

**CENTRE FOR STUDIES IN SOCIAL SCIENCES, CALCUTTA,
R-1 BAISHNABGHATA PATULI,
KOLKATA 700094**

GENERAL SEMINAR

Craig Brandist
Professor of Cultural Theory and Intellectual History
University of Sheffield

will give a talk titled:

“From the Russian Revolution to Orientalism: The Soviet Roots of Postcolonial Theory”

While the publication of Edward Said's eclectic 1978 book *Orientalism* is widely regarded to have inaugurated the boom in postcolonial studies, the Foucauldian nature of much postcolonial theory is quite different to what Said envisaged. In this paper, we will see how Said adopted certain ideas from Oriental Studies in the USSR, which characterised 'bourgeois orientalism' in a particular way, and which were then developed by post-1968 French intellectuals into a 'closed discursive circle'. We examine the Soviet intellectual background to the rise of postcolonial theory, looking at the way the Revolution, its Stalinist degeneration and the Cold War left indelible marks on intellectuals from national liberation movements who visited and were educated in the USSR, and how this shaped postcolonial theory in crucial ways. It will also be suggested that a reconsideration of important but neglected aspects of Soviet intellectual history are crucial in moving critical scholarship about the 'Orient' beyond its current impasse.

Date: Thursday, 24th August, 2017
Time: 3 – 5 pm

Venue: CSSSC's Seminar Room, Patuli Campus

Trina Nileena Banerjee
(Convener, Seminar Committee)
All are welcome to attend.