

ZeMKI-Forschungskolloquium

ZeMKI Research Seminar

Linzer Str. 4, Room 60.070, 28359 Bremen, DE

29.06.2022, 16.15 – 17.45 (CET)

Prof. Dr. Gregory Grieve

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Actual and Ludic Fascisms: Comparing the Play of Evil in the Videogame *Wolfenstein* to the QAnon Community

Abstract:

Evil is a human product. However, if it is not merely ideology and rhetoric, what divides the justifiably bad from the inexcusably evil? This talk explores the play of evil and fascism in the video game *Wolfenstein* and the QAnon community. Broadly speaking, fascism defines a far-right, totalitarian ultranationalist political system that differs from conservatism because it aims to engage and excite the public rather than demobilize and pacify it. The *Wolfenstein* franchise consists of a series of World War II-themed videogames that follow a Jewish Polish American Army captain and his fight against the Axis powers. QAnon is a far-right political conspiracy theory that centers on false claims made by an anonymous individual or individuals known as "Q." QAnon maintains that there is a cabal of Satanic, cannibalistic sexual abusers of children operating a global child sex trafficking ring who conspired against former U.S. President Donald Trump.

Bio:

Gregory Price Grieve is Professor and Head of the Department of Religious Studies at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. He conducts research at the intersection of religion, popular culture and Buddhism, with a particular focus on religious practices that employ digital media, such as the Internet, virtual worlds, and video games. His most recent book, *CyberZen* (2016), explores Buddhist identity, community and religious practices in the virtual world of Second Life. Besides an accomplished researcher he is a decorated teacher, and an able administrator. In 2016, he was awarded the UNC Board of Governors Award for Excellence in Teaching, the highest honor bestowed by the North Carolina system for superior teaching. Service also plays a pivotal role in his career, and he has served on over forty major committees, as the Head of the Department, and as the Chair of the College Assembly. Through his service to the profession he has shaped the field of digital religion by serving as an advisor to the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Social Science Research Council, and has served as a series editor for Routledge and De Gruyter. Furthermore, he pioneered the study of digital religion during his six years as chair of the American Academy of Religion's Religion and Popular Culture Group, and he is now chair of the AAR's new Seminar on Religion and Digital Gaming. He is also a founding member of the International Academy for the Study of Gaming and Religion, and its new journal, *Gamevironments*.