



## EARLY CHINA SEMINAR LECTURE SERIES

### Conceptualizing Crisis in Early China

Shirley Chan · Macquarie University



Crisis is often spoken of as if its meaning were self-evident, yet what counts as a crisis and what counts as a response has never been singular. In early China, transmitted texts and recovered manuscripts reveal a striking variety of vocabularies for disruption, vocabularies that resist neat translation into modern categories. From the mythic story of Great Yu's flood control, remembered as the archetype of ecological calamity, to bamboo slips that imagined disorder through illness and culinary balance, and finally to the *Lüshi Chunqiu*'s vision of the body politic as an organic system, these sources display a diversity of perspectives that together trace a distinctive trajectory of crisis-thinking. They

suggest that crisis was never a single rupture to be overcome, but a recurring condition demanding unceasing vigilance and sustained attention.

**March 13th, 2026, 4:30–6:30 pm**

**Faculty House, 64 Morningside Drive, Columbia University**

\*Please check the announcement board in the first-floor lobby for room information

#### **Seminar Co-Chairs:**

Glenda Chao, Ursinus College

Ethan Harkness, New York University