



## **WELCOME GUIDE**

Fourteenth Edition, April 2019

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Information in this document is subject to change without notice. Complying with all applicable copyright laws is the responsibility of the user. No part of this document may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, for any purpose, without the express written permission of Academie Duello. If, however, your only means of access is electronic, permission to print one copy is hereby granted.

Academie Duello may have patents, patent applications, trademarks, copyrights, or other intellectual property rights covering subject matter in this document. Except as expressly provided in any written license agreement from the Academie Duello., the furnishing of this document does not give you any license to these patents, trademarks, copyrights or other intellectual property.

© 2019 Academie Duello. All rights reserved.

Other product and company names mentioned herein may be the trademark of their respective owners.

## **WELCOME TO ACADEMIE DUELLO**



Congratulations on becoming a member of one of North America's foremost schools of European Martial Arts! Academie Duello is devoted to reviving the martial arts and lifestyle of European dueling. We specialize in teaching the use of swords such as the rapier and longsword, knightly arts such as polearms and grappling, as well as the code of honour, gentry, and discipline that surrounds life by the sword.

Many resources are available to you as a student of the Academie, in addition to ongoing classes:

- [www.academieduello.com](http://www.academieduello.com) & [www.wmawiki.org](http://www.wmawiki.org) – a vast amount of regularly-updated information is offered on these sites including workshop, tournament & event announcements, terminology, our online store, media appearances, links, and many more enticing tidbits
- Private lessons – our instructors are available to sharpen your skills on your schedule, at our studio or a place that you choose

- Duello.tv – our online learning channel features thousands of hours of videos of most of our programs and is continually expanding
- The Academie Duello Facebook group – our way of connecting with our students. Here we send out school-wide announcements offer study materials for download and engage in witty discussions!

Thank you again for joining us. May your duelling career be long and healthy... for you.

## MEMBER BENEFITS

### The Facility

#### Floor space

The training floor at Academie Duello is available during business hours for training provided that the floor is not otherwise occupied by classes, private sessions, etc. Please be respectful if you are sharing the floor with a class.

#### Shared equipment storage

We have limited, complimentary space for storing your swords and masks at the studio. Please observe the following guidelines for storing your gear:

- storage is used at your own risk
- storage is for students actively taking classes
- equipment must be clearly identified with your **name**
- space is first-come, first-served
- scabbards, daggers, gloves, etc. must be attached to your weapon or inside your mask
- please respect other people's equipment and the rack by not forcing your weapons into the rack if there is no space available

Students going away for an extended period *must take their gear home*. Gear that has been left at the studio will be removed at our discretion.

## Personal cubbies

For a monthly fee one of the cubby spaces in our change-rooms can be yours for storing equipment, student materials, etc. Please speak to our Front Desk staff for details on renting cubby space.

## Lost and found

Items that are left in the studio outside of designated student storage areas may go into the Lost and Found. The Lost and Found bins are in the museum-facing cubbies by the women's change room. Items left at Academie Duello are done so at your own risk.

## Loaner Equipment

Loaner equipment is on a first-come, first-served basis and is limited in supply. Students are encouraged to obtain their own equipment at their earliest convenience.

Our loaner equipment includes:

- masks
- gorgets
- longswords
- sideswords
- epees
- quarterstaves
- bucklers
- daggers/knives

Note: the availability of loaner gear is not guaranteed.

## Open Floor

All members receive free access to our weekly Open Floor.

Open Floor runs on Fridays from 7 – 10 and is best described as free time: members are invited to come out and use the floor to practice slow work, spar, do solo practice, and to simply be social.

A Floor moderator is always present to answer questions, maintain safety, and generally manage the floor.

Please consult the Floor moderator if you have any questions or concerns or if you'd like help finding a drilling/sparring partner.

### **Library**

The library is a reference-only resource at Academie Duello and features a broad spectrum of books on swordplay. We carry novels where swords and swordplay feature prominently, books on weapons, armour and battles and copies of the manuals from which we derive our curriculum. Books may not leave the studio.

