Dhruv Raina (Delhi):
“Knowledge ‘Engrafted’, Concepts ‘Entangled’:
Departures from Conceptions of Radical Break and Discontinuity in Histories of the Sciences”

The historian of science S.N. Sen once pointed out that that the nineteenth century was the century of the most rapid institutionalization and expansion of modern science, and yet at the time in India this process was frustratingly sluggish. The imperial history of science on the other hand has frequently played upon the radical break or discontinuity that marks the eclipse of the so called traditional knowledge systems of India and the ascent of modern science that came to be institutionally anchored from the period of early to late colonialism. Running against these trends are the interpretive frames of “engraftment” and “entanglement.” In the former case, there is recognition of the exhaustion of epistemological or osmotic explanations for the circulation of knowledge. The focus of investigation shifts instead to the varied uses traditional or modern knowledge resources were put to by learned communities. On the other hand, the idea of entanglement operates at the level of social theory and interrogates the very categories that structure the histories of science premised on the standard dichotomies such as tradition-modernity, or East-West. This paper discusses how these notions begin to revise our conceptions of knowledge and its circulation.

Podium Discussion “Circulation and Changing Conceptions of Knowledge”:
2011/10/06 (Thursday) – 11:00-12:30
Venue: Neue Aula