

PE 147, Tai Chi Chuan

Spring 2011: FH 228, 3:30-5:10pm

Bryan Smith

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1 Introduction

The primary purpose of this course is for you to learn the 24 Posture (standardized/simplified) pattern of Tai Chi. This is the pattern almost all of the people are doing when you see them in TV commercials or movies that include scenes of the parks in China. I will not assume that you have any previous experience with Tai Chi but, for those of you who do, note that the majority of this pattern is based on the Yang style.

Please wear loose and comfortable clothes to class.

1.1 Styles

The history of Tai Chi is as complex as you would expect of something that has developed over at least a thousand years. There are not only competing stories about its genesis but there have also been numerous fragmentations as students decide to change what they have learned from their masters. At this time there are at least five major “styles” of Tai Chi: Chen, Yang, Wu, Sun, and Wu. Other important styles are Tsao Bao, Li, Heh, and Wudang.

Even though it is unclear how and when the martial precursor to Tai Chi originated, it is agreed that the origins of Tai Chi lie in the fundamental conceptualization of Yin and Yang made by the ancient Chinese and passed along to us through Taoism. As for historical documentation, Chen Style Tai Chi Chuan was probably the first to be recorded in formal documents in the mid 1600's. Fourteen generations later, Yang Lu Chan developed Yang Style Tai Chi Chuan from Chen Style. The pattern we are learning is mostly Yang style and was commissioned by the Chinese government in the 1950's. Although based on the Yang style, it is called “Simplified Tai Chi”. The postures of this pattern are common to all the major styles but are presented in a fashion that is designed to preserve and enhance health as opposed to developing martial skill.

1.2 Lineage of Traditional Yang Family Style

- Yang Lu Chan founded the Yang Style Tai Chi Chuan
- Yang Jian Hou was Yang Lu Chan's son and the 2nd generation exponent
- Yang Chen Fu was Yang Lu Chan's grandson and the 3rd generation exponent
- Li Ya Xuan was the fourth generation exponent
- Lin Mo Gen is the fifth generation exponent
- Qin Li Li (Lily) studied under and was declared a master by Lin Mo Gen
- I have been studying with Qin Li Li (Lily) since 1998 and have studied with Grandmaster Lin Mo Gen during visits to China.

1.3 Recommended Textbook

Tai Chi Chuan, 24 & 48 Postures with Martial Applications, Liang and Wu, YMAA Publications, © 1996.

1.4 Basic Information

You can find information pertinent to all of my classes (office hours, office location, etc.) at the link below and, once there, information specific to this class by clicking on the PE 147 link.

<http://math.ups.edu/~bryans/>

Location FH 228, 3:30-5:10pm Tue

1.4.1 Logistics

Professor Bryan Smith	879-3562	bryans[at]pugetsound.edu	Thompson Hall 390D
Office Hours	Mon	1:00-1:50pm	
	Tue	8:00-8:25am, 10:30-10:55am, 3:00-3:20pm	
	Wed	3:00-4:30pm	
	Thu	3:30-4:00pm	
Non-Exam Weeks Only	Thu	8:00-8:25am, 10:30-10:55am, 3:00-3:25pm	

1.5 Grading

In order to pass the course you must, by the end of the semester, be able to perform the entire 24 Posture pattern (which takes 5-10 minutes) from memory. This should occur for most of you about 2/3 of the way through the semester and will be evident to me from my observations during class. Anyone who misses more than three class periods or who does not seem to know the entire pattern will need to meet with me during Finals week to demonstrate their knowledge of the pattern.

1.6 First Assignment

Please send an email to me at bryans(at)pugetsound.edu with the following information.

- Have PE 147 or Tai Chi in the “Subject:” line and your name as the first line of the email.
- Please tell me why you are taking this class and what you hope to gain from it.

2 books

1. **Tai Chi Chuan, 24 & 48 Postures with Martial Applications**, Liang and Wu, YMAA Publications, © 1996.

One of the best books I’ve found for the 24 Posture pattern. There is an associated DVD as well. The book is under \$15.00 at Amazon.

2. **T’ai Chi Classics**, Waysun Liao, Shambhala Classics, © 1990

If you are interested in this sort of thing, Waysun Liao has other books worth reading. This book is also under \$15.00.

3. **The Dao of Taijiquan, Way to Rejuvenation**, Jou, Tai Chi Foundation, © 1998.

This one is also under \$15.00 at Amazon.

4. **Tao Te Ching**, various translations

This book is not about Tai Chi so much as it is the foundational book of the philosophical underpinnings of Taoism from which Tai Chi developed.