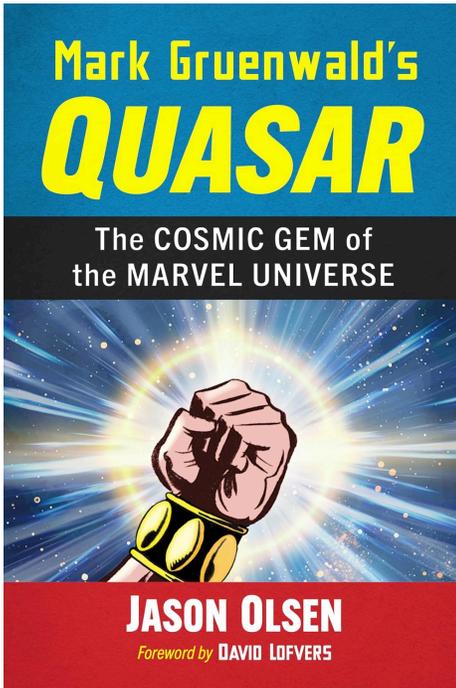


# Faculty Spotlight: Jason Olsen

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Between publishing a new book and presenting on two panels at FanX Salt Lake Comic Convention, USU Eastern English Department Associate Professor Jason Olsen had a busy September.

His book, Mark Gruenwald's Quasar: The Cosmic Gem of the Marvel Universe, came out on September 4, 2025, from McFarland Publishers. Quasar was a comic by Gruenwald that ran for five years in the early '90s. "Mark Gruenwald is someone who I've researched and written about before, and I just love his work on Quasar, so I wanted to dive deep on his work with this comic," Jason reflects. "Quasar is a wonderfully weird and funny comic, but one that deals with serious issues about suicidal ideation and mental health, and it was a perfect platform for a deep analysis."

Jason wrote another book, which came out in 2021, on Gruenwald's work called Mark Gruenwald and the Star Spangled Symbolism of Captain America, 1985-1995.

"Unlike my other book about Gruenwald which deals with Captain America, Quasar is a very obscure character, but that's a big part of what drew me in. Not many people

know this character or comic and I wanted to encourage everyone who might be interested to check it out," Jason says.

Jason's presentations at FanX also had Marvel themes. The first was titled "Captain America's Greatest Writers," where he discussed Gruenwald's ten-year run as the writer for the superhero. The second panel was called "We Stick Together from Now On: Why the Thunderbolts\* is the Most Important Marvel Movie."

"This was the third time I've presented at FanX, and the third time I've been in a panel talking about Captain America. FanX is a huge event with so many people applying to be panelists, so I've been lucky to have been part of this multiple times," Jason comments.

For the three Captain America panels he's done, Jason proposed the idea himself, but the Thunderbolts one worked a little differently; after FanX announced certain panels could use an extra participant, Jason asked to be a part of it, knowing his love of comics and movies would make him a good fit.

"Both panels were a lot of fun — in the Captain America one, I got to talk about a writer I've spent a lot of time writing and researching, so it was great to sharing that knowledge I've developed with a wonderfully engaged audience," Jason explains. "The second panel allowed me to talk in detail about movies — and a movie I really love — so it was great to be able to do that."