**CALL FOR PAPERS**

**Sixteenth Century Society & Conference, Milwaukee 26-29, October 2017**

**Sacred Biography Across Confessions and Continents:**

**On the Limits of Hagiography as a Category of Analysis**

**Sponsored by the Hagiography Society**

Although the genre of “hagiography” initially emerged to characterize writing for the purpose of promulgating the Christian cult of saints, it has since been applied across confessions to describe varied forms of sacred biography and spiritual life writing. This panel seeks to destabilize the genre of hagiography by examining subjects and situations that elude it. We invite papers that consider surprising uses of hagiographic writing or that focus on figures and narratives that challenge universal constructions of hagiography. Such papers might consider cross-confessional applications of hagiographic writing, such as the uneasy importation of hagiographic narratives or cultic practices into non-European contexts or attempts to produce hagiographic narratives of indigenous holy figures. For such papers we ask: how was hagiographic writing transformed by the globalizing mission of Catholicism? Alternatively, papers might consider hagiographic slippage from within the Christian tradition, perhaps by focusing on the ways that this generic classification has served to overdetermine our interpretations of certain narratives or to conceal dubious behaviors or ritual objects that demand explanations beyond the dynamics of cultic practice. For such papers we ask: with what shall we replace “hagiography” in order to capture the multiplicity of sacred narrative?

Please send 250-word abstracts by April 10 to Sara Ritchey at: [ritchey@louisiana.edu](mailto:ritchey@louisiana.edu)