

The College of Arts & Sciences  
Center for the Humanities

Laura Giannetti



*Food and the Senses:  
Pleasure, Sin and Guilt in Sixteenth-Century  
Italian Literature and Art*

*Thursday April 22, 2010 3:30 pm*

**CAS Gallery at Wesley House**  
1210 Stanford Drive, University of Miami

*Laura Giannetti*



Laura Giannetti is an associate professor of Italian in the Department of Modern Languages and Literatures at the University of Miami. She is the author of *Lelia's Kiss: Imagining Gender, Sex, and Marriage in Italian Renaissance Comedy* (2009) and translator and editor, with Guido Ruggiero, of *Five Comedies From the Italian Renaissance* (2003). Her new project, *Food Culture and the Literary Imagination in Renaissance Italy* was awarded the Lila Wallace Reader's Digest Fellowship at Villa I Tatti, The Harvard University Center for Italian Renaissance in Florence.

Two separate heavens awaited the dead in Ruzante's *Dialogo facetissimo*: one for those who enjoyed the sensual world of food and sex and another reserved for those who lived *malinconici*, fasting and praying to God. Humanists, doctors, and food writers debated whether the concern for health or the pleasures of the senses should be the guiding principle in choosing food. Perhaps in the context of the Reformation the debate was resolved in favor of a concern for health and a tighter control of the body, the senses, and appetites; yet imaginative literature and artistic representations showed an increasing fascination with food, taste, and sensual pleasure. This paper will address how a discourse of food found in prescriptive literature was translated into and changed to empower the senses in the realm of the literary imagination.

\* This lecture is sponsored by the Lila Wallace Reader's Digest Fund, at Villa I Tatti Harvard University Center for Renaissance Studies in Florence.