

Wintersemester 2023/2024

GIB Lecture Series

## „Räume des Krieges“ / “Spaces of War”

Dienstag 05.12.2023 | 16.15–17.45 Uhr | H8 (Geo II)

### Geographies of war: the anatomies of later modern war

**Derek Gregory**

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There has long been an intimate relationship between war and geography, but the emergence of later modern war has capitalised on this relationship – practically, intellectually and rhetorically – as never before. By ‘later modern war’ I mean no single way of waging war but rather a contemporary cluster of modalities of military and paramilitary violence. I am not trading on the dichotomy between ‘old wars’ and ‘new wars’ proposed by Kaldor, Münkler and others, and neither am I proposing a simple chronological division. Previous modalities of war have reappeared in our own century, appropriated and re-purposed: siege warfare in Gaza, Syria and Ukraine, trench warfare in Nagorno-Karabakh and Ukraine. And for all the talk about ‘virtual’ or ‘virtuous’ war, military and paramilitary violence remains profoundly embodied.

The lecture will focus on five, closely connected characteristics of later modern war:

1. The accelerated deconstruction of the battlefield as a bounded space: the formation of complex topologies of violence, the continued blurring of the distinction between combatants and civilians, and the multiple forms of the ‘everywhere war’.
2. Digital targeting: ‘remote’ warfare and death from a distance; so-called precision targeting of ‘high-value’ individuals (‘warheads on foreheads’) versus targeting the social; the proliferation of low-tech drone technologies and their use by non-state actors.
3. The juridification of warfare: spaces of exception and war zones; military lawyers and the kill-chain; the violence inherent in international law; ‘lawfare’ and bending international law.
4. The mediatization of warfare: social media and the digital public sphere; war correspondents, citizen journalists and post-truth regimes.
5. The casualties of later modern war: the incidence of civilian casualties; medical evacuation and medical care for combatants and civilians in war zones.

*Derek Gregory is currently Peter Wall Distinguished Professor and Professor of Geography at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver. He has published many outstanding books and articles on the relations between power, knowledge and geography. In his book ‘The Colonial Present: Afghanistan, Palestine and Iraq’ (2004) he discusses the actions of various western governments in the Middle East after the 9/11 attacks. It reflects how the popular discourses found in the media and in political circles indicate a continued presence of orientalist and neocolonialist undercurrents.*



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