



FEB 28 2012

Video Games Depict Religion as Violent, Problematic, Study Shows

ScienceDaily (Feb. 27, 2012) — In the past few years, the video game industry has grown from a niche market into a major part of mainstream media. This increase in popularity and use of technology has allowed video game developers to insert more detail and nuance into the storylines of their games. Many video games have begun incorporating religion as a key aspect to plot points and story lines. Greg Perreault, a doctoral student in the University of Missouri School of Journalism, found that the many newer-generation video games equate religion with violence in the game narratives.

Perreault examined five recent video games that incorporate religion heavily into the storyline. The video games he studied were "Mass Effect 2," "Final Fantasy 13," "Assassin's Creed," "Castlevania: Lords of Shadow" and "Elder Scrolls: Oblivion." Perreault found that all of these video games problematize religion by closely tying it in with violence.

"In most of these games there was a heavy emphasis on a "Knights Templar" and crusader motifs," Perreault said. "Not only was the violent side of religion emphasized, but in each of these games religion created a of problem that the main character must overcome, whether it is a direct confrontation with religious zealots or being haunted by religious guilt."

While Perreault observed a relationship between violence and video games, he does not believe video game developers are creating an intentional commentary on religion.

"It doesn't appear that game developers are trying to purposefully bash organized religion in these games," Perreault said. "I believe they are only using religion to create stimulating plot points in their story lines. If you look at video games across the board, most of them involve violence in some fashion because violence is conflict and conflict is exciting. Religion appears to get tied in with violence because that makes for a compelling narrative."

Perreault presented his findings at the Center for Media Religion and Culture Conference on Digital Religion.

theman eater

No increase in scholarship funds planned for MU

MU Director of Admissions Barbara Rupp said the increase in the non-resident tuition was necessary to make up for budget cuts.

By Sean Na

Starting in the summer semester, in-state students will pay \$7.80 more per credit hour and out-of-state students will pay \$48.46 more per credit hour, after the UM System Board of Curators consented to increase MU in-state tuition by 3.0 percent and out-of-state tuition by 7.5 percent.

In response to the tuition increase, MU students said there could be a way to make up the lack of budget for higher education from other sources, not solely from the students.

In-state MU freshman Christopher Lenz said he was disappointed in the state government.

“I have to believe that, if they considered every alternative, state legislators could find ways to ameliorate the budget crisis without slashing spending on education,” Lenz said.

Lenz said the main goal for state schools is to make their education affordable to their own residents. He said he understood why the increase rate of the out-of-state tuition was higher than that of the in-state tuition.

Although in-state students were generally OK with these increases, some out-of-states students were upset with these increases.

“I understand the need to make up for a budget gap, but I certainly disagree with the method,” freshman Ryan Walker said. “Out-of-state students will be among the hardest hit with the tuition increase.”

He said he will stay at MU but he hoped the administration will put a greater emphasis on scholarships for out-of-state students because they make up a great deal of his payment.

MU Director of Admissions Barbara Rupp said there will be no additional scholarship opportunities for out-of-state students. She said the UM System Board of Curators had to increase more on the out-of-state tuition to make up the budget cuts.

“While none of us were eager to increase the out-of-state tuition, the budgets cuts that we face required us to find a variety of ways to make up that loss of revenue,” she said. “It became clear

that increasing non-resident tuition 4 percent more than the resident increase was something we would have to consider.”

In spite of the 7.5 percent out-of-state tuition increase, she said she still believed that MU provides a high quality education at a reasonable price for non-resident students as well as resident students.

“I think we will see evidence of that as we continue to attract non-resident students in the coming years,” she said.

MU international students were also sensitive about the tuition increase.

MU senior Jianghui Wen said it is an unfair decision to increase the out-of-state tuition doubled amount compare to that of the in-state tuition.

“As an international students, we already pay more than American students,” she said.

Rupp said MU will introduce new international merit scholarships effective next fall. These would only apply to incoming international students.

MU Police Department class on school shootings emphasizes group action

By Felicia Greiff

February 27, 2012 | 4:35 p.m. CST

COLUMBIA — Andrea Young remembers walking to class on the Virginia Tech campus that morning.

At 9:30, she went to her technical writing class in Shanks Hall. A classmate noticed an alert on the Virginia Tech website: Someone on campus was armed.

Loud speakers blared announcements that no one could understand because of echoes and feedback. Someone came into the classroom and said to stay inside for safety — people had died.

In the end, 33 people died and 25 were counted among the injured. April 16, 2007, would be remembered as the date of the deadliest school shooting in U.S. history.

