



STRAUS INSTITUTE

— FOR DISPUTE RESOLUTION —

FALL 2025 FACULTY BIOS



Joi Carr

Joi Carr, Professor of English and Film at Pepperdine University, Seaver College, serves as the Director of Film Studies, as an Academic Director for the Institute for Entertainment, Media, and Sports, and as the Creative Program Director of the Multicultural Theatre Project. Carr volunteers for the LA City Attorney's Office Dispute Resolution Program as a Community Mediator. Carr holds a Ph.D. in English with a concentration in American literature and film from Claremont Graduate University, an MA from Texas Tech University, an MA from Seaver College, Pepperdine University, a Master of Legal Studies, and an M.D.R. in Dispute Resolution from Caruso Law School, Pepperdine University. Carr's B.A. in Liberal Arts and her B.S. in Bible and Ministry are from Lubbock Christian University. Carr recently finished an appointment as a Visiting Professor/Visiting Scholar at Harvard Divinity School and is currently a Research Associate for the Moses Mesoamerican Archive and Research Project at Harvard University



Darryl Darden

Lieutenant Colonel Darden honorably served the United States Army and National Guard for 33 years. Since retirement, LTC Darden has performed over 500 family law and civil mediations in San Bernardino Superior Court. He has mediated over 100 employment cases while serving the Department of Fair Employment and Housing in downtown Los Angeles. As a County Superior Court Appointed Mediator, he has successfully settled over 200 small claims and limited and unlimited jurisdiction cases. LTC Darden is a formally trained Ombudsman.



David Dowling

David Dowling is co-owner of the California Family Mediation Center. David founded and directed (2009-2018) the Mediation Clinic and Criminal Justice Dispute Resolution Clinic at Chapman University's Fowler School of Law. In 2017, his clinics received the Ninth Circuit's Alternative Dispute Resolution Award. David has taught Mediation and Negotiation skills to law students, lawyers, judges, and professors around the world. He received his B.A. from Brigham Young University, his JD from Chapman University Law, and his MDR from the Straus Institute.



Jair Gevaerd

Jair Gevaerd is the founding partner at Gevaerd & Associates, a Brazilian boutique law firm specializing in Commercial Law. In addition to serving as a State Attorney to the State of Paraná (Brazil), Gevaerd is a domestic and international arbitrator, as well as a cross-cultural international commercial mediator. He is a professor at the Pontifical Catholic University of Paraná, a specialist in Development Law (IDOLO - Rome, Italy), and holds a Master of Laws and a Ph.D. degree in Corporate Law from the Paraná State Federal University Law School (Brazil).



Stacie Hausner

Stacie Feldman Hausner, Esq., is a full-time mediator with a background in litigation and a remarkable track record of resolving thousands of disputes across employment, real estate, personal injury, business, civil rights, and more. Known for her calm, empathetic, and persistent approach, she brings creative problem-solving and deep negotiation insight to each case. Stacie earned her LL.M. in Dispute Resolution from the Straus Institute, where she has taught since 2016, offering courses like Mediation Theory and Practice and Mediating the Litigated Case. In addition to mediating, she trains mediators for the U.S. District Court's Pro Bono program and presents widely on negotiation and settlement strategy. A Distinguished Fellow of the International Academy of Mediators, she has also served in leadership roles with CLA and LACBA. Counsels consistently commend her ability to resolve emotionally and legally complex matters with care, skill, and dedication, including thoughtful post-session follow-up when needed.



Lisa Herzog

Lisa Herzog is a licensed California attorney with over 27 years of professional legal experience in the fields of business and real property, employment, contracts and civil rights litigation. She is a full-time practitioner at the Pepperdine Graziadio Business School, Business Law Department, where she has taught for 17 years (starting as an adjunct and then becoming a full-time practitioner). Ms. Herzog is now also teaching Negotiation Theory and Practice (Law 1492) at the Pepperdine Caruso School of Law, Straus Institute beginning in the Spring of 2025. Prior to teaching full time, she was an active litigator. Ms. Herzog graduated from Pepperdine Caruso School of Law in 1997 and earned an M.A. in Labor and Industrial Relations (1987) and a B.A. in Communications and Psychology (1986) from Michigan State University.



Rehana Jamal

Rehana Jamal is a conflict resolution specialist and attorney focused on restorative practices. She has always been fascinated by the ways people communicate and navigate difficult conversations. She works with adults and youth to make this shift and to reimagine the systems we currently live in. Rehana holds an LL.M. in dispute resolution from the Straus Institute at Pepperdine Caruso School of Law, a J.D. from Cardozo School of Law, and is a member of the New York State Bar. Her B.A. is in psychology from Barnard College, Columbia University.



