March 17, 2012

**PRESS RELEASE**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Columbia University Professor George Saliba to talk on the Arabic/Islamic Roots of Modern Medicine at Albany College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences on April 5**

On Thursday, April 5, at 7 p.m. George Saliba, Ph.D., professor of Arabic and Islamic Science at Columbia University will give a talk on “The Impact of Arabic/Islamic Science on Modern Medicine and Pharmacology” at the Albany College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences, Student Center Room 202, 106 41 Union Drive, Albany. The event is free and open to the public.

During the 9th and 10th centuries the Abbasid Dynasty of Baghdad sponsored a multigenerational project to translate Greek philosophical and scientific works into Arabic. In 832 CE the *Bayt al Hikma* or House of Wisdom was established to support the work of the translators and scholars. Without this translation project it is likely that much of the Greek writing would have been lost. In addition renowned Arabic/Islamic thinkers such as Hunayan, Ibn Ishaq, Al-Kindi, Ibn Sina, Ibn Rushd, Farabi, Al-Razi and others had an enormous impact not only on Medieval Arabic translation but also on the scientific breakthroughs which were made later in the West.

Dr. Saliba’s illustrated talk will focus on how Arab/Islamic intellectual development of the period transformed scientific thought, ultimately leading to significant advances in pharmacology and medicine. The talk will also illustrate how the new empirical attitudes that were developed in the Islamic civilization became the cornerstones in what we now call experimental empirical science.

Dr. Saliba is highly regarded for his ability to make the complexities of Islam accessible to those eager to understand this important tradition

Dr. Saliba, a native of Lebanon, graduated with a B.S. and Masters in Mathematics at American University Beirut. He then earned a Master’s in Near Eastern Studies/Semitic Languages and a Ph.D. in Near Eastern Studies/Islamic Sciences from the University of California Berkeley. Dr. Saliba has been teaching at Columbia University since 1978. He studies the development of scientific ideas from late antiquity to early modern times, with a special focus on the transmission of astronomical and mathematical ideas from the Islamic world to Renaissance Europe during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. He has been selected as Distinguished Senior Scholar at the Kluge Center of the Library of Congress (2005-6), and at the Carnegie Scholars Program (2009-10). Dr. Saliba has been interviewed for the PBS documentary “Empire of Faith” and for the BBC documentary “Islamic History of Europe.” He is the author of Islamic Science and the Making of the European Renaissance (2007) as well as another eight books which he authored or co-authored and a multitude of scholarly articles.

Dr. Saliba’s talk is part of a new lecture series entitled the Science, Culture and Medicine Speaker Series sponsored by the Department of Humanities and Communication and the Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences. Albany College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences. Dr. Saliba’s talk is also co-sponsored by the Iraqi Refugee Project of Albany (a coalition of Bethlehem Neighbors for Peace, Women Against War and the Women’s Association for Family Affairs).

ACPHS Student Center can be reached by turning from Holland Avenue onto Notre Dame Drive, then turning right on Union Drive and following signs for Albany College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences parking.

For more information about Dr. Saliba’s talk visit [www.acphs.edu](http://www.acphs.edu) or contact Professor Bill Millington at ACPHS at 518-694-7242 or the Iraqi Refugee Project at 518-392-9477.