Most of the violence had taken place just a block from where Young took shelter with her classmates. She wonders how she would have reacted if she had been in Norris Hall, where many of the shootings took place, instead of Shanks.

"It would be a foreign situation," she said. "You never know what you're going to do until you're in that situation."

Imagining the unimaginable underlies a new MU Police Department-sponsored class called "Citizens' Response to Active Threat Incidents." It explores ways to respond to a shooting or violent situation at school, work or in public.

MU Police Sgt. April Colvin, who will teach the class, and other MU officers attended training through a company called Response Options and studied a program called ALICE, which stands for alert, lockdown, inform, counter, evacuate. It has been used in elementary and high schools and was tweaked slightly for the university setting, but the concepts are the same. Other

Missouri schools that have used the training include Southeast Missouri State University and the University of Central Missouri.

Colvin said she will try to give students, staff and faculty the tools they need to make decisions on their own. "The goal of the class is to let you know that you don't have to hide and wait," she said.

Part of the class is a discussion of what could occur in such an event, and the other part is a simulation of a shooting. Colvin said that a school shooting is not like a hostage situation where people can try talking to the shooter. A shooter's goal is to shoot as many people as he or she can, so the key is to find methods of distraction.

The best thing to do is leave the building immediately. If that's not a safe option, Colvin said, the class encourages people to secure the room they're in.

There's also the "active threat" part of the class where an "attacker" comes in and participants react.

Colvin said throwing a book, laptop or trash can could be a distraction to subdue a shooter or help someone escape. The natural response to getting hit by an object is to flinch, moving the gun from a target. That's the time to take group action, which is taught during the simulation part of the class. Police may not arrive immediately, so participants are taught to consider swarming the assailant and attacking.

"Safety is everybody's responsibility," Colvin said. "(Police) can't be everywhere at once ... Be prepared to act when the time comes."

Still, are people likely to remember what they learn in the class in an actual emergency?

"I think they are likely to remember the conflicts," she said. "When you actually physically do (the exercises), it will drive the point home."

Split-second decision-making

According to 2009 data from the Division of National Vital Statistics, a person who dies between the ages of 15-24 is most likely to be the victim of a motor vehicle accident. The second leading cause of death in the age group is from some other type of accident. Assault (homicide) ranks third, but the number of school shooting homicides is not provided.

In the unlikely event of a school shooting, what makes the difference between acting — or not acting — to stop a gunman?

In an article published by the American Psychological Association last year, Zeno Franco and Kathy Blau of Palo Alto University and Philip Zimbardo of Palo Alto University and Stanford University write that "most people are capable of heroism with the right mindset and under certain conditions that call for heroic action." It could be a friend, a teacher, a student or anyone who has deeply held standards for behavior in a given situation.

In the article, called "Heroism: A Conceptual Analysis and Differentiation Between Heroic Action and Altruism," the authors write that when physical risk is a factor, it comes down to split-second decision-making. The choice is made in "complete aloneness, even if it is in the presence of others."

Sorting through what happened

Andrea Young lost three friends in the Virginia Tech massacre.

She is now 26. After graduating in 2007, she worked at a lawyer's office and taught piano in the evenings. Recently, she got married and moved to Chesterfield, Va. Two weeks ago she started a job at Capital One in property and real estate management. Life has moved on. Still, she said she sometimes thinks of the tragedy. Related incidents bring back memories, including a shooting last year in a parking lot on Virginia Tech's campus.

"I think what (MU is) doing is excellent," Young said of the new class.

"Virginia Tech was unprecedented. You just don't expect something like that to happen," she said. "If there had been an initiative in place...it might have benefited Virginia Tech."

Colvin will teach the next class, which is free, from 5:30 to 9:30 p.m. on March 22 at the MU Police Department. She encourages as many people as possible to sign up for the class because the simulation is more realistic with a crowd.

ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

Tipsheet: Money will revive the MU-KU rivalry

BY JEFF GORDON | Posted: Monday, February 27, 2012 8:02 am | (16) Comments

Some time will pass before Kansas and Missouri play basketball again. The way Jayhawk Nation sees things, MU has been fortunate to play in the same basketball conference as KU.

Those folks are miffed that Mizzou abandoned the Big 12 Conference and subjected the remaining schools to much unwanted angst as the league scrambled to survive.

CBSports.com college basketball guru Jeff Goodman summed up the scenario:

Now that Missouri is headed to the SEC next year, Kansas doesn't have to play the Tigers any longer. Obviously, Missouri wants to keep the series -- one that began way back in 1907 when James Naismith first took KU into Columbia -- going because wins against one of the most storied basketball programs will help with credibility and, more importantly, in recruiting.

