

# Jitsu Canada

Newsletter  
June, 2012



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## Jitsu Canda: Summer School 2012

20th – 22nd July

Trent University, Peterborough, Ontario

### Instructors

Andy Dobie, 5th Dan (Canada)  
Raj Soren, 3rd Dan (UK)  
Chris Brooks, 3rd Dan (Canada)  
Mike Mallen, 3rd Dan (USA)

Training Fee: \$150

The evening social event is being hosted at Yourkevich Sensei's ranch on the outskirts of Peterborough. The evening will include BBQ, campfire and live music. Food and entertainment are included in the price. Camping both nights is available at the ranch for all participants, which will save on hotel costs. You will need your own camping equipment. Flush toilet available at the ranch, shower facilities at Trent.

Cost for the evening social including camping is \$40 per person. All proceeds to the Jitsu International 2013 fund. (Social without camping is \$25).

### Event Schedule

#### *Friday 20th July*

6.30pm to 9.30pm: Training Session  
10.00pm to midnight: Meet & greet social

#### *Saturday 21st July*

10.00am to 12.30pm: Training Session  
12.30pm to 2.00pm: Lunch  
2.00pm to 4.30pm: Training Session  
4.30pm to 5.00pm: Presentations  
7.00pm to 1.00am: Social Event

#### *Sunday 22nd July*

11.00am to 1.00pm: Training Session  
1.00pm to 1.30pm: Break  
1.30pm to 3.30pm: Training Session  
3.30pm to 4.00pm: Closing

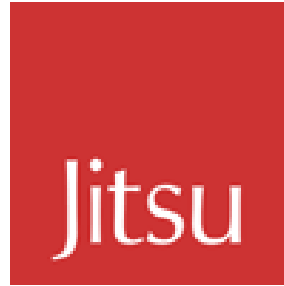
#### *Grading Examinations (Alternate Dojo)*

10.00am to 12.30pm: Candidates for 7th kyu to 5th kyu  
12.30pm to 4.00pm: Candidates for 4th kyu to 1st kyu

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## Other Upcoming Events

# *Jitsu International 2013*



July 2<sup>nd</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup>, 2013

Edinburgh, UK

Historic Capital City of Scotland

Training Venue: Edinburgh University Centre for Sport and Exercise

Accommodation: 'Edinburgh First' (Edinburgh student halls & catering company)

### **Outline Plan of Event**

- Tuesday 2nd July: Attendees arrive. Informal meet and greet social.
- Wednesday 3rd July: Seminars and workshops. Evening social activity.
- Thursday 4th July: Seminars and workshops. Evening social activity (possible Ghost walk in Edinburgh City).
- Friday 5th July: Rest and recuperation day. Options of pre-arranged Tourist activities.
- Saturday 6th July: Main mat training - various sessions led by representatives of each attending country.  
Formal Dinner / Awards / Speeches and Dance
- Sunday 7th July: Farewell "Sunday Brunch"

The Jitsu Canada contingent will then spend the following week touring the UK visiting some of the UK clubs.

**\* Start organizing club fundraising \***

**\* Start saving now\***

# Jiu Jitsu Seminars

Saturday 16th June, 2012

Peterborough, Ontario



## Throws And Take Downs

2.30pm - 4.30pm

Balance breaking and basic throwing techniques as defences against grabs and strikes.

## Joint Locking Techniques

12 noon to 2pm

Application of wrist and arm locking techniques for use as restraints, come along techniques, and defence.



## Instructors:

Paul Fox has taught and studied Chokushin Aikijujutsu for over 30 years and is a member of the Canadian Jiu Jitsu Council grading panel. Andy Dobie has over 25 years experience in Shorinjikan Jiu Jitsu. Open to all levels, the seminars will be tailored to the participants' experience and ability.

Cost \$25 per seminar or \$40 for both

Club fundraiser – proceeds to dojo floor repair

Contact paul001fox@gmail.com for information or to register.

## Would you trade 24 hours of driving for 9 hours of Jiu Jitsu?

~ Doug Mclean ~

We were somewhere around Kamloops on the edge of the desert when the excitement began to take hold. I remember saying something like “I feel about 4 hours from our location if we can keep this pace...”

