

Living/Learning Center Programs

The University of Vermont

<http://www.uvm.edu/lcenter/>

Martial Arts House

Overview:

The direct translation of Kung Fu from the Chinese language is to make something beautiful through hard work and determination. In the martial arts house, not only will we continue to train and learn about different martial arts, but also we will strive to do our best in whatever tasks we may choose to undertake. Whether you are a black belt in Karate, or just enjoy watching kung fu movies, you are encouraged to join. We hope to incorporate seminars about different martial art styles to give program participants some hands-on experience in these different styles of self-defense, while also promoting physical fitness and well-being. We hope to host a variety of different activities to acquaint ourselves with the history, philosophy, culture, and spiritual beliefs relating to the martial arts styles we learn. We plan on inviting teachers and advanced students from surrounding schools to come and hold workshops for self-defense, fitness exercises, and/or discussions on their chosen style of martial art. Many of these philosophies, exercises, and self-defense techniques apply to everyday life and by incorporating them into our program. We hope to instill some of these qualities into the participants and learn more about them ourselves.

Learning Objective 1

Martial arts are not only a way to overcome physical obstacles, but to connect with the culture associated with them and learn more about how to succeed in everyday life. There is a large array of various types and styles of martial arts belonging to different cultures from around the globe. Each culture adds its own history, philosophy and life lessons to the art. Members will expand their knowledge of the different philosophies and histories behind different styles of martial arts from around the world.

Action Steps:

- Invite a qualified martial arts expert with extensive knowledge of the cultural and spiritual background of their particular art to hold discussions/workshops on the history/philosophy/spirituality on their respective styles.
- Invite a religion or philosophy teacher such as professor Mai and have him talk about Asian religions and how they are interwoven into the philosophies and beliefs of certain martial arts.
- Read traditional/philosophical books/passages pertaining to the martial arts such as *The Art of War* and *I Ching*.
- Each member will research one culture and how martial arts are used in that culture. We will all get together and discuss our findings afterwards.

Learning Objective 2

To examine and discuss the similarities and differences between the use of martial arts in reality and in the media. Martial arts movies in the western world can often sensationalize what effective martial arts really are. We will compare and contrast the differences between the martial arts displayed in the media from areas across the globe. We will also discuss the historical and philosophical aspects and references displayed in the media.

Action Steps:

- Members will read a book such as *American Shaolin*, by Matthew Polly and hold a discussion on the material afterwards on how the uses of martial arts are portrayed in the book.
- The house will hold occasional movie nights for movies or television shows that have a focus on martial arts. After each showing members will discuss the practical applications of moves seen in the films, and also discuss cultural and historical backgrounds of the movies. For example, we may watch the popular anime series *Dragonball* which is a Japanese cartoon that is loosely based off of the Chinese folk legend “*Journey To The West*” Opportunities to collaborate with different suites like Chinese House and Japanese House will be taken advantage of during these showings.
- Acrobatics like beautifully executed flying and spinning kicks are often used in popular martial arts films, although they are wonderful to look at and require a great level of fitness and strength, may not be the most useful way of protecting yourself. Members will compare the types of moves used in the media with the more realistic self-defense moves displayed by someone with practical martial arts knowledge.

Learning Objective 3

Each member will show physical improvement in some aspect of martial arts. This will be achieved by setting a personal goal at the beginning of the semester and by demonstrating the completion of the goal/improvement to the group. This may include any improvements or advancements that pertain to the martial arts, such as flexibility, strength, or stamina.

Action Steps:

- Members will set a personal goal at the beginning of the year and work towards completing that objective. At the end of the year, our group will get together and display their improvements to the rest of the group members.
- Invite martial arts instructors from the community such as Sensei Pincus or Sifu Arthur Makaris to come and hold fitness/self defense workshops.
- Group members are expected to attend training sessions held by the PDs of the group.
- Group members are expected to continue stretching/training during free time.
- Promote the importance of self-defense to the community by holding various seminars.

Community Service

As avid martial artists we understand the importance of fitness in peoples' everyday lives, this is why we would like to conduct not only martial arts but also fitness activities with kids in the community. For example going to surrounding schools like the Edmund's Middle School and Elementary School, and teaching children a little bit about martial arts philosophy and some basic self defense would be a possibility. Also we plan to team with youth groups like the King street Youth Center and help with any programs they may be putting on, while also leading an afterschool martial arts activity or fitness activity. Among other possible activities, we would like to help maintain hiking trails, this might not seem in anyway related to the martial arts but in fact it is intimately related. Hiking not only strengthens the legs and increases stamina. It also allows you to become more connected with nature, which is a common goal in many philosophies pertaining to martial arts.

Interaction with other programs

There is an enormous wealth of possibilities for collaboration. We could collaborate with the interpreting film house to watch relevant movies; we could add more groups based on the movies we watch, for example we could watch Star Wars with the Sci Fi Suite, etc. Reading and discussing books with the literary appreciation suites would help bring different perspectives to different types of literature. If we watch a Star Wars movie, we could add collaboration from the sci-fi house, and another possible activity is weapon boffing with the sci-fi suite. Boffing is more like a game of tag than an actual fighting style, but it's a great team building activity, thus helps people get to know each other; it also requires nice weather, which is why the beginning of the year is probably the best time to do it. Since martial arts have a place in many different cultures from around the world, collaboration of activities with different suites from the global village is also a possibility.