

# Department of Modern Languages

## Speaker Series

Presents:

Dr. Cindy Ermus

### Plague Cultures: Managing the 1720 Plague of Provence in France

Monday, October 3, 2016

\* 3:00—4:00 in D 630

From 1720 to 1722, the French city of Marseille, one of eighteenth-century Europe's most important port cities, suffered an epidemic of bubonic plague that claimed approximately 45,000 lives in Marseille alone—reportedly about half of the city's population. And as a result of various circumstances, including the vested interests of *Marseillais* authorities in the earliest days of the outbreak, the infection spread from Marseille throughout the French regions of Provence and Languedoc, ultimately taking as many as 126,000 lives.

What was it like to live through a major plague outbreak in eighteenth-century France? What did plague times look and smell like? What did laypeople and local authorities do to protect themselves and their communities from infection? I will answer these questions and more within the context of the 1720 Great Plague of Marseille, or more appropriately, the *Peste* or Plague of Provence—the last of the great outbreaks of bubonic plague on the European continent.

