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How would Freud relate to O'Keefe?

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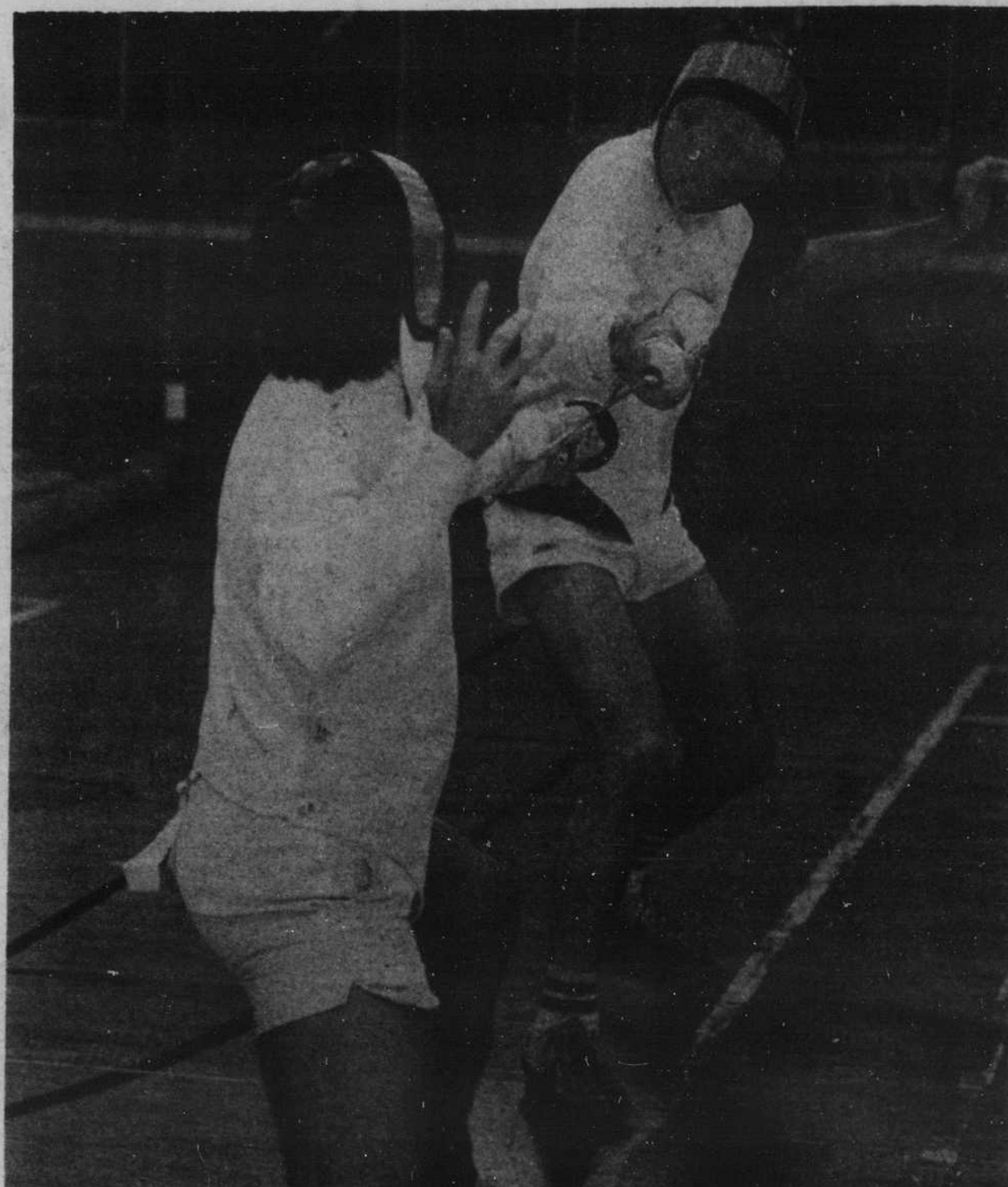


Photo by Dennis Hickok

The physical education department offers fencing, a sport that developed from ancient cavalry fighting. Instructor Sinbock Kang says fencing requires concentration, quick reactions and correct leg and arm positioning.

Curses, foiled again

Fencing class teaches attack, defense

By BRIEN LAUTMAN
Of the Emerald

The University's physical education department has an unusual history course. The art of attack and defense, or simply, the sport of fencing.

Fencing developed from ancient calvary fighting, replacing the larger, more cumbersome double-edged swords that were used to batter an opponent, but could not effectively pierce armor. The fencing weapon, with its light weight and fine edge easily pierced the joints of the armor.

Fencing changed into a sport through the use of the foil, which was used as a practice instrument. The foil is a light, flexible weapon with a blunted tip. But according to University instructor Sinbock Kang, who has taught fencing classes for the past two years, there is more than one kind of weapon used in the sport.

"Fencing uses three types of weapons," explains the Korean-born instructor. "First there is the saber, with a (theoretical) cutting edge along the front edge and on one-third of the back edge, then the epee, a straight, stiff and narrow weapon, and of course there is the narrow, very flexible foil."

Other equipment needed include gloves, jacket and the protective mask, all of which are used in Kang's classes. Only the foil is used in Kang's classes.

Kang teaches two levels of fencing, the beginning and intermediate. He stresses that the beginning course is not as physically demanding as the intermediate, and deals with basic fencing skills.

"The students are not competing very much with each other, they are just learning," he says. "But in the intermediate class there is great deal of competition and it becomes much more physical."

"Fencing involves a lot of leg and arm positioning, foil positions and of course concentration. It is very strenuous and involves quickness and reaction both offensively and defensively."

Kang's students agree about the amount of physical effort needed to fence.

"It's not as demanding as wrestling," says beginner Rick Edgington, "but I do get a good workout, especially on my arms and legs. It requires a lot of concentration too."

Another beginning student, Iris Palmer, comments on the learning aspect of CPE 139 and why she decided to enroll.

"I am learning a lot about fencing, although it's not really physically demanding yet," she says. "I took the class because fencing is something I will continue with."

Aspiring fencers can join the University's Fencing Club, located in the basement of the Erb Memor-

ial Union. According to Kang, the club is short of members, and offers an excellent opportunity for anyone interested in fencing.

"I encourage my students to join the club," says Kang. "It's good practice and they can also use electronic scoring equipment."

Kang points out that fencing is a highly technical and mental sport and must be practiced regularly. The availability of a place to fence is minimal and according to Kang this has contributed greatly to a decline in fencing.

"Fencing is not really a popular sport right now," he says, "but people are not exposed to it very often. It isn't available to everyone."

Laura Tompkins, a beginning fencer, describes her initiation this way: "I'm just a beginner, but I really enjoy it and intend to continue with fencing after this class. The instructor does a good job of teaching the class too."

Kang has excellent fencing credentials. He was a member of the Seoul National University Fencing team that captured the Korean national title in 1965. Kang also was considered for the 1964 Olympics, but a lack of funds kept the team home.

According to Kang his experience has helped him relate that the sport of fencing is something more than just two people slashing away at each other with blunted instruments — it is the art of attack and defense.

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