Monday, April 11, 2016
12pm, Jones 202
“The Maqāmāt Between Philology and World Literature”

Maurice A. Pomerantz
New York University & IAS

Dr. Pomerantz is Assistant Professor of Literature at New York University, Abu Dhabi and in 2015-2016, an Andrew W. Mellon Asst. Professor at the IAS, Princeton.

Pomerantz’s research focuses on collections of short Arabic picaresque tales known as *Maqāmāt*.

*Maqāmāt* relate the exploits of roving trickster protagonists who use ornate linguistic devices to defraud unsuspecting victims. Like their rogue anti-heroes who are always on the move, *Maqāmāt* also manifest an amazing capacity to travel and transform. Over the course of a millennium, versions of *Maqāmat* tales spread to nearly all regions of the Muslim world from West Africa to East India.

Tracing the long life of a literary form now known only to specialists, this lecture argues for the necessity of combining two radically different ways of studying texts and their historical circulation: the close reading of Philology and the distant reading of World Literature. The lecture presents a new model for the study of a pre-modern literary form that explores the textual past and engages with contemporary literary scholarship.

Light Lunch Served.