

Theme Fall 2014:
Orientalism
and the representation of Islam
in French and Francophone culture

Laurence Porter French Colloquium Series

Dr. Marcie Ray
(School of Music)
October 24, 2014

2:00pm to 3:30pm
Wells B 342

“Ethnographies” of Love in French Baroque Opéra-Ballets

Although exotic characters had long been a part of French ballets, late seventeenth-century and early eighteenth-century opéra-ballets began to explore foreign cultures particularly through love plots. Many of these spectacles promulgate stereotypes to iterate markers of difference between cultures; in particular, composers and librettists represented French men as fickle, Spaniards as loyal, and Italians as violently jealous. This talk argues that while Jean-Philippe Rameau’s opéra-ballet *Les Indes galantes* (1735-36) continues to reinforce cultural differences, it also critiques contemporary French conceptions of love delineated in other genres including plays, operas, and early feminist literature.