

1-16-2001

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Recommended Citation

"From '2001' to 'Matrix,' UD Sci-Fi Class to Explore Genre's Evolution and Human Condition" (2001). *News Releases*. 9444.
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Jan. 16, 2001
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NEWS RELEASE

FROM '2001' TO 'MATRIX,' UD SCI-FI CLASS TO EXPLORE GENRE'S EVOLUTION AND HUMAN CONDITION

DAYTON, Ohio — Today's young science-fiction fans may not have the same appreciation for *2001: A Space Odyssey*, Stanley Kubrick's 1968 cult classic, as they do for some of today's films of the same genre, says a University of Dayton professor.

"When compared to, say, *Matrix*, *2001* looks rather slow and silly," says Jim Farrelly, who is teaching a literature and film course in science fiction. "Students are too sophisticated and special effects have come such a long way that it would have little impact. It may even elicit a laugh.

"That's too bad," he adds, "because I still think its worthy of watching."

To explore the sci-fi genre, Farrelly has chosen *Matrix*, *2001* and several other novels and films for the upper-level course. Others include *Star Wars Trilogy*, *The War of the Worlds*, *Dune* and *Blade Runner*.

Farrelly chose the film and novel *2001* as the course's focus based on its motif of "computers as independent thinkers" and the human drive to find life beyond Earth.

"*2001* was prophetic in that it had talking computers and showed our desire to communicate with another world on a sophisticated level," he explains. "We're sending signals into space and our computers are talking to us."

Farrelly also was struck by the film's foreboding theme that computers may one day control humans, just as the spaceship-controlling Hal did in *2001*.

"Man is increasingly becoming more dependent on machine," he says. "It's a compelling thought when you consider how fast technology is advancing."

Students also will study the evolution of the genre, Farrelly says.

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"We've come a long way with movies — in both technology and subject matter," Farrelly says, from the early days of "flying saucers" to dazzling, adrenaline-churning special effects seen in such movies as *Matrix*.

Farrelly, director of UD's film studies program, has a history of teaching and designing nontraditional literature and film courses. In 1974 he created a class on the occult based on the then just-released movie *The Exorcist*, such a hit among students that it is still taught today. In 1998 he started a class on Stephen King. In the same year, he created a literature course with the millennium as its theme, which explored books and films on the anti-Christ, Armageddon, the Second Coming and the prophecies of Nostradamus. Other course subjects have included magic and fantasy and utopias and dystopias

"I try to choose subjects I'm passionate about and that students are going to find interesting," Farrelly explains. "It's much harder for us, as faculty, if they don't have an interest in what we're feeding them.

"Some scholars think only the classics should be used to study the human condition, but I disagree wholeheartedly," he adds. "I firmly believe that you can explore our struggles — truth, love, death, resurrection, good, evil — through the genre of science fiction."

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For media interviews, contact **Jim Farrelly** at 937-229-3435 via e-mail at James.Farrelly@notes.udayton.edu. The class meets from 11 to 11:50 a.m. Monday, Wednesday and Friday.