



Laura Smit Emerald

Students practice assertiveness training in Nadia Telsey's self-defense class. Many who have taken the decade-old class say the experience was life-altering for them.

## Self-defense

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replace. She is pretty amazing," DeVore said.

"When I took this class as a student, I got so much out of it I wanted to see what it was like on the other side," said Jessica Geraci, 19, who is a student facilitator for Telsey's class. "I wanted to help other women."

Facilitators are former self-defense students who volunteer approximately eight hours of their time each week to help teach the class. Facilitators such as Geraci demonstrate physical moves in class, help students role-play attack situations and lead outside discussion groups.

Geraci said she loves facilitating, even though it is hard for some of her peers to understand what she does in class.

"A lot of people call it 'The Man-Hater's Club' because they think there should be men in the class too," Geraci said. "They don't understand how difficult it would be for a woman who has been victimized by a man to recreate those situations with a male classmate. Many women wouldn't take the class if there were men in it."

Many would-be students of Telsey's are disappointed to hear of her impending absence. Some of these are students who were unable to register for Self-Defense for Women, also known as Women's Studies 399, because the class is

nearly always full after the first week of registration.

"I think the University definitely needs to continue to have classes like this," DeVore said.

Telsey, who grew up in Brooklyn, N.Y., didn't always want to be a self-defense teacher. She majored in anthropology in college and had visions of digging up fossils in faraway places.

Attending school amid student protests against the Vietnam War, Telsey began to think seriously about how she would like to affect the world around her. She went back to school and earned her teaching degree.

At the time, she was also becoming an avid student of the martial arts. She credits Gerald Orange, her role model and sensei, or martial arts teacher, with being the catalyst that helped her realize she had the power to change the world.

"He believed in me, so I began to believe in me," Telsey said.

Telsey feels both sadness and contentment about the possibility that she may not return to teach.

"On one hand, I am tired of schlepping my equipment to class and ready to slow down a bit," Telsey said.

On the other hand, Telsey said she will miss interacting with students and seeing how she is making a difference in their lives.

"I like to think I have started something here," she said, smiling through the rising steam from her tea, "and that my students will continue it."

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