

Welcome to our self-defense seminar, working title Mutual Aid Martial Arts (MAMA)!

First, some background about me and my experience:

I did Tae Kwon Do from age 5-10. In my junior year of high school, I joined the wrestling team. In college, I took up TKD again and grew disappointed with the philosophy of the style. Some friends got me into MMA (or as we called it then, No-Holds-Barred, NHB) and I trained boxing, kickboxing, Muay Thai, jujutsu, judo and any other martial art I could get someone to teach me. After college, I continued my training and won two competition fights. After giving it up for grad school, I went back for one more fight (lost, but what're ya gonna do) and spent about two years training hard for the fight and after. My return to competition got me connected with Danzan Ryu Jujutsu and an unofficial Bujinkan Taijutsu instructor, when I began learning more of the combat side than the sport.

WHAT I EXPECT FROM EVERYONE:

- Bring comfortable clothing you can move in and don't mind getting dirty.
- Mask up. We may remove them for certain things if that becomes necessary, but let's have them.
- If you are symptomatic, stay home for your safety and ours. If it is at all possible, please get tested.
- Please let me know if there are any accommodations that you need. Be aware there is no self-defense training without contact, so if you have issues with people touching you, particularly around the neck, we can work around that but I will need to know. Feel free to DM me on Discord with any concerns.
- Safety. Yours, and your comrades. We will discuss the specifics of this in person, but let that be the first thing you take into account for everything.

WHAT TO EXPECT:

Self-defense isn't just a series of techniques to stop an attack. It's a mindset wrapped up in awareness, specifically about yourself, the world around you, and how the two interact (Dialectical Materialist Jutsu). With that in mind, we will discuss situational awareness tips. We also will discuss the basic goal of all self-defense: survival. While that seems obvious, that one word will govern how we approach each move, giving us the how, why and what we deploy against our attackers.

I am assuming everyone is starting from zero, so if you have some experience in martial arts or street fighting, please be patient. I also may call on you to brainstorm and assess the sessions, so be ready for that :)

In addition to being a wonderland, your body is a weapon. We will briefly discuss what those weapons are and how to apply them. This will not make you ready to use the weapons, but it will start you thinking creatively about how to defend yourself.

Basic philosophy: All martial arts differentiate themselves by a philosophy. The human body moves in only so many ways, how we train them is determined by social and material factors: how do other people fight, how does my body move, what kind of terrain am I on, etc. For example, if you train to fight on a battlefield wearing armor, you won't waste time keeping your hands to your face for defense, you're wearing a helmet. Bujinkan consists of nine schools, one of which utilizes enormous weapons like war hammers and such, so they train their kamae (positions) with dramatic lunges meant to drive those weapons forward.

As we will be training for survival, our philosophy will go as follows:

Can't see, can't fight
Can't breathe, can't fight
Can't walk, can't fight

Everything we learn will be to maximize our effectiveness at creating those three material conditions in our opponent, and minimizing their ability to do so to us.

WHAT WE WILL ACTUALLY DO:

We have a lot to cover in just the basics, so it is likely we will not get to all of this on the first day. Whatever we don't cover Saturday will be saved for the next time, and so on going forward.

Balance and positioning: while my goal is not to make this a holistic exercise/fitness/martial arts class (won't be too fussed if it ends up that way), we will go over some physical concepts about how to position your body in a conflict situation. This will be effective in both striking and grappling, and the concepts will overlap even as there are some differences between them. We will cover B&P more heavily in the beginning, but truthfully this will be a major theme every session.

Tapping: we will practice the "tap-out." This will be for the benefit of the person practicing the move and being practiced on. These techniques can go from harmless to oh-god-stop in a very short window, and often you will not be able to say "stop." It's vitally important not to injure your comrade or be injured yourself, so if you take away nothing else from day one, take this.

Choke defense: we will go over the initial basics of what it feels like to be choked and how to stop it. We will NOT do what one of my instructors did, where we took turns being choked into unconsciousness. While not the worst idea to learn what it feels like to lose consciousness and make someone else lose it, I am not medically trained for that, and if I was, I am not willing to risk the brain damage.

Punch defense: we will begin the basic block-and-pass punch defense. This will consist of same-hand block and opposite-hand block with the goal of stepping to your opponent's side.

That will likely take the whole hour. As this will be the first day, we will all be feeling it out, so keep expectations (of me and also yourselves) flexible. Feel free to ask for any accommodation needed for physical/emotional/mental overwhelming. I've had to break off training sessions myself when things got too "real," it happens. We are after all, training on the edge of death and when that sinks in, even without prior trauma, it can be a lot.

As we go into this, I want to make it a regular thing, however I do not have the time to do this every day, which is ideally how often you will practice. Anyone at the session who can meet each other for mini-sessions, even shooting the breeze at home and saying "hey, want to practice same-hand-block-and-pass" is a good practice. Practicing in front of the mirror or with friends and significant others (SAFETY, SAFETY, SAFETY!!!!) is also good, as long as you remember SAFETY. I can't tell you what to do on your personal time, but I can tell you this won't sink into your reflexes unless you PRACTICE.