A road trip is always a memorable journey, and before you begin one, there's some sort of nervous feeling that makes you forget about how long the drive is, how smelly your cohorts will be, and the bad food you'll eat along the way. Somehow Jo-

anna Yu Sensei convinced us to undertake this crazy adventure.

Within a few hours of her description of the event, we had two purples, a green and a yellow signed up for the car. The next day, emails were flying back and forth as the event organizers prepared for the shenanigans that would ensue once the Calgary blood arrived.

We left Calgary at 11:30am and arrived at Chris Olson Sensei and Lori O'Connell Olson's

condo at about 10:30pm. Joanna Yu Sensei and Stu Cooke Sensei were already staying at the house, so the sum of jiu jitsu ranks totaled 4 Dans and 4 Kyus.

The “West-Endionals” was a great training session. The first day consisted of 5 hours on the mats at the Pacific Wave Jiu Jitsu. There were 6 Dans teaching to roughly 20 Kyu’s. I’ve never had the pleasure of being trained by so many Dans at once. It was also an awesome experience to train with Fairweather Sensei and Eugene Sensei’s students. It felt like being at home – but in some other dimension.

I really loved Chris Brooks Sensei’s treatment of Judo and its application within our style. We had a lot of fun playing with De Ashi Harai and Sasae Tsurikomi Ashi; these are definitely throws that I need to practice, but they look so good when your opponent finds that their feet aren’t where they left them.

On Friday, the class was a bit smaller as Chris Brooks Sensei and Alex Fairweather Sensei had other engagements. We started the warm-up with an un-orthodox Shorinji Kan game. We played ‘dojo hockey;’ Lori O’Connell Olson explains this one on her blog. It was an epic game: Calgary vs. Vancouver – but I’m good-natured, so I won’t say who won.

Eventually, the day got serious. Joanna Yu Sensei, Chris Olson Sensei, Kevin Eugene Sensei and Stu Cooke Sensei broke the 4 hour day up into chunks and then did an amazing job of gluing all of

those pieces together into a beautiful mosaic of pain. When the day came to a close, we were exhausted. The car ride, the jiu jitsu, and the excitement – it was all quite a lot... but was not to be outdone. Immediately, we got in our rental car and drove back to Calgary (with a brief stop-over at my parent’s house in Abbotsford for dinner).

We arrived home at 6:00am – just in time for Dani to go to work.

I’d like to thank everyone for their hospitality, flexibility, and the powers of persuasion that made this event possible. There are so many “this could only have happened with” moments and people that I feel that I should list them.

This could only have happened with

- Joanna Yu Sensei challenging us to show our love for Jiu Jitsu and making it happen.
- Dani Chilcott, Braden Batch and Megan Porter being crazy enough to get in the car with me.
- Lori O’Connell Olson and Chris Olson Sensei giving us their floor to crash on (and promising us amnesty from their cats)
- Chris Brooks Sensei and Kevin Eugene Sensei accommodating our last minute change to the itinerary.
- Chris Brooks Sensei, Alex Fairweather Sensei, Kevin Eugene Sensei, Chris Olson Sensei, Joanna Yu Sensei and Stu Cooke Sensei.

Thank you so much!



# Practical wisdom of martial arts in the classroom

~ Chris Hassel ~

In March 2012 I attended a workshop from which I have stolen my title. It was an interesting confluence of my interests in martial arts and academia. I passed my purple grading in December 2011 and my Instructor Course in February 2012, which means that I am just in beginning to teach in the dojo, but I also recently started to teach at a university level as well. I had never really thought about the complementary aspects of teaching in these two environments, and the speaker (Dr Solveiga Armosakaite) brought up a lot of interesting points. I won't go through the whole seminar, but I will focus on a few aspects which I found particularly interesting.