## **WESTERN MARTIAL ARTS**

In 1200 AD, the monks of the little pine monastery in China were teaching martial arts. At the same time, in Germany, the monks of the Wurzburg monastery were teaching the art of sword and buckler combat.

In 1400, in Japan, the Tenshin Shoden Katori Shinto school was founded. In Europe, Fiore di Liberi, after a lifetime of teaching his warrior's art, sat down and wrote out his method in the famous "Flower of Battle."

In the 1600's, Japanese swordsmanship reached its peak. Musashi Miyamoto and Munenori Yagyu wrote their manuals, and the great schools of Japanese swordsmanship flourished. In Europe, at the same time, the art of swordsmanship reached its peak in the final development of the rapier and its methods. The great Ridolfo Capoferro and Salvator Fabris wrote down their methods in the *Gran Simulacro* and *Lo Schermo*, respectively.

From this point forward both Eastern and Western arts met with their own challenges. The Japanese arts were preserved through mysticism and philosophy, whereas the European arts were abandoned to fashion, sport, and pistol.

In any culture that faces war, there will be specialists that seek to understand the art of war, to excel at it, and to teach its ways. Due to the political changes at this time in Japan, its medieval arts were remembered and taught up to the modern day. The European arts were forgotten by all but a few dedicated scholars of the sword.

Today, thanks to the efforts of these scholars, we can explore the martial heritage of Europe with the same keen interest we do the Asian arts.

The written history of European arts starts in the 1200's. A manual kept in the Tower of London Library, known only by its reference number of "I.33" details a method of fighting involving a one-handed sword and a small buckler. The manual is lavishly illustrated and appears to depict Christian monks demonstrating the various techniques upon one another. Christian monasteries in Europe were much like the Buddhist monasteries in Asia. They provided a refuge for soldiers weary of war and looking for a more peaceful life. Early monasteries were also targets for looters. It's not much of a stretch to imagine that the monk's martial practice was not for pure enjoyment.

What we don't know about the I.33 manual is what it doesn't tell us. We know that it teaches a systematic method of swordplay. We don't know if it was intended for battlefield use. We don't know if it represents common methods of swordplay, or if it was a singularly rare instance. All we know is that one person in 1200 AD knew a system of swordplay with one of the many weapons used at the time, and had the time, resources, and motivation to write it down.

We do know that from this point on Europe had a long and established tradition of martial arts schools. This tradition ranged from the great German Federfechter and Marxbruder guilds, the English Masters of Defence, and the French Royal Academies, to the myriad and renowned schools of the Italian and Spanish masters. Surviving manuals of the times, once rare artefacts in private collections, museums, and national libraries, are now available on the Internet, and many have modern English translations available.

Though the European martial arts have not had the same continuity of study as those of the Orient, now is a time of resurrection both through recreation of the art exactly as it was done hundreds of years ago and as a modern and evolving martial art. Schools of Western Martial Arts are by no means as common as those of Eastern arts but there are new schools forming every year: The School of European

Swordsmanship of Helsinki in Finland, The Chicago Swordplay Guild in Chicago, the Association of European Medieval Martial Arts in Toronto our own school here in Vancouver and many others in the major centres of Europe and North America.

## **TENETS & CONDUCT**

Academie Duello is founded on two tenets.

### **Proper Arms**

We always use the most accurate simulators of the weapons and armour for the martial arts we teach and practice.

Superior technique will only come from working with the properties of your weapon and your body. Thus, by maintaining the most accurate environment to what you would face in a real duel, we create an environment where the best techniques will always come to the fore, whether these are researched or found through experimentation.

### **Proper Respect**

Respect the deadliness of the weapons and the deadliness of an opponent using proper technique. Though we train with blunted blades and do body-to-body work at slow speeds, it is important to always maintain awareness that the real weapon is sharp and contact with your opponent potentially deadly. To become a great practitioner of the arts we teach you must approach each engagement with that intention.

