

Martial arts at Dalhousie

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become quite complicated, combining a fascinating array of both offensive and defensive moves. Brown and black belts can put on impressive displays. Some advanced katas are composed of 50 or 60 different moves.

Sparring is very limited, and strictly controlled. In Shotokan karate, most "fighting" is pre-arranged, and despite karate's violent reputation, hitting your opponent is prohibited. Free-sparring is only done by brown and black belts.

The class usually ends with a vigorous warm-down "to help develop your body physically," Tam says. Self-defence techniques are taught just before finishing.

Judging by the energy expended in one recent class, karate students are in excellent condition. The Dal Club also appears to be spirited, but without the aggressiveness that characterizes some non-university martial arts classes.

You don't have to be strong, or weigh 200 pounds

Advanced students wear crisp, white karate gis, but beginning students need only wear comfortable work-out clothes for the first few months. The average age of the students is probably around 22, and

women make up about 40 per cent of the class enrolment.

"A lot of women join for the self-defense aspect of the class," Tam says, "because karate is good for all sizes and all shapes. We teach you to use what you have. You don't have to be strong, or weigh 200 pounds. That's why we attract a lot of women, and that's why they stay right up to the senior ranks. We have a number of female black belts... I encourage women to join. I think they end up being surprised."

Importantly, the Dal club also sponsors a number of tournaments and training clinics, with club fees used to fly in such venerable karate masters as Tereyuki Okazaki, a 60-year old eighth-degree black belt.

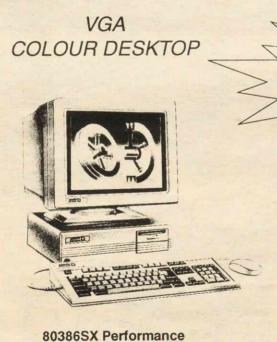
There really does seem to be something else at work within the confines of the karate dojo (training facility). Club members show respect for both the teachers and other students. At the end of each class, students recite five essential passages, which were handed down by the great karate master Gichin Funakoshi, the founder of Shotokan.

Funakoshi expected karate students to abide by these passages both in and out of the dojo, and so students recite: seek perfection of character; be faithful; endeavour; respect others; and refrain from violent behaviour before they leave the facility.

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Stan Miastowski Byte Magazine - June '91

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