

INDIANA UNIVERSITY

DEPARTMENT OF FRENCH & ITALIAN presents a lecture by

# Nicolas Valazza

(Johns Hopkins University)

## Salome and the Sphinx: the Emergence of Symbolism in the Naturalist Novel

Looking at some novels by Émile Zola considered as emblematic of his ambition to paint a "Natural and Social History of a Family under the Second Empire," this talk will examine how certain symbolic elements, ascribed to Gustave Moreau's painting, emerge in Zola's narrative, to the point of challenging his naturalist doctrine. In particular, such figures as Salome or the Sphinx appear in the text as archaic symbols that cast into doubt Zola's confidence in the march of time. Thus Moreau's symbols are likely to establish a new esthetic relationship with History, which is further illustrated by Joris-Karl Huysmans in *À rebours*.

Nicolas Valazza is a PhD Candidate at the Johns Hopkins University, with a specialty in 19th century French literature. He has published several articles, notably on the interrelation between painting and literature. His dissertation, entitled *Crise de plume et souveraineté du pinceau*, explores the development of French art criticism, from Diderot's *Salons* throughout the 19th century, in light of the emerging paradigm of the sovereignty of painting, after the fall of the *ut pictura poesis* regime.

Mr. Valazza is a candidate for the position of Assistant Professor of French (19th Century) in the Department of French & Italian. This lecture will be in English, to be followed by refreshments.



5:30 pm, Monday, February 2, 2009  
Maple Room  
Indiana Memorial Union

If you have a disability and need assistance, accommodations can be made to meet most needs. Please call 855-5458.