## What academics can learn from martial arts

### *Delineation of space*

The speaker was very much of the opinion that there needs to be a distinction between the space in which students are learning and the “other space” outside of the classroom. In martial arts we are acutely aware of the need to take our training seriously and to prepare ourselves mentally and physically for training. A part of this is the ritual of the rei and mokuso, as well as the “white pyjamas” that we train in. The speaker explained that she tries



to encourage students to adopt similar techniques, taking a quiet moment to compose themselves and reflect on the previous class before beginning to teach.



### *Analogies from the physical*

There is an interesting psychological phenomenon known as the “Dunning-Kruger effect” where incompetent people are so incompetent that they are unable to recognise their own incompetence. We reach university with a fundamental knowledge of the tools needed to complete university work (be it reading, writing or arithmetic), and we consider ourselves capable of, for example, writing essays. One look at an undergraduate essay shows that they substantially overestimate themselves... The speaker illustrated this concept by asking who in the class could throw a punch. When a student rose and tried to punch her, it was almost always a lazy, telegraphed haymaker which she could easily block or deflect. She points out that while we all think we can punch, our own assessment of a “good punch” is substantially lower than it should be. She highlighted the need for good body structure and form, a precision of striking, economy of motion, and commitment of bodyweight to the strike. Similarly, she pointed out that essays should

have solid structure, a precise point that is being made, brevity where possible, and a body of literature to back up the central argument.

### *Requirements of mastery*

The degree of mastery of a subject is a function of how many times it is practised and the range of teachers from whom a student has learnt. This is as true in martial arts as it is in academia. As Bruce Lee famously said: “I fear not the man who has practiced 10,000 kicks once, but I fear the man who has practiced one kick 10,000 times”. This idea of frequent practice is ingrained in our dojo lives, but teaching in universities tends to involve a broad, yet shallow experience (how many readers have a major in biochemistry and a minor in French Romantic poetry?). The speaker emphasised repetition of practical elements during her teaching and this is no less important in academia.



### **What martial arts can learn from academia**

I was slightly disappointed that the speaker did not turn the topic around to ask what martial arts could learn from teaching theory, but I have included some of my thoughts here:

#### *Sensei isn't always right*

Jitsu Canada dojo tend to be relatively relaxed compared to other styles. There is a tolerance and even, depending on the instructor, an

encouragement of discussion between students and the Sensei, even when questions and comments are critical of a particular technique or philosophy. This is not tolerated in other styles where students are there to learn a series of techniques that are set in stone. Indeed, in some styles there is no talking whatsoever. Whether this stems from the negligible English language skills of the first Japanese Sensei to teach in North America or not is unclear, but it may not be the most effective pedagogical form in all cases. Academic environments, on the other hand, attempt to teach students not only the ability to perform certain tasks with a high degree of skill, but also (and most importantly) to think critically about arguments and skills in order to improve upon them. Where teaching in martial arts sometimes involves the transmission of information that is assumed to be complete (a rigid “style”), academia realises that all knowledge is imperfect and seeks to refine and expand upon the current state. Perhaps one group of martial arts that has embraced this idea is the sport styles, where the competitive element leads to a desire to find an “edge” against opponents and, therefore, continuous development of theory and practice. The development and spread of “rubber guard” techniques in Brazilian Jiu Jitsu is a great example of this development. (Illustrated on the next page.)

#### *Lesson planning*

The theory of planning an academic course follows a standard (and slightly idealised) progression, illustrated on the next page (with an example from one aspect of the Jitsu Canada syllabus).

The instructor decides what the outcomes of the course are going to be, then defines a method of assessment by which the students can demonstrate their ability to achieve those aims. The curriculum and lesson plans are the last part of the puzzle, designed to ensure that the students are able to pass the test. The trouble is that what usually happens is the instructor begins by designing a curriculum based on the teaching of a set of techniques or prin-