### **Concerning Your Future**

Academie Duello can provide you with many things. As a practitioner of a martial art you may find balance, peace, and the meditative qualities that come from a greater awareness of your own body and its extension through martial tools. Studying a martial art can be a

profound spiritual and metaphorical experience as it relates to your life. After years of practice many experience a greater ability to approach everything in their life from dating and marriage to conflict and creating safety.

The arts we teach are also excellent ways to develop everything from physical strength and endurance to poise, confidence, and quick wit. Yagyu Muneyoshi, a great swordmaster of Japan, said “Among those who control the world and protect the State there’s no one who doesn’t employ swordsmanship in his mind.”

Through the Academie you also have the opportunity to be a premier scholar in the discovery, research, and application of Western Martial Arts. Whether you pursue this art as a scholar, competitor, or dilettante, you will develop a greater ability to protect yourself both through your ability to use the tools of this art and through your heightened ability to comport yourself with confidence. We hope you find a place to explore and express all of your potential here.

## Academie Student Code of Conduct

*1. Be welcoming & respectful to everyone who trains here. Our school is a diverse and inclusive space.*

All people who can accept our values and code of conduct are welcome to train and learn here. People who cannot are welcome to go elsewhere to train.

*2. Be a good partner first.*

A training partner's main role is to do their best to facilitate the learning of their partner. They execute their role in an exercise to the best of their ability. They do not seek to break or "win" the drill. A good training partner also looks after their own safety as well as the safety of their partner.

*3. Be respectful to your partner - get permission to give feedback.*

Students working through a technique may have their own tools for learning. Avoid interjecting your own opinions without first getting permission to do so. Be respectful when you offer to give feedback and take "no" for an answer with grace.

*4. Control your weapon at all times.*

Any attack or other action you make should always be controlled to the best of your ability. Also, keep your point directed to the ground when not in guard and remember that some parts of a person's body are more sensitive to being struck than others (eg. fingers, armpit).

*5. Own your practice. Ask questions and seek help to make the Art fit you.*

The correct application of a technique is the replication of the principle(s) described by the technique. Alterations to how a

technique is performed are often necessary to apply the principles. This is both ok and appropriate - speak to your instructor if you need help.

*6. Keep the space and equipment in good order. Put your equipment away and keep it clean.*

This is our studio and our space. We all have a responsibility to look after it.

*7. Strike as if your partner was unarmoured.*

The purpose of protective equipment is to mitigate mistakes that could otherwise cause injury. The presence of protective equipment is never an excuse for uncontrolled and/or excessively-powered attacks.

*8. Respect everyone's right to work or train free of romantic advances.*

All students are here to practice swordplay and develop themselves in this Art. Everyone has the right to work and train here without concern for unsolicited sexual attention or advances.

*9. Bring up any and all concerns with your instructor.*

Whether it's a safety concern, a training concern, or something else, it's important to let your instructor, or someone else on our team, know so that it can be addressed as quickly as possible.

*10. Be aware of and conduct yourself in accordance with our policies.*

They can be found at:

<https://www.academieduello.com/courses/about-the-school/#Policy>

## **EQUIPMENT**

Although the Academie has a selection of equipment that can be used in training, we expect all of our members to begin acquiring their own gear as quickly as possible.

### **Uniform**

All students of the Academie must wear black pants and their Academie Duello T-shirt when attending classes and Academie events or when representing the Academie abroad.

### **Care of Equipment**

Through regular usage most equipment undergoes some easily-repairable wear and tear. Inspect all your weapons and armour before each use and conduct necessary care after each use.

