

Selim Center

for Lifelong Learning



Learning Post June/July 2026

A Message from the Director:

Since assuming the faculty director's role at the Selim Center, I have felt both a sense of deep respect for the legacy of five decades of continuous lifelong learning offerings that the Center has provided and real excitement to start working more closely with such dedicated, curious, and enthusiastic people. As the academic year comes to a close and the long days of summer arrive, I am more convinced than ever that our mission and the people that sustain it are sources of clarity and purpose in an ever more dynamic, uncertain world. While the challenges posed by new technologies, increasing costs, and a world that seems to require that we rethink every assumption that we hold make sustaining lifelong learning at St. Thomas a consuming project, they also make the lifelong learners of all ages who come together at the Selim Center a special community.

I am happy to report that "by the numbers," the Selim Center continues to offer ample evidence that lifelong learning is not only valued, but sustainable at St. Thomas. Thanks to your breadth of interests and to the broad array of talented scholars that the Twin Cities have to offer, we were able to offer **29** programs across the fall, spring, and winter sessions, with nearly **1100** individual enrollments in our series and single-session offerings. Those enrollments yielded the equivalent of **4,290** educational hours, an increase of more than 25% from last year and confirmation that our lifelong learning community likes to delve deep into questions that reward complex, multisession engagement.

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Beyond enrollments, your gifts, which are vital to our operations (the Selim Center takes no money from the University of St. Thomas general fund, relying solely on its endowments, direct giving, and program subscriptions for its operations) set a Tommie Give Day record with more than **\$12,000** raised to support our work in honor of the retirement of Susan Anderson-Benson, whose decades of contribution to the Center cannot be overstated. To those who attended, encouraged friends to come, made a financial contribution, or led a session or series for the Selim Center last year: **THANK YOU.**

Even more than the raw numbers, the quality of our programs --which is the core of our mission--remains robust. As all of our instructors will attest, that quality stems not only from the expertise of our educators, who we draw exclusively from those with extensive research and sustained intellectual or practical engagement with their topics, but also from our attendees. The desire to understand that you bring is palpable, expressed in the alertness of your attention and the questions you ask as well as the lively conversations during breaks and before and after sessions. The nearly **97%** satisfaction rate tells its own story, but it is amplified by the many anecdotes which confirm that lifelong learning is ultimately a human and personal connection. To share just a handful: I will long remember the incredulity--even amazement--that several of us shared after Alex Barrios so brilliantly showed us that mathematics is an evolving and fundamentally human pursuit; the electric sense of engagement in every corner of the auditorium as Shaherzad Ahmadi, visiting us while on sabbatical in order to give context to emerging events in the Straits of Hormuz, brought precision and clarity to complex circumstances even as they changed in real time; and the empathy shared across a deeply connected group of learners who have become friends as Melissa Lundquist explained how grieving and mourning not only reveal our pain but also make community possible. As one lifelong learner with broad experience across higher education, community education, and lifelong learning programs graciously shared with me after that session, "at the Selim Center, I don't feel like a part of an audience, but like a participant."

As we prepare for the new academic year, which will begin with our fall programming that launches on September 22nd, our priorities remain consistent with the 53 years of foundation upon which we build. The Selim Center seeks to promote the capacity of people of all ages and backgrounds to pursue both timely and timeless questions through engagement with experts and with one another or, put more simply, to live richer lives together by **making our brains happy.**

A Year of Lifelong Learning

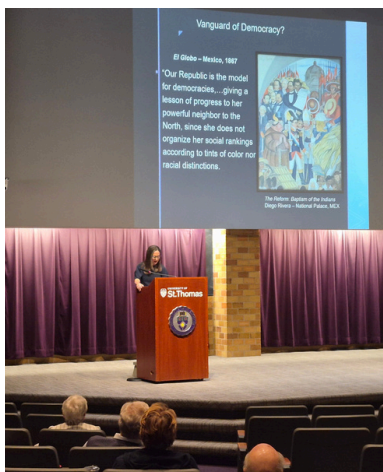


The Selim Center ran nearly 30 programs this last year! As always, the programs covered a wide variety of topics and areas of study, and were taught by experts in their fields. How many did you attend this year???

- Ending World War II: Problems, Possibilities, and Legacies
- Cold War Cadence: A Military Musician's Berlin Memoir
- Modern Greece and Italy: Parallel Histories
- A Field Guide to the Modern Economy: Tariffs, the Fed, and the Pandemic
- Postwar? Japanese & American Experiences After WWII
- Seeing Culture
- Rhapsodies
- Paradox Documentary Screening
- The Terrain of Relationships
- A Survey of the Old Testament
- Inequities in Urban Food Access
- The Critical Study of the New Testament
- Brain Science and Healthy Aging
- American Democracy at the Crossroads
- NATO, Putin, Trump
- The Making of Minneapolis
- Latin America: From the Maya to Maduro
- AI: Artificiality and Intelligence
- The American Revolution and the Fate of the World
- How to Think About Language
- Immigration and US Law
- Cathedrals of Learning: Math & Society
- The American Revolutionary War
- Music and the Art of Protest
- Echoes of the Revolution: Hemispheric, Indigenous, and Commemorative
- The Ecosystem Around Us
- How Curiosity Creates Community
- Understanding Grief & Community
- Iran: The Islamic Republic and the World in the 21st Century



Selim Center Snapshots: Fall 25/Spring 26



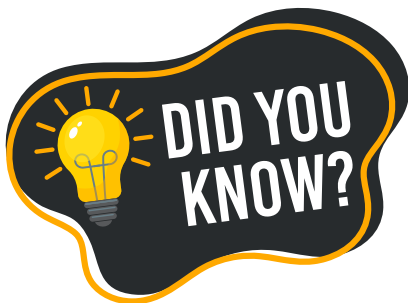


Thank You for Your Support!

We wanted to say thank you to our community of Selim Center Lifelong Learners for your continued support of our program over the last 50+ years! We truly couldn't do it without you! As we approach the end of our 2026 Spring programming season, here is a reminder of the top three ways you can help support the Selim Center:



1. **Registering for and attending Selim Center programs:** Whether you come to one, some, or all of our programs each semester, you are making a difference just by being a part of our Lifelong Learning programs.
2. **Spreading the word to friends and family:** The best advertising we get is from students like you! Bring a friend, tell a relative, like us on Facebook, etc.!
3. **Making a donation:** Registration fees only cover a portion of our yearly operating costs. Donations from our generous Lifelong Learners are critical to Selim Center programming. You can learn more about how to give by [clicking here to visit our donation site](#).



The Selim Center has a [Facebook page](#)! If you want to be the first to know about all that is happening here at the Center, make sure to follow us!



A Sneak Peak at Fall 2026

While the summer months have only just started, the Selim Center team is already hard at work planning for our Fall 2026 program season! It is still too early to give out all the details, but here is what we can tell you:

- Our first program day for Fall 2026 will be on **Tuesday, September 22nd**.
- We plan to open registration for the Fall by **August 1st**.
- While programs are still being finalized, here is a sample of some of the topics we are planning to run*
 - "Religion, Nation, and Empire in the Modern Middle East"
 - "Originalism: The History of a Legal Theory"
 - "Citizen Participation and Electoral Capture: The State of American Democracy"
 - "The Federal Reserve and You"
 - "Jobs: The Present and Possible Future of Work"
 - "Guns: An American History"
 - "Between Reconstructions: A National and Global History of Segregation"

**All programs are subject to change until registration is open*



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MAKE YOUR
BRAIN HAPPY



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