



ZMO-Colloquium Summer Term 2018

Thursday, 19 April 2018, 5 pm

Development Knowledge in Colonial and Nehruvian India

Lecture by **Prakash Kumar** (Pennsylvania State University)

The lecture explores the relationship between scientific knowledge and development in two overlapping, successive periods in India in a comparative perspective: in colonial India in the first half of the twentieth century and in Nehruvian India in the middle of the century. It will track the rise of “agrarian developmentalism” in the collusion between expertise and the desire to engineer better society. If the goal of “improvement” was the creation of an ideal society in the imperial imaginary, new forms of developmentalism in late colonial India were marked by an economic logic. In that context, the talk will interrogate the proclaiming of a public purpose in economic knowledge and the claim that expertise appended to economic knowledge could reconcile diverse social interests. In Nehruvian India, the critique by the Gandhians allow us to explore the limits of techno-economic knowledge that are constitutive of “development” and to place historically development’s social “others.”

Prakash Kumar is an Associate Professor of History and Asian Studies at Pennsylvania State University. He is a specialist of the history of South Asia, history of science, and Development Studies. His interest lies in the agro-ecological history of colonial and postcolonial India. Kumar is the author of *Indigo Plantations and Science in Colonial India* (Cambridge, 2012). He is currently writing a book on the place of US-American technic in agricultural and rural projects of development in twentieth century India.



Venue

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