

Dinner with Professor Maria Rosa Menocal at the American Club (March 25)

The Hong Kong Yale Club is in for a treat! **Yale Professor Maria Rosa Menocal**, *Sterling Professor of the Humanities and Director of the Whitney Humanities Center*, will be making a stop in Hong Kong as part of her trip through Asia this March and we will be hosting a dinner for her to welcome her to Hong Kong. As part of this dinner, she has also agreed to speak about one of her areas of expertise, Medieval Spain and its relevance to our world today. Space is limited; please RSVP today and see below for more details!

After-Dinner Discussion: “Why Medieval Spain Matters Today”

After both 9/11 and the 2004 terrorist attacks in Madrid, communiqués released by Osama bin Laden claimed that these deadly acts of aggression were in revenge for “the tragedy of al-Andalus.” Al-Andalus is the Arabic word for the territories of current-day Spain ruled by Muslims for hundreds of years. Medieval Spain has always been a fascinating historical subject for many, in part because its cultural and scientific achievements –especially in the areas of philosophy and the sciences –migrated to Latin Christendom and there became central to the intellectual renovation that created our modern world, indeed much of what we consider “western civilization;” and in part because it was an example unique in the west of a society within which members of the three Abrahamic faiths –Christianity, Judaism, and Islam –coexisted with considerable success, over an extended period. Today, in the context of terrorists who claim to be fighting to regain what they imagine was al-Andalus, and also of the large communities of Muslims living within western European societies, the meaning of medieval Spain –as a symbol of a certain kind of past, as a model for a certain kind of future –far transcends historical curiosity.

- Date:** Tuesday, March 25, 2008
- Time:** 7:00pm
- Place:** American Club (Town Club; Exchange Square Two, 48/F)
- Who:** All Yale Club members and their guests are warmly welcome
- Cost:** \$350 per person for all alumni, family and friends. *Includes dinner and one soft drink. (Wine can be purchased by the glass at \$48)*
- Signup:** Space is limited and reservations will be on a “*first-come, first served*” basis. To RSVP for this event, please e-mail **Denise Wong** denise.wong@lehman.com or call her at 2252-1071, specifying the number of persons attending.

Brief Biography:

María Rosa Menocal

Sterling Professor of the Humanities and Director, Whitney Humanities Center, Yale University

Born in Cuba and raised in Philadelphia, Maria Rosa Menocal received her Ph.D. in Romance Philology from the University of Pennsylvania. She taught at Bryn Mawr College and at Pennsylvania before coming to Yale in 1985, where she is Sterling Professor of the Humanities and the Director of the Whitney Humanities Center.

Professor Menocal has lectured and published widely in the field of medieval literature and culture, and is especially known for her work on the relationship among the cultures of the three monotheistic faiths. She has written *The Arabic Role in Medieval Literary History: A Forgotten Heritage*, *Writing in Dante's Cult of Truth: From Borges to Boccaccio*, and *Shards of Love: Exile and the Origins of the Lyric*. Her most recent books include *The Ornament of the World*, which has been translated into eleven languages, and a co-edited volume in the Cambridge History of Arabic Literature series, *The Literature of Al-Andalus*. In the spring of 2007 an international conference commemorating the twentieth anniversary of the publication of *The Arabic Role in Medieval History*, and its impact on the field of medieval and philological studies, was held in Toronto; the volume from that conference, *The Persistence of Philology: Rethinking the Arabic Role in Medieval Literary History*, will appear with Toronto University Press in 2008. Also to appear in 2008, with Yale University Press, is a broad-ranging and richly illustrated collaborative project, written with art historian Jerrilynn Dodds and Arabist and historian Abigail Krasner Balbale. *The Arts of Intimacy: Christians, Jews and Muslims in the Making of Castilian Culture* reveals the extent to which Castilian identity is deeply rooted in the experience of confrontation, interaction, and at times union through its deep experience of Hebrew and Arabic cultures.

