The second half of the 20th century into the 21st has been marked by a significant increase of interest in modern Arabic literature and at the same time an equally significant increase in the number of Americans with the language-skills necessary to engage with the literary texts of the modern and pre-modern eras of Arabic literary production in the original language. One feature of these recent developments in the study of Arabic literature is a considerable increase in the availability of translations. However, as with the example of Amin al-Rihani and his amazing variety in terms of activities and literary genres, it is important to observe that translation, as a term, is not confined to a mechanical process of rendering the wording of one language into that of another. Translation rather involves the highly interpretive process of literally “carrying across” (the basic meaning of “translation”) the intellectual and literary values of one cultural system to another and all the complex and sensitive issues involved in such a process. Within such a context, the career and achievements of Amin al-Rihani merit a special mention in any history of modern Arab cultural trends.

Roger Allen is the Sascha Jane Patterson Harvie Professor Emeritus of Social Thought and Comparative Ethics, School of Arts & Sciences; Professor Emeritus of Arabic & Comparative Literature, the University of Pennsylvania. He retired in 2011 after 43 years of service to the university and the field. His students include some of the most distinguished members of the younger generation of specialists in Arabic literature. He has also been very involved in the development of Arabic language pedagogy. In addition to his landmark works of literary history and criticism, such as *The Arabic Novel: An Historical and Critical Introduction* and *The Arabic Literary Heritage and Modern Arabic Literature*, he has also served the field by his numerous translations of literary and historical works, including works by Naguib Mahfouz, Abd al-Rahman Munif, and Hanan al-Shaykh. During 2009-2010, Allen served as president of the Middle East Studies Association of North America (MESA) and in 2011-2012, he serves as President of Pennsylvania Association of Senior and Emeritus Faculty.

Thursday, October 27, 2011 , 6:30-8:30, Skylight Room

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