Robert Kaufman

Robert G. Kaufman is a political scientist specializing in American foreign policy, national security, international relations, and various aspects of American politics. Kaufman received his JD from Georgetown University Law School in Washington, D.C., and his BA, MA, M. Phil., and PhD from Columbia University in the city of New York. In May 2016, Kaufman received an LLM in dispute resolution from the Straus Institute at Pepperdine University Caruso School of Law. Kaufman is a former Bradley Scholar and current adjunct scholar at the Heritage Foundation. He has taught at Colgate University, the Naval War College, and the University of Vermont.



Lee Mendelson

Lee Mendelson, Esq. is a seasoned mediator with over 27 years of experience in civil litigation, including insurance coverage, personal injury, subrogation, workers' compensation, debtor/creditor disputes, and complex multi-party cases. As founder of the Mendelson Law Group, he led a 20+ member team and earned a reputation for resolving high-stakes disputes efficiently and effectively. His transition to full-time mediation was a natural evolution, driven by his long-standing passion for negotiation and early success in fostering resolution outside the courtroom. Known for his thorough preparation, calm presence, and practical mindset, Mendelson creates a collaborative environment where parties feel heard and empowered to settle.



Lawrence R. Mills

Lawrence R. Mills, Esq., brings to his ADR practice an accomplished and multi-faceted career of over 35 years as a lawyer specializing in litigation and business counseling, and over 25 years of experience as an arbitrator and mediator. Larry is well known in the ADR field, and, in addition to being a Fellow in the College of Commercial Arbitrators and a Distinguished Fellow in the International Academy of Mediators, he has served as Chair of the American Bar Association Section of Dispute Resolution. As a mediator, Larry is known for being engaged and analytical and for leading parties to effective resolution. As an arbitrator, Larry is known for his fairness and proven ability to manage and adjudicate complex disputes. He has mediated and arbitrated a wide variety of cases such as business and commercial contract disputes, real estate matters, professional liability disputes, and cases involving environmental issues and government entities.



Sarah Nissel

Sarah M. Nissel serves as the Director of the Faith and Family Mediation Clinic and Adjunct Clinical Professor of Law. Professor Nissel is the Executive Director of the Jewish Divorce Assistance Center of Los Angeles (JDAC), a nonprofit organization that provides pro-bono services to individuals and couples navigating dual civil and religious processes of divorce. Prior to joining JDAC, Professor Nissel worked in private practice in the areas of white-collar criminal defense and complex civil litigation at Bird, Marella, et al., a Los Angeles-based boutique litigation firm.



Sarah Park

Sarah Yoo Park teaches Legal Research and Writing at the Straus Institute. Before coming to Pepperdine Caruso Law School, Sarah practiced civil and intellectual property litigation in the U.S. and worked in trademarks in Korea's largest law firm. She has also worked in Christian publishing and admissions consulting. She holds a J.D. from Harvard Law School, Bachelor of Arts in Rhetoric from UC Berkeley, and a diploma in Divinity from the University of Cambridge. She loves meeting and mentoring students from the many different countries represented at the Straus Institute.



Shaphan Roberts

Shaphan Roberts currently serves as the Sr. Director of Strategic Development and Global Expansion at Pepperdine University, where he also acts as an Adjunct Professor. Prior to this, Mr. Roberts was instrumental in driving strategic expansions and orchestrating the Dispute Resolution Program (DRP) at the Los Angeles City Attorney's Office. He has a track record of pioneering collaborations, notably a 36-month pilot program between the Los Angeles City Attorney's Office and the Los Angeles Police Department, now known as the esteemed CPU Program. Currently, he provides nationwide counsel on police reform and community relations.



Birgit Sambeth

Birgit Sambeth, LL.M., is the immediate past President of the Swiss Bar Association (2021-2023). Attorney-at-law and Partner at Altenburger Ltd in Geneva, she co-heads the Dispute Resolution Team and specializes in dispute prevention and resolution: early case assessment, negotiation, mediation, litigation and arbitration, collaborative law, and dispute boards. Internationally Sworn and Accredited Mediator, she is a distinguished Member fellow of IAM and an accredited conciliator and mediator for ICSID. She was the external mediator for the WTO and is registered as mediator at the TAS-CAS Court of Arbitration for Sport. Birgit is an internationally recognized full-time Mediator who has handled more than 650 cases covering a very wide range of disputes, also the first ICSID Investor-State disputes. Birgit teaches commercial mediation at the MIDS-Graduate Institute of Geneva, as well as at various universities worldwide. Nominated "Best Mediator and Mediation Advocate in Switzerland" by Who's Who Legal, she has again been ranked as Lexology Index: Global Elite Thought Leader in Commercial Mediation in 2025.



David Talbot

David Talbot joined the World Bank Group as Ombudsman in September 2011 from the Coca-Cola Company and Coca-Cola Enterprises, Inc., where he served as Ombudsman since 2003 for over 65,000 employees. Mr. Talbot has 23 years of experience in conflict resolution as a mediator, trainer, program manager, adjunct professor, and ombudsman. Prior to his work at Coca-Cola, Mr. Talbot was Director of Community Mediation Services in Vancouver, Washington, and for the California Academy of Mediation Professionals, in Los Angeles, California.