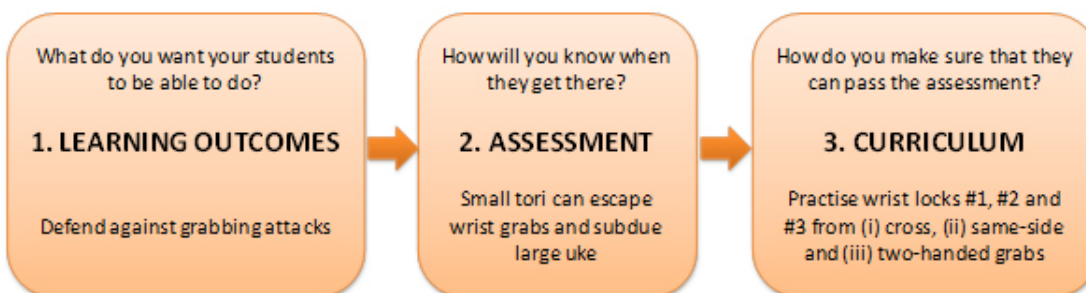


“Rubber guard” is a non-traditional but increasingly popular aspect of Brazilian Jiu Jitsu. This diagram shows some of the theory behind the technique (by user Jdcollins13 on Wikimedia Commons).

principles (Step 3), designs an assessment to ensure that the students have learnt (Step 2), and the ultimate outcomes are neglected or assumed to be merely the teaching of the techniques. This means that the curriculum lacks cohesion and a sense of purpose. Martial arts and academic courses must become more than just a list of techniques or ideas punctuated with assessment. An overarching motivation and goal must be laid out in order to provide a framework against which to structure the concepts. Sometimes this can be achieved simply by asking “why am I doing this?” For some styles the answer remains “because a samurai might attack me when I don’t have my katana to hand” while others have adapted to cater to modern self defense needs. In either case, it is the answer to the question “why?” that gives the basis for the generation of learning outcomes and a syllabus of techniques.

### Conclusion

Martial arts in the broadest sense have within them elements that can be extremely useful in the context of other pedagogical environments. Direct parallels exist between martial arts and purely intellectual pursuits, and there is much to be gained by acknowledging and embracing those similarities. While explicitly incorporating martial arts into a classroom may seem “gimmicky” and distract from the material being taught if not done skillfully, a more subtle awareness of concepts such as mental preparedness and the importance of repetitive practice can inform an instructor’s perspective on classroom teaching. Depending upon whether the martial art in question is more or less traditional or competitive, it may be to the benefit of both teaching environments to be open to a flow of ideas.



The development and construction of curricula has received a great deal of theoretical and practical attention in academia.

## Acme Traps and Hallways

~ Robin Coleman ~

For those of you who don't know me, I am a 7th kyu with the privilege of training at the Peterborough YMCA Jiu Jitsu club and have a background as a Shodan in Chitu Ryu Karate. This past Sunday, May 6, I attended the Nage No Kata course that was organised by Kenn Gibb Sensei and Evan Senkiw Sensei. This course was one of the few moments in my time as a martial art practitioner where I could visualise the true expanse of how much I don't know about the martial arts. I would like to share that experience as best I can.

For those of you who are not familiar with Kata or (more specifically) Nage No Kata; a Kata tells a story of an attacker (Uke) and a defender (Tori) through a series of scenarios. In the case of Nage No Kata there are 15 scenarios performed on both left and right side. Sounds fairly straight-forward – right? Not so much.

Gibb Sensei and Senkiw Sensei broke with the tradition of performing this kata from the point of view of Tori and instead focused on Uke. Uke has a role in kata as important as it is in training. In training, Uke uses varying degrees of resistance to challenge Tori into finding or making the right opportunity for a throw. In Kata, Uke behaves in a prescribed manner. In our course; Uke would first attack with reckless abandon. Then Uke would adjust each subsequent attack to prevent the nasty punishment that Tori delivered in the previous attacks. Tori's response to each attack would be to use Uke's adjustments against them. In our story, Uke is very much an ineffectual Wile-e-coyote. That said; who would care about the Roadrunner's story if he didn't have an Acme trap to spring? I digress. Throughout this experience, I became increasingly aware of my role as Uke, more in tune with the subtleties of timing and very sore from my 7th kyu break-falling. I enjoyed it immensely.