#### **Swords and Daggers**

##### *Inspection*

Check the straightness of your blade by scoping it like a rifle. Hold the hilt up by your eye and stare down the length of the blade to the tip. A gentle curve in the blade in a single direction is optimal for its use as it predisposes the blade to a direction of flex on impact, reducing the hardness of your hits. However if there are two opposite curves in a blade in close proximity, known as an 'S' bend, the curve either needs to be corrected or the blade replaced. A mild 'S' bend will look like a curving of the blade in one direction and then a straightening or returning in the opposite.

Second; check the blade for burrs. With a gloved hand, run your fingers down the length of both edges. Any spots that catch your glove or visible nicks and gouges will need to be cared for before further usage.

Third; ensure that the blunt on the end of your blade is firmly in place and that the cap of the blunt is not torn or punctured in any way. Hold the handle and give a firm tug on the blunt with the other hand.

Last; check that the handle, pommel, and guard are firmly tightened and in place by testing the tightness and shaking each piece individually.

### *Care*

Periodically file out any nicks and burrs along the edge. Use a rust eraser or rust cleaning foam, gel, or wipe (available from most knife shops) to remove any rust or stain. After your blade has been fully cleared of rust and nicks, use a steel polish or protector to apply a final coat. Ensure that the tape holding your blunt in place is clean and not sticking up or cut in any way. It is always best when repairing tape to remove the original tape and blunt, clean the blade, then restore the blunt with a fresh coating of tape.

When taping a blunt in place, leave the top of the blunt exposed so it can be easily checked for the tip of the sword bursting through. We recommend using hockey tape.

### *Armour*

#### *Inspection*

Masks should be regularly checked for failure. A failed mask can be identified using an FIE mask tester, that tests the resistance of each gap in the mesh or less accurately by holding a mask up to the light and looking on the inside for particularly large gaps in the mesh. If you suspect a mask of failure, show it to an instructor before further use. Remember this is the piece of armour protecting your eyes and your brain: don't take any unnecessary chances.

Regularly check your gorget to ensure the buckles are firmly in place and that no rivets or welds have broken.

### *Care*

Your clothing and uniform should be regularly. Any fabric can break down gradually over time from repeated washings, so be on the lookout for any tears or separation of fibres as your garments age.

Masks and gorgets should be wiped down and kept dry after combat. Any tears in a mask's bib or loosening of fastenings on a mask or gorget should be immediately repaired.

## **THE WEAPONS OF THE ACADEMIE**

### **The Rapier**

The rapier, sword of the musketeer and renaissance noble, is the cornerstone of our Academie. Inspired by the writings of Ridolfo Capoferro in his 1610 treatise, and further developed through the influence of many European masters, along with modern knowledge and experience.

### **The Dagger and Unarmed**

Fiore Dei Liberi (14c Italian Master) said that the weapon he most feared to face was the dagger. Students of the Academie will become proficient in grappling, unarmed, and dagger combat as passed down to us through the teachings of the Italian school, starting with Fiore Dei Liberi and his treatise "The Flower of Battle".

### **The Sidesword**

A weapon of the cut and the thrust studied throughout the middle ages and renaissance (1400 – 1600). Students will achieve proficiency in the techniques as ascribed by Achille Marozzo with influence from other Italian masters both early and late including Fiore dei Liberi, and Antonio Manciolino.

### **The Longsword**

Students will gain proficiency in longsword combat both unarmoured and in full harness. The longsword is the second cornerstone of our

Academie and is built upon the study of the rapier for strategy and tempo, and grappling for movement and posture. Our curriculum is based on the research, study and application of the teachings of Fiore dei Liberi.

### **Pole weapons**

George Silver (a notable 16c Master of Defence from England) stated that he would choose a quarterstaff over any other weapon in a fight for his life. Our lineage for the quarterstaff and other pole weapons comes from the teachings of Fiore dei Liberi and the English teachings of masters such as Swetnam and Silver.

## **INTRODUCTION TO SPARRING**

### **RULES FOR SPARRING**

#### **The Grand Rules**

Common sense is always to be assumed and enforced where needed. No one incapable of common sense shall be permitted to spar. A demonstrated lack of common sense will be grounds for removal and/or restrictions on sparring.

