



Archaeologist Available To Discuss Movie "2012" And Maya Prophecy

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DURHAM, N.H. – Despite claims in the soon-to-be released movie "2012" that the end of the world is near as purportedly foretold by the Maya prophecy, the end of the current Maya calendar on Dec. 21, 2012, does not predict a global cataclysm, according to a University of New Hampshire archaeology professor and Maya scholar.

The movie "2012" opens in U.S. theaters Nov. 13, 2009.

Eleanor Harrison-Buck, assistant professor of archaeology at UNH, says the Maya calendar system is set up in cycles of time, and the current cycle ends December 21, 2012.

At certain points in the calendar, called "period endings," the Maya made predictions about the future. These prophecies were, in large part, based on a repeating cycle of events so that, for instance, during certain periods of time, drought and a bad harvest or warfare and conquest were inevitable. In many ways, it was a self-fulfilling prophecy, Eleanor Harrison-Buck said.

"Rather than simply 'the end of the world,' the Maya would no doubt have viewed the end of this great cycle as an important and powerful time of reordering and renewal of the world. The current push for sustainability and renewable resources suggests that perhaps the ancient Maya were not that far off in their predictions for this time period, that our world by 2012 would need a time of reordering and renewal," she said.

According to the professor, Westerners have a different concept of time and space, viewing chronology as a linear time line with a single start and end point. Mesoamerican cultures viewed both time and space as cyclical — never ending, but also repeating and recreating itself in many ways.

"Most people today have difficulty viewing time and space in this way. The Mesoamerican concept of the 'end of time' is in some ways similar to our own New Year's celebration; it represents the start of a new beginning and a period of renewal," Eleanor Harrison-Buck said.

The University of New Hampshire, founded in 1866, is a world-class public research university with the feel of a New England liberal arts college. A land, sea, and space-grant university, UNH is the state's flagship public institution, enrolling more than 12,200 undergraduate and 2,200 graduate students.

