Spring 2010 Graduate Seminar
Decolonization and its Aftermath: Globalization from Below

E58.2211 and G41.2900-003.
Wed 4:55-7pm
Course Instructor:
Arvind Rajagopal

The advent of 20th C. decolonization challenged the way in which world history had been conceived for four centuries, as centered upon the tiny landmass of Western Europe, rather than say, as plural and polycentric. The former view made it difficult to understand how the majority of the world's population mattered to history at all. With the onset of decolonization after the end of World War I, the world began to be seen, first through the lens of the nation, and secondly, as an extensive set of interconnections, where seemingly remote events could have major effects across countries. This course will combine a survey of select decolonization movements with analyses of the transformations from anticolonial nationalism through postcolonial developmentalism to the contemporary new world order. The course will consider decolonization in two senses: as the historical achievement of independence in former colonies, and, as a concept illuminating socio-political change.

The aftermath of the Cold War and the failure of non-alignment in the global South has been marked by the rise of religious and market fundamentalism as well as the emergence of a New World Order. It is increasingly obvious that decolonization has not brought all the freedoms it promised. Rather, it has enabled a deeper infusion of metropolitan technologies of governance, that would have been inhibited if erstwhile colonial structures had remained in place. Nevertheless, there are numerous unforeseen outcomes of the partial but increasing deinstitutionalization of regulatory systems. These are conventionally referred to in terms of democratization, consumer choice and the new mobility of goods and persons. At the same time, questions of politics begin to move beyond the purview of the state, and pose problems that are also opportunities for democratization.

This course will address a) the persistent legacies of colonization, as well as b) the political status of decolonization, as an initiative that inaugurates new futures, while remaining agnostic about its material outcomes. We will consider decolonization in the historical context of postcolonial development as well as retrospectively, in terms of the new world order, the clash of fundamentalisms, and rise of political violence that we witness today.

Course Requirements
Participants will be required to participate actively in class discussions and make class presentations on the readings. They will write a 5 page midterm research paper, and a final research paper of 13-15 pages that can be a development of the midterm paper.
Week One Jan 20: **Introduction: The Third World as a Political Project**


Week Two Jan 27 & Week Three Feb 3: **Colonial Violence Inside and Outside Europe**


**Week Four: White Humanism and Black Universalism**


**Week Five: Rethinking the Political**

Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political* and *Theory of the Partisan*; Habermas on the Public Sphere (encyclopaedia essay).

**Week Six: Towards A Politics of the Whole Earth**


**Week Seven: Postcolonial Responses**


**Week Eight: Mass Utopias, Failed Universalisms**

Susan Buck-Morss: *Dreamworld and Catastrophe*

Benedict Anderson: Imagined Communities (extract)

**Week Nine: Nation-Building and Subject Formation**

Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and its Fragments*

**Week Ten: Literary visions of decolonization**

Tsitsi Dangaremba, *Nervous Conditions*

**Week Eleven: Postcolonial infrastructures and politics**


**Week Twelve: Postcolonial infrastructures and politics (contd)**

Timothy Mitchell, *Rule of Experts: Egypt, techno-politics, modernity* (California, 2002). (extract)

**Week Thirteen: Fundaments of ‘Fundamentalism’**


Arvind Rajagopal, *Politics After Television: Hindu nationalism and the reshaping of the public in India* (extract).

Saba Mahmood, *The Politics of Piety: the Islamic revival and the feminist subject*. (extract)

**Week Fourteen: A Politics To Come**

Faisal Devji, *Landscapes of the Jihad: militancy, morality, modernity* (Cornell, 2005)

Week 15
Round up and review