Kansas gains virtually nothing by keeping it going -- except that it's great for college basketball and each fan base. That should be enough, but it's not.

"Not one Kansas fan has written, called or e-mailed me about us stopping the series," Kansas coach Bill Self sniffed.

But here's the thing: An annual KU-MU basketball game would make a lot of money. Self is tasked with paying a LOT of bills in Lawrence, given that school's second-tier standing in football.

Is the Kansas athletic department awash in cash? Does every athletic team play in state-of-the-art facilities? Is every coach of every KU team earning a highly competitive salary?

Um . . . no.

Kansas will boycott Missouri for a while on general principle. Nobody should blame them for that, all things considered.

But unless Self starts taking the Jayhawks deep into the NCAA Tournament every spring -- thus creating epic revenue growth -- he will have to play some big non-conference games for the money.

And what non-conference game could be bigger than the Border War, er, Adjoining States Skirmish?

As for MU, it will move on and find new basketball rivals. The annual Kentucky and Arkansas games should be big.

Life in the SEC will be just fine overall for Mizzou, given all the financial benefits from playing in the nation's top athletic conference. But at some point down the road MU will answer the call from Lawrence and work out a showcase, made-for-TV game in Kansas City.

Money drives college athletics and money will force these rivals to renew their hostilities.

MYSTERIES OF THE UNIVERSE

Questions to ponder while wondering if Big 12 officiating crews will review the block/charge rules so there isn't so much guessing out there on the court:

Could a car reverse roles and dunk over the top of Blake Griffin?

By vacationing with his old Patriots pals, will Randy Moss convince that team to take him back?

What were the original titles of your favorite sports movies?

QUIPS 'R US

Here is what some of America's leading sports pundits have been writing:

Mike Bianchi, Orlando Sentinel: "For the record, the West beat the East 152-149, and the Pro Bowl called afterward to complain about the lack of defense. But, sadly . . . the time has come for the Magic to turn out the lights on the spectacular Dwight Howard era. For months, Orlando has dreaded this day, but now it's here. All-Star Weekend was nice way to forget about it for a while – sort of like two divorcing parents having one last Christmas together. Dwight and the Magic put on a happy face for the kids, but it was all for show. Dwight was a great host, smiling widely, saying all the right things, sitting next to Magic owner Rich DeVos during a timeout, even taking the microphone before the game and thanking the All-Star fans for coming to 'my city, my home.' The Magic and the NBA had that home – the sparkling, spectacular Amway Center -- decorated beautifully. But now it's time to take down the lights and tell the kids Daddy's leaving.

Greg Cote, Miami Herald: "Just as the Heat risked big thinking that superstar egos could mesh and eventually harmonize, so the Marlins are gambling that this roster — led by the most refreshingly outspoken and unfiltered manager in baseball — will enjoy tranquility. This team could come together and be brilliant, or it could come loose and be chaos. The man in charge of that is the manager. But what if the warden running the asylum turned out to be crazier than the inmates? The only comparison to (Ozzie) Guillen in American pro sports coaching right now is the Jets' Rex Ryan. You get blunt with no varnish, you get loud, you get language not heard in church. All of that gets to parade around as wonderfully justified swagger, of course, but only when you are winning."

Tim Brown, Yahoo! Sports: "So, in the matter of Ryan Braun, a test result that inferred he'd been driven to a playoff game in a vat of testosterone, a collector accused of going rogue, a temporarily sullied Most Valuable Player award, and a Major League Baseball PED juggernaut that is no longer undefeated, one must consider the question: Who are you going to believe, science or those big gorgeous eyes?"

Jerry Greene, ESPN.com: "What we're here to clear up is another inaccurate report -- the one about Tom Brady and Gisele Bundchen not being happy with his wide receivers, including Wes Welker. Fear not,

Brady is not still slumped over on the Super Bowl grass. He's been at Gisele's Costa Rican beach hideaway -- and Welker was there, too, along with Anna Burns, the former Ms. Hooters. Unfortunately, despite the efforts of the Costa Rican paparazzi, we have no photographic evidence of if the foursome passed around a Nerf football and whether Welker hung on to it. But they all seem to be recovering nicely together. Despite a Super Bowl loss, somehow they have found a way to carry on."

MEGAPHONE

"When you come to God, he says to you that whatever you did in the past is erased. You become a new man in the eyes of God. You see what's going on in this world. Michael Jackson. Whitney Houston. A lot of bad stuff. If you don't have God in your heart, you're not going anywhere. You could have money, you could have 700 home runs, but you're not going anywhere."

Disgraced slugger Manny Ramirez, telling CBSSports.com that he is a new man.