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## Beyond the Mini Course

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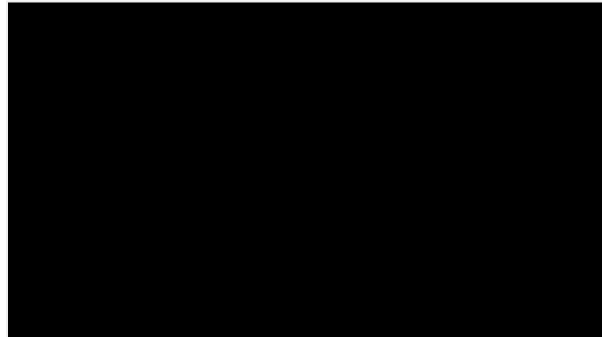
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Saturday, January 11, 2014

# Beyond the Mini Course

Matt Lickenbrock, 2016 Cohort



Take a look at this picture. (I know, it's just a black rectangle. just humor me for a few seconds). Also plug your ears. Well go on, do it.

Buried deep within Flyer folklore, probably in an ancient papyrus scroll or a dusty leather-bound book somewhere in the Roesch Library stacks, exists a tale of great adventure passed down from upper classmen to lower classmen through the ages. It tells of a magical cave of wonder (definitely not a dirty storm sewer) that sleeps under the very foundation of the UD campus, and stretches from beyond Stuart Hall all the way to the Great Miami. It's walls are crowded with detailed prehistoric cave carvings (definitely not half-assed graffiti), but when the lights go out, the picture above is all you see. The blackness is thick, and it is eerily quiet save for the echoing trickle of water passing beneath your feet. You wave your hand in front of your face, and your eyes open wide as you ask them to see something. Anything.

...No good. it's too dark, and you and your group are forced to re-light the torches (definitely not LED headlamps) and trek onward for over a mile of soggy subterranean creepiness. As you walk, you can't help but think of the basements of buildings that you pass under, the tree roots in the dirt far above that branch down towards you like chandeliers, the people on the surface whose feet might be directly over your head, and how they have no idea you're even there.

A faint blue glow lights the path just ahead, and as you round the last turn you kill the lights. Nearly a full hour of darkness opens up into a brilliantly bright moon above, and a shimmering river below. Fresh air. Tall river grass. A hunger for exploration heartily satisfied. Friendships strengthened. Memories forever made. This is what awaits any adventurer bold enough to make the dark journey for themselves.

...Or at least that's how the stories go. You'll have to choose who to believe. Many adventurers (definitely not an undisclosed selection of River Stewards and myself) have many stories. And not just stories of this particular adventure. There are so many caves, streams, trails, crawls and

climbs to be discovered all around the Dayton area. And some people (definitely not myself) are so grateful to have such a solid group of friends (definitely not the 2016 River Stewards cohort) who are always ready to brave the next adventure.

Here's to the next five semesters we'll share, and the countless adventures that await.