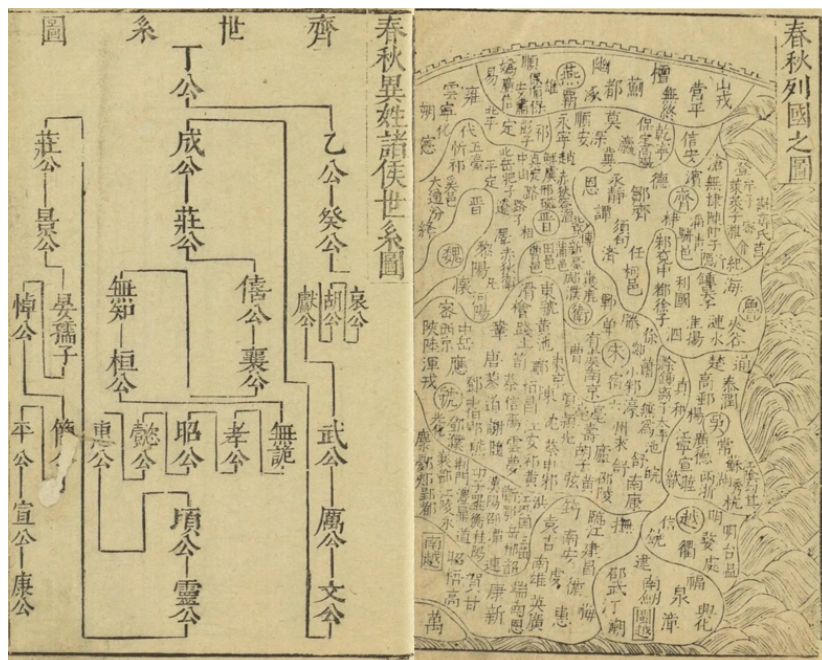




## EARLY CHINA SEMINAR LECTURE SERIES

### The Paradox of Hegemony: The Logics of Political (Dis)integration and Lineage Segmentation in Spring and Autumn China

Chris Kim · New York University



The political history of the Spring and Autumn period (722–481 BCE) was marked by two overarching, seemingly inverse trends. On one hand, the hundreds of polities comprising the fragmented multi-state order of the era competed, conquered, and were gradually consolidated into a handful of larger territorial constructs. On the other hand, peering under the veneer, we see a picture of increasing disintegration as elite lineages constantly split and segmented into cadet branches that provoked intense intra-state discord often more destructive than the wars between states. The goal of this seminar is to

unpack and explore the ebbs and flows of centripetal and centrifugal impulses involved in these two interdependent trends and reassess or challenge this narrative of the fundamental shift in the organizational principles of early Chinese state and society in the Spring and Autumn period. The wide range of associated social and political developments of the era will be introduced for discussion through a set of heuristic dichotomies including patriarch-monarch, warrior-soldier, and shaman-bureaucrat. While I will draw as examples mainly on textual and archaeological evidence from the state of Qi, it is hoped that incorporating participants' expertise on other states, regions, or periods will shed additional light on regional variabilities or alternative processes of socio-political change in early China (Image source: *Sancai tuhui* 三才圖會, 1609).

**September 26th, 2025, 4:30–6:30 pm**  
Kent Hall 403, 1140 Amsterdam Ave., Columbia University

#### Seminar Co-Chairs:

Glenda Chao, Ursinus College  
Ethan Harkness, New York University

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