



UCSB HISTORY ASSOCIATES

Pious Postmortems: Anatomy and the Making of Saints



During the Reformation, the Catholic Church suffered a crisis in one of its oldest and most powerful institutions: belief in the saints. To support the veneration of these individuals, canonization officials turned, it would seem paradoxically, to medical science. Canon lawyers and physicians thought that medicine could be used to prove miracles. The category of supernatural was, however, a tricky one and so canon lawyers, theologians, and doctors developed a range of techniques to establish the bounds of nature. This talk examines the means used to determine the existence of the supernatural in human bodies. Surprisingly, the tools employed in the search for the holy mirror and presage many of the techniques later used by experimental scientists to establish the factuality of unusual observations.

Brad Bouley completed his PHD at Stanford in 2012 and taught at Penn State until he joined the UCSB History Department in 2017. His specialty is Italian history from the 16th through the 18th centuries. Bouley studies the intersections of religious history, the history of science, and the history of food and urban provisioning. His first monograph, Pious Postmortems: Anatomy, Sanctity, and the Catholic Church in Early Modern Europe, was published last year by the University of Pennsylvania Press. This event will begin at 2:00pm at the Karpeles Manuscript Library, 21 West Anapamu St. on Saturday, December 1. It will be followed by a reception.

Pious Postmortems - Karpeles Manuscript Library - 21 West Anapamu St. - Dec. 1

Please reserve ____ space(s). Admission is free, but so we'll have enough refreshments, please respond to UCSB History Associates, History Dept., UCSB, 93106-9410; or leave a message at 1-805-300-4016; or e-mail jsmcgee@history.ucsb.edu.

Name _____ Guest(s) _____

Daytime Phone _____ E-mail: _____