

Feit Seminars for Fall 2025

IDC 4050H – Martial Arts: A Global Perspective

Tuesdays, 11:10-2:05

TJ Desh Obi (History)

Steve Jackowicz, (Doctor of Chinese Medicine & Martial Arts Instructor)

This course explores the cultural history of martial arts from a global perspective. Popular culture often portrays martial arts as ancient, even timeless traditions from East Asia, yet martial arts developed in Africa and Europe as well. This course will expand our understanding of the martial arts by seeking to explore the military, medical, moral, social, and spiritual traditions that helped shape individual martial arts styles in specific times and places across the globe. We will then consider how these martial arts in turn impacted both local and global culture through their impact on national identity, performance art, and modern cinema. All students will conduct at least one field trip to a local martial arts school to gather data that will be used to analyze the art according to one on the many methodological lenses that will be used in this class (history, oral history, history of science, sociology, kinesiology, etc.).

IDC 4050H - War and the Arc of Human Experience

Tuesdays, 6:05-9:00 PM

Glenn Petersen (Sociology and Anthropology)

Glenn Albright (Psychology)

In this seminar we aim to examine some of the social, psychological, and cultural forces that predispose young men and woman to join the military and seek out combat and other forms of military service; the nature of war and its effects on those caught up in it (including both warriors, noncombatants and their families); and the impacts war has on the later lives of those who survive it. Much of Glenn Albright's current work as a psychologist is on Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and war trauma and he is deeply involved in developing support services for veterans at Baruch. Glenn Petersen is a Vietnam vet, has recently been writing on war-related issues, and teaches on the anthropology of peace and war. We will draw on materials from our respective fields as well as on literature and the other humanities and social sciences. We are eager to have some of Baruch's veterans participate in this seminar.

IDC 4050H – Empathy and the (Musical) Theater

Wednesdays, 11:10-2:05

Liz Wollman (Fine and Performing Arts)

Lisa Blankenship (English)

Whether they are new or revived, musicals are often read as reflections of their place and time. Most, too, reflect cultural ideals, including the importance of community and of collective problem-solving, of making human connections and of understanding and embracing the Other. The idea that the live theatre—and specifically the musical theatre—can function not only as a source for personal joy but also social good that increases our empathetic attachments to Others has been suggested by researchers in humanities and social sciences in recent years. This idea is not without its critics, but the intersections of empathy and musical theatre are worth exploring in an age of detachment, cynicism and extreme polarization. In this course, we will explore the intersections between (musical) theatre and empathy, with readings across disciplines of theatre, rhetoric, literature, psychology and cognitive science. We will attend select productions together as a class and will engage in creative and reflective writing about our experiences.