

Celebrating 50 years of 'Doctor Who' at DePaul

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Published: Sunday, April 28, 2013

Updated: Sunday, May 12, 2013 03:05

Fifty years seems like a short time to the Doctor, who is over 1,000 years old, but 50 years is an anniversary that rarely occurs in television. Due to this monumental milestone, the Media and Cinema Studies program within the College of Communication at DePaul is hosting "A Celebration of Doctor Who," an all-day colloquium May 4 honoring Doctor Who and its 50th anniversary. Doctor Who premiered on BBC Nov. 23, 1963 and introduced audiences to the time and space-traveling alien known as the Doctor, his traveling machine, the Tardis and a wide range of companions joining him wherever he went.



Photo courtesy of MCT Campus

The colloquium was put together by Dr. Paul Booth, an assistant professor of media and cinema studies at DePaul, who came up with the idea in his "Time Travel on Television" class.

"I asked (my students) if they'd go to an event celebrating the show's 50th anniversary this year, and they got really excited, so I thought that I'd plan something that was part-fan convention, part-scholarly conference," said Booth.

The Doctor was originally portrayed by William Hartnell. After Hartnell decided to leave the show, Doctor Who kept the show running without the main character by adding the concept of regeneration into the plot.

The concept of regeneration is when one Doctor dies, he regenerates into another person and lives through that body. Through this, Doctor Who has managed to keep the show running for so long, with a cast that has included 11 different doctors, the current played by Matt Smith.

Doctor Who originally ran on BBC from 1963 until 1989, with a TV film premiering in 1996. The show was picked up again and a new version debuted in 2005, introducing the Ninth Doctor (Christopher Eccleston) and his companion Rose Tyler (Billie Piper). The new series of the show has gained a new audience by making science fiction appealing to younger crowds.

The colloquium will consist of a series of scholarly roundtables with numerous speakers and academics, and intends to spark debate and discussion about changing morals and ethics throughout the duration of Doctor Who.

In addition to the roundtables, there will be screenings of episodes throughout the series' history all day that explore different aspects of Doctor Who, such as Exploring the Tardis, Anniversaries (where previous cast members are brought back), Beginnings (which includes the first episode ever broadcast and a surprise screening) and the viewing of the episode titled "Dalek."

The screening of "Dalek" will feature live commentary by guest of honor Robert Shearman, best known as the writer of the episode that reintroduced the Doctor's most notorious foes to the new series.

"A Celebration of Doctor Who" will be held at the Richard M. and Maggie C. Daley Building in the lower level CMN and CDM theaters from 9 a.m. until 5 p.m. Saturday, May 4. Those interested can sign up on the Facebook event

page for updated information.