The experience reminded me of an analogy

Marc MacYoung (survivalist author and martial artist) uses to describe what it takes to become a master of the martial arts. -Borrowed from his website:

*I want you to think of a long hallway that has many, many doors in it.. Each door leads into another hallway that you can go down. Each hallway is a specific "aspect" that is directly related to the main one, but is not, I repeat not, the original hallway. These many aspects can be researched and learned. In fact, in order to have truly "mastered" the main hallway, one must have gone down many of these side hallways -- and learned their significance and their influence on the original. You do not learn these side hallways, by merely opening the door and looking down the hallway before moving onto the next one. They can take years to understand the significance of just one of these "aspects" and there are many hallways, over and above the main. It is by understanding, both the original hallway and the significance/influence of these side hallways that one "masters" an "art" ([www.nonnonsenseselfdefense.com](http://www.nonnonsenseselfdefense.com))*

Kata is one of the few places as a martial artist where you can explore a large number of aspects of Jiu Jitsu in great detail. You can, in the words of Dobie Sensei "Chase the perfect throw", explore the ceremony for opening and closing, play with Kuzushi, develop your timing and live up to the role of Uke. Each of these aspects and each of the aspects that I failed to notice or forgot to mention will take years to explore and decades to master; and yet Naga No Kata is just one corridor off of the main hallway of Jiu Jitsu.

After learning all of this in a 5 hour seminar, I am humbled by the learning experience ahead and just as eager to tackle it. I will see you in the corridors with the Acme traps.



# Peterborough Youth Club Report

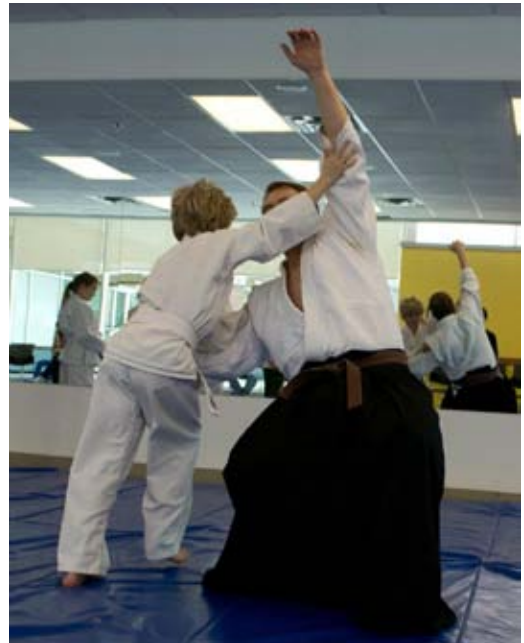
~ Gerry Taillon, Sensei ~

On January 8, 2012, one very anxious Sensei, three excited assistant instructors, and seven really nervous looking children opened the Peterborough YMCA Youth Jiu Jitsu Club. Three months later, one extremely proud Sensei (and the three excited assistant instructors) got to be present for the successful grading of eight students to Junior 7th kyu. It's been quite an interesting first four months for our club.

We started with quite a mix of students, from a very shy 8 year old to a very confident 12 year old judo orange belt. On day one, that shy 8 year old needed encouragement and help to push one of the assistant instructors over, while the 12 year old walked up and did a decent O Soto Gari to another one of the assistants. Their growth and development in the art of jiu jitsu in a relatively short time has been amazing to see and be involved in. From struggling with somersaults to doing some really nice ukemi (breakfalling), from tentative tackling to doing some pretty good looking throwing – including Tenchi Nage, from being quite timid to being much more confident, the students have worked hard and have come a long way.

I am the Club Instructor for the program, and I'm assisted by Mike McGuire, Andrew McNabb, and Maxwell Jacobs. Their efforts really help to make things run smoothly with the club. The one class where none of them were available was quite an eye opener on just how much they help out. Whether it's helping with the mats, retying belts, dealing with the occasional bumps and bruises, or watching part of the class while I teach the other, they make everything work better.

