of events, individuals, and states. In short, its form puts hierarchy on display, and it appears to have been produced by a system that was deeply concerned with hierarchy, prestige, and relative rank. This talk introduces my current book project, which analyzes the historiographical priorities and strategies of the *Spring and Autumn* itself, and builds on my previous work, which examined the early commentarial interpretation and reception of the *Spring and Autumn*.

三月癸酉大雨震電	春天王使南季來聘	九年	冬十有二月無駭卒	蟻	九月辛卯公及莒人盟于浮來	八月葬蔡宣公	秋七月庚午宋公齊侯衛侯盟于瓦屋	辛亥宿男卒	春秋左氏吉運	夏六月己亥蔡侯考父卒	三月鄭伯使宛來歸昉庚寅我入昉	春宋公衛侯遇于垂	八年	冬天王使凡伯來聘戎伐凡伯于楚丘以歸	秋公伐邾	齊侯使其弟年來聘	夏城中丘	滕侯卒
<small>左氏經如此傳作癸酉大雨霖以震以霖釋大雨以震駭電也</small>			<small>駭殺萊作倭</small>		<small>浮來皆作包</small>				<small>隱公</small>		<small>昉昉公駭皆作邲</small>							

**November 22, 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
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