Self-defense training sparked by assaults

By Mario Saggio
Intern staff writer

Many OSU students are enrolling in self-defense classes to prepare themselves against the kind of assaults that have recently plagued the campus area.

Sue Green, program coordinator for the OSU Rape Education and Prevention Program, said students have filled two class sections on self-defense and confrontation training for women.

The classes are held 10 a.m.-noon on Saturdays until Nov. 10 and 7:30-9:30 p.m. on Tuesdays.

These classes were also included as part of Sexual Assault Awareness Week Oct. 12-19, which several groups at Ohio State held for the first time this year.

"In the past, we have offered a program throughout the quarter," Green said. "This is a more concentrated way to draw attention to the issue of violence on campus."

The courses try to educate students by debunking stereotypes and defining sexual assault, Green said.

"We try to educate about statistics and facts, not stereotypes," Green said. "Most sexual assaults are by acquaintances. Many preventive strategies are directed against strangers."

"In what is called confrontational, or assertive training, we teach actual physical techniques in order to give some options."

"We do not tell students that they have to do this or that. Rather, we give them information to give them different choices," Green said.

"Fighting back isn't an option if you don't know how," she said.

Similar courses are available for both men and women, and they are offered through the physical education department.

Three sections of Physical Education 172, or self-defense, were offered fall quarter, with one of the sections designated for women only.

Although the classes are always filled, more OSU students seem to be trying to take the course because of the recent violence on campus, said Mary Hums, a class instructor who has heard it mentioned as a concern.

"It is an underlying current of the class," Hums said. "The majority of students take it as a preventive, which is a good reason."

The physical education classes are devoted to physical tactics and related issues in self-defense, the law, sexual harassment, as well as child and sexual abuse, Hums said.

The classes also deal with the issue of stereotypes, she said.

"We try to dispel myths about assault in terms of a societal picture," Hums said.

"There are many common myths about rape and assault that are harmful. They engender an ethnocentric view, such as all rapes are committed by black men, which is stupid," she said.

Although the class is offered to men and women, Hums said, only two or three of the 25 students in each class are men.

"On the first day of class, some students see all the issues that we cover and they tend to perceive the class as only for women," Hums said.

The physical tactics covered in the class can be divided into three categories: hand strikes, log strikes and escapes, Hums said.

"We concentrate on working on weak points, not on physically overpowering someone," Hums added.

Martial arts classes have not seen such increased enrollment, some instructors said.

"Whereas martial arts take a lot of time to learn and master, self-defense is geared to things that you can learn and master in a short period of time," Hums said.

Karate is not geared towards self-defense, said Alan Downie, active member and former president of the OSU Karate Club.

Enrollment of new students in the karate club for fall quarter is approximately 35 students, which is normal for this time of year, Downie said.

The club is adapting to the recent violence on campus, he said.

"We usually teach common sense and precautionary measures, so we will include a little more self-defense and reinforce common sense," Downie said. "We won't make drastic changes but just make students more mentally aware."

Doug Cottrill, active member and former treasurer of the OSU Isshin Ryu Karate Club, said he had heard a comment recently from a new student that he was concerned with protecting himself and his girlfriend, something he had not noticed before.

Enrollment figures for the Isshin Ryu Karate Club are not unusually high for fall quarter, he said.

"Most get into it for other reasons," Cottrill said. "We don't promote fighting — so many don't come back — although we do spar."
USG event underscores the need for awareness

By Tiffany C. Miller
Lantern staff writer

Various organizations gathered on the Oval yesterday to provide crime prevention tips at the Undergraduate Student Government Safety Day.

The USG Safety Day was the beginning of a year-long emphasis on safety issues. Campus and Columbus organizations distributed educational materials and gave demonstrations on how to be safe on campus.

"I think the groups enlightened many students on the safety issues that face them," said Eric Roberts, community service and safety director for USG. "This was a great opportunity for us to offer education on crime prevention."

The OSU Karate Club received the attention of many students with self-defense demonstrations.

"We are showing students some of the different situations that could happen to them, and some possible ways to react," club president Angel Alexander said. "Our goal is to get students to ask questions about how they should act in a self-defense situation. If we can get them interested, we might be able to teach them something that may someday help them walk away from a dangerous situation."

Karate Club members gave advice on knife defense, and demonstrated body throwing techniques.

Representatives from the American Red Cross gave students information on CPR training, first aid, water safety, and AIDS issues.

"I am a firm believer that every person should learn how to do CPR and first aid," said Dave Decker, coordinator from the Red Cross. "It is very important that we all learn how to react in an emergency situation."

Other organizations offered basic tips for students walking on campus.

"Be aware of your surroundings at all times. Trust your instincts, and learn self-defense," said Julie Quirk, member of Women Against Rape.

Members of the Crimewatch Escort Service advocated not walking alone at night.

"We are here to make sure no one has to walk alone," said Jason Toombs, director of Crimewatch. "Students hear about attacks and other violence that happen to people who walk alone all the time, so we receive about 90 calls a night to escort students home."

Holly Kemmer, a freshman majoring in art education, said the various crime and safety resources on campus have been a big help in answering her questions about crime prevention.

"My first day on campus I witnessed a robbery," Kemmer said. "I'm really trying to be smart about safety. I'm from a small town and I have had to prepare myself to deal with a new environment that has a lot more crime."

Members of the Community Crime Patrol said students are more aware of crime and violence.

"Crime can happen to anyone in a variety of ways," patroller Sally Williams said. "No matter who you are or where you are, you can always get hurt."

Toombs said there is not necessarily more crime around the campus area, but students have become much more aware over the past year. In fact, a recent study done by the OSU Polimetrics Laboratory shows that 9.3 percent of students agree that crime, safety, and violence are the most important issues facing OSU today.

"A lot of the fear probably has to do with Stephanie Hummer's murder. We are constantly hearing stories about attacks and incidents at bars," Toombs said.

Freshman Mark Noble said students may sometimes not want to deal with the crime issue because it scares them.

"I haven't had a safety problem, but I know people who have," Noble said. "I think students are scared, but they don't want to admit it. A lot of people joke about it."

Karl Spaulding, a senior majoring in education, was at Safety Day offering tips to prevent another common campus crime problem: bike theft. Spaulding said students must properly lock bikes by putting a U-lock around the frame and the bike stand.

"Most importantly, always ride the cheapest, ugliest, nastiest bike you can find. Chances are, no one will want it, and if it is stolen, it is much cheaper to replace," Spaulding said.