

## Feit Seminars Spring 2026

### **IDC 4050H - Making Music in the U.S: Race, Power, and the American Songbook**

Tuesdays, 11:10-2:05

Andrew Sloin (History)

Abby Atherton (Fine and Performing Arts – Music)

This class explores the development of American popular music from the Civil War to the present, with a focus upon the relationship between music, performance, race, and politics. We will begin by exploring lineages of popular music in America, tracing pathways of musical migration through the Atlantic World. We then will examine popular music as a site of racial construction and imagining, as well as a space of boundary-crossing creativity. Along the way, we will explore the emergence of new genres of American music, from ethnic folk music, blues, country and jazz, to rock, punk, and hip hop. All students will be required to participate in a weekly piano or guitar practicum (to be held during each class session). Experience playing music is a plus, but not a requirement. However, you must be willing to learn and practice; music-making will be a critical component of this course.

### **IDC 4050H – Crossroads of Exile: Written Between the Lines**

Wednesdays, 11:10-2:05

Sarah Valente (Modern Languages and Comparative Literature)

Dina Odnopozova (English)

The conditions of exile, “otherness,” and alienation have defined the Jewish experience for centuries. In this course, we will explore Jewish literature produced under censorship and persecution across various historical contexts: the Portuguese and Spanish Inquisitions, pre-World War II, World War II, Latin American Military Dictatorships and Soviet rule. We will focus on the multilingualism and cultural blending in the texts written in “lingua franca”: Spanish, Portuguese, Russian, and German, as well as in languages of the Jewish diaspora: Yiddish and Ladino. We will examine questions such as: How do writers and artists define exile? How does exile define them? We will study the mode of “writing between the lines” that Jewish authors employed to simultaneously avoid censorship and deliver their messages. We will investigate essays, letters, poems, fiction and non-fiction, and inquire into material culture across different media: maps, banknotes, cookbooks, theater, music, architecture, newspapers and film. In the process, we will explore the fruitful cultural interactions between Jews and their neighbors: Muslims, Christians, Ukrainians, Poles, Roma, Africans, the indigenous peoples and “mestizos” in the “New World,” to name a few. We will explore their methods of resistance developed in parallel with and at times inspired by the story of Jewish exile and survival.