I've only been teaching children for a little over four months, so I'm still learning the ropes myself. Here are a few early thoughts on the matter. Teaching children jiu jitsu is quite different from teaching an adult class. I tend to teach using a lot of



geometric and mathematical terms, all of which are useless in the youth club. When I'm speaking I try to use vocabulary that the students can easily follow. All the analogies and pop culture references we like to use when we teach....scrap them. There's a limit on how much time you can spend speaking, after which you lose about half the class. Teaching children tends to be a bit more physical as saying, "turn your hips and step" might not be effective, but turning their hips for them and placing their foot where it needs to go and then saying, "perfect, that's where you want to be" might be what's needed. There's a lot more positive reinforcement required when teaching a children's class. They want to know they're doing something right and you can see the confidence build when you encourage them. They may have botched the throw, but did a nice job of taking balance. Point that out, then work on the rest.

Of course, keeping things fun is a big part of the class being successful. Races and randori are really popular. The two most popular games are what

the kids have called “British Turtle”, which is just the crawling version of “British Bulldog” Joanna Yu Sensei likes to use for warm-ups at courses, and the rodeo or “seven seconds” game. For that one (borrowed from the Gracies), the child gets to your back, gets over/under control around your neck and shoulders and puts in hooks. From there, they place their cheek against your shoulder (on the under-hooking side) and look away while you move side to side and spin to try and throw them off. Very tiring, but lots of fun. You can also chain it together with whatever newaza techniques you were teaching that day to make a really good and fun drill.

We’ve had awesome support from the Jitsu Canada community as well. As soon as she heard we were opening a youth club in Peterborough, Joanna Yu Sensei insisted on coming to teach. She visited in February and put on a great session, which included the previously mentioned Tenchi Nage. Andy Dobie Sensei came in at the beginning of March to run a session and to give some feedback on grading can-

didates. In early May, Jennifer Higgs Sensei, Evan Senkiw Sensei, and Chris Roy all visited the club to teach another really fun class. Yu Sensei, Higgs Sensei, and Senkiw Sensei were all also in Peterborough help out with our first grading.

We started with seven students on the mats. By the end of the first session we were up to eleven. All eleven returned and now we’re up to sixteen students. It’s been so much fun to see how much they’ve learned and how much they’ve grown and become more confident in a few short months. The students have done a great job of coming in, training hard, paying attention, and really committing to learning jiu jitsu.

One final note to all the parents: Thank you for the support and feedback you’ve provided to me and to the club, and for making the effort to make sure your children make it out to as many classes as possible.



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## There is No Spoon

~ Christopher Roy ~

I often think about jiu-jitsu; even when I'm not in class, on the days between classes, long weeks between terms, on the bus, or during injury leave. When I'm bored and don't have a dojo or uke, I still have them in my head. I've learned what it feels like to take balance and throw someone, or to not take enough balance. Even when I make attempts to throw in my imagination, my brain knows if it will work or not. I can actually feel an imaginary uke's weight slam into me and fail the throw. Even inside my own head I can fail. But how useful could this be? Am I wasting my time day dreaming about jiu-jitsu instead of living my life?

There was an interesting study I read about. They had a group of people spend twenty minutes a day practicing a song on piano for seven days. They also had another group do the same thing, but practicing only in their heads; twenty minutes a day for seven days. At the end of the week they evaluated the participants in the study and found the participants who only imagined playing the piano, to

be two thirds as good as the people who practiced with a real piano. Two thirds!

I read another article about a man who was sentenced to several years in solitary confinement. To prevent himself from going insane, he played imaginary chess against himself for the majority of his sentence. When he left prison, he became a world champion chess player.

Your imagination is a pretty powerful tool. It lets us practice, even when we can't practice. So if you miss classes, or are injured, or stuck on a long break from jiu-jitsu; you can still train.

If you like a little philosophy; as homework, I'd like you to explore the consequences of this thought beyond the scope of the dojo. Perhaps question the nature of perception and reality. Perhaps the meaning of perceiving within your imagination versus our perceived reality.

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## *Submit to the Newsletter!*

Without submissions from Jitsu Canada members, there would be no newsletter! Please consider writing an article and submitting it to your club instructor. Topics can relate to anything on the Martial Arts and be in any form you like.