**Theory from the South: Graduate Seminar**
Thursdays 6-8:30 Sharpe House, History Department

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*The idea is very simple really, although its implications could be quite radical...*

*It is this. Western enlightenment thought has, from the first, posited itself as the wellspring of universal learning, of Science and Philosophy, upper case; concomitantly,it has regarded the non-West—variously known as the Ancient World, the Orient, the Primitive World, the Third World, the Underdeveloped World, the Developing World, and now the Global South—primarily as a place of parochial wisdom, of antiquarian traditions, of exotic ways and means. Above all, of unprocessed data. These other worlds, in short, are treated less as sources of refined knowledge than as reservoirs of raw fact: of the minutiae from which Euromodernity might fashion its testable theories and transcendent truths. Just as it has long capitalized on non-Western 'raw materials' by ostensibly adding value and refinement to them. In some measure, this continues to be the case. But what if, and here is the idea in interrogative form, we invert that Order of Things? What if we posit that, in the present moment, it is the so-called 'Global South' that affords privileged insight into the workings of the world at large? That it is from here that our empirical grasp of its lineaments, and our theory-work in accounting for them, ought to be coming, at least in major part?*

*Jean and John Comaroff, "Theory from the South," Anthropological Forum, Vol. 22, No. 2, July 2012.*

The "Global South" is a working category today for a diversity of intellectual projects centered on the non-European postcolonial world. Many of us at Brown use it as a shorthand to locate our work. While this category is embedded in histories of empire and culture, critical thinking since the 1970s has already done much to "provincialize Europe" and interrogate the ways in which power and knowledge have been imbricated in the making of universal claims, institutional processes and historical self-understanding – the very tools with which we have been interpreting and engaging with the world. Now the task at hand is different.

Taking cues from Jean and John Comaroff, it is time to relocate the "Global South," as not merely a field-site for study, but rather to "invert" the canon and return to it as a generative source for theory and for understanding the world as it is changing around us. This relocation, however, is not simply a new trend that follows as postcolonial critique arguably reaches its limits. It has a long genealogy of its own in anti-colonial struggles (Gandhi, Fanon, Tagore, and Al-Afghani amongst others) and certainly many of us use "Global South" as a progressive shorthand to refer implicitly to liberation projects, and to struggles for social justice that have challenged "North-South" relations across the globe. In important ways then, "South" here functions as not merely a geographic category, but rather an epistemic one.

This graduate seminar will work in tandem with the interdisciplinary reading group of the same title to read recent essays and books that "shake the ground" so to speak, from the vantage of the "south". Thus, on a monthly basis, the seminar will benefit from the readings curated by a guest scholar and conversations with other faculty and students. In addition, the seminar will focus in particular on a body of influential writings called *Subaltern Studies*, and consider its relation to peasant and labor histories, its methodological innovations, and critique of European modernity. With the formal closure of SS, we will also examine its limitations and impact on postcolonial scholarship in different parts of the globe.

Every week you will be expected to write a brief commentary on the readings and once during the semester you will take the lead in making a presentation on the readings. Detailed instructions for both will be provided on the first day. In addition, you will write a final research paper or two short papers after consultation during the course of the semester.

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For the weeks marked in red, the texts curated by the guest scholar will be provided. Please contact Rajeev Kadambi and Rijuta Mehta to receive the books and pdfs for those weeks.

The readings that are marked with an asterix are available as pdfs. Other texts can be bought or borrowed (or ordered through inter-library loan).

Books:
Dipesh Chakravorty, *Provincializing Europe*
Jose Rabasa, *Without History: Subaltern Studies, Zapatista Insurgency and the Specter of History*

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David Ludden (Ed.), *Reading Subaltern Studies*
Eduardo Kohn, *How Forests Think*
Ariella Azoulay, *Civil Imagination*
Didier Fassien, *Humanitarian Reason*
Ashis Nandy, *Intimate Enemy*
Nigel Gibson, *Fanon: The Postcolonial Imagination*

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WEEK ONE: SEPTEMBER 4
**Jean and John Comaroff, "Theory from the South," Anthropological Forum, Vol. 22, No. 2, July 2012.*
*Tony Bogues, "And what about the human?"
*Arif Dirlik, "Global South: Predicament and Promise"

WEEK TWO: SEPTEMBER 11
*Ashis Nandy, *Intimate Enemy*
*Nigel Gibson, *Fanon: The Postcolonial Imagination*
* Aime Cesaire, "Discourse on Colonialism"

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WEEK THREE: SEPTEMBER 18
FAISAL DEVJI: Orientalism and Islamophobia

WEEK FOUR: SEPTEMBER 25
Subaltern Studies: Genealogies
*James Scott, *Domination and the arts of resistance : hidden transcripts* (Chp. 4, 5, 6)
*E. P. Thompson, "The Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the Eighteenth Century"
*Ranajit Guha, "Preface", "On Some Aspects of the Historiography…" and "The Prose of Counter-Insurgency" *Selected Subaltern Studies*
*Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?"
*Partha Chatterjee "A Brief History of Subaltern Studies"
*David Arnold, Gramsci and Peasant Subalternity

@WEEK FIVE: OCTOBER 2
Subaltern Studies
*Eric Wolf Europe and the People Without History (intro)
Dipesh Chakravorty*, Provincializing Europe*
Ajay Skaria "The Project of Provincializing Europe…"
Chatterjee, *Nationalist Thought* (excerpt)

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WEEK SIX: OCTOBER 9
Jose Rabasa, *Without History: Subaltern Studies, Zapatista Insurgency and the Specter of History*
*Walter Mignolo, The Darker Side of Western Modernity (excerpts)
*Mignolo, "Coloniality of Power and Subalternity"

WEEK SEVEN: OCTOBER 16
*David Ludden (Ed.), *Reading Subaltern Studies*
Critiques of Subaltern Studies/Death of SS
Partha Chatterjee, "After Subaltern Studies"

WEEK EIGHT: OCTOBER 23
Hamid Dabashi, *Arab Spring and the End of Postcolonialism*

WEEK NINE: OCTOBER 30
LEELA GANDHI: Postcolonial Ethics and the Practice of Democracy

WEEK TEN: NOVEMBER 6
Ariella Azoulay, *Civil Imagination*

WEEK ELEVEN: NOVEMBER 13
Didier Fassien, *Humanitarian Reason*

WEEK TWELVE: NOVEMBER 20
TONY BOGUES and COURTNEY MARTIN: Culture, Politics and the World We Live In

WEEK THIRTEEN: DECEMBER 4
Eduardo Kohn, *How Forests Think*

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