From about 1500, even as Christian states mainly fought other Christian states and Muslim states mainly fought other Muslim states, there was also a broader background rivalry, in which competition for trade, dominion, and cultural precedence often led to war between "Franks" and "Moors." By about 1700, the balance had tilted toward Europe, not through any inherent superiority of Christian or Western institutions, but through a properly historical concatenation of circumstances. This history of conflict is often down-played in recent studies, perhaps because scholars have reacted to Samuel Huntington's prediction of a coming clash of civilizations by leaning, as it were, in the opposite direction. But one does not conjure away an undesirable future by minimizing the reality of past hostility.

James D. Tracy
University of Minnesota, Union Pacific Professor of Early Modern History
Author of Europe's Reformations, 1450-1650 and Emperor Charles V, Impresario of War

Wednesday • March 24, 2004 • 7:30 PM • College of Law 146