There are certain rules that override all others. These are:

1. Do not be an idiot
2. Always assume the blade is sharp and needle-pointed
3. Depart the field only when satisfied

#### **Safety Foremost**

The highest concern at all times during any Academie Duello event or class is for the safety of all students and instructors. Conduct deemed dangerous or likely to cause injury by an instructor/official may result in expulsion from the class or event. Recklessness or lack of control will not be tolerated. It is not possible to stress strongly enough the importance of safety and respectful conduct towards all participants, spectators, and others involved in any martial arts event.

#### **Calling “Hold!”**

At any time during practice any instructor, student or bystander may call “Hold!” if they see any sign of danger.

Upon hearing a hold all active practitioners will raise their tips to the sky and exit measure until the issue has been addressed and they have been instructed by an instructor or official to resume.

Call a hold if there is a safety issue. Delays are preferable to injury.

## Sparring speeds

We have varying sparring speeds to allow students to focus on different elements of sparring and breed comfort in sparring. Speeds specify *upper limit*, not uniformity. Eg. fighting at speed 4 does not require you move constantly 4, just that you limit your *fastest movement* to 4.

1. As slow as you can go.

*Each technique can be practised and thought about as it is executed.*

2. Deliberately slow.

*A flowing speed that allows for thought and high mental presence.*

3. “Walking speed” - neither slow nor fast.

*Physical forces come into effect. Situations are more fluid and tactical, but combat is noticeably slower.*

4. Fast - smooth and controlled at your perfect form.

*Physical forces are in play. This is the lower end of ‘combat’ speed.*

5. Unlimited.

*There is no restriction on upper speed while still fencing with control.*

When working at speeds 1 to 4 be sure to calibrate with your partner to establish agreement. Calibrate to the slower partner.

**Sparring conventions**

Limited	Standard	Expanded (Freescholar and up)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Upper arms (above the elbow), torso, &amp; head as targets</li> <li>• Invalid targets do not “block” blows to valid targets</li> <li>• No grappling</li> <li>• No blade seizures</li> <li>• No strikes with hand (punches, etc)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whole body target</li> <li>• Standing grappling for max 5 seconds</li> <li>• No throws</li> <li>• No strikes with hand (punches, etc)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whole body target</li> <li>• Submission grappling (fight ends if a mask, gorget or other armour comes off)</li> <li>• Strikes as pushes (not impacts)</li> </ul>

**Off-hand weapons**

The rapier and sidesword as well as other weapons may be accompanied by an object held in the off-hand.

- Daggers are to comply with the rules for rapier. Non-flexible and flexible daggers may be used, but extreme caution must be exercised in thrusting. Daggers may not be thrown.
- Cloaks, though primarily used to protect the left hand and arm when it encounters the blade, throwing the cloak or entwining the blade were used in period and considered reasonable technique. Cuts to the covered hand and arm are considered parried but thrusts into the hand or arm are accepted as strikes.

- Bucklers/shields/targas must be sturdy and secure without sharp edges or points. If both fencers wish to allow buckler pushes and shield knocks, they must both give explicit consent to each other. Size will be limited to that appropriate for a civilian duel, but larger shields and targets may be used with the consent of both fencers. See Optional Rules below.
- Sticks and canes must be smooth and without points or sharp edges. If both fencers wish to allow a strike with the stick, they must of both give explicit consent to each other. Rigid hand, elbow and knee protection is strongly recommended. See Optional Rules below.

### **Strikes**

Unless agreed upon by the fencers beforehand, all bouts represent a duel-to-the-death fought by unarmoured opponents. The rules assume opponents are dressed in a thick jacket, leather gloves, and some light fabric over the legs. Swords are assumed to be sharp.

#### *Calling strikes*

At Academie Duello the honour of determining whether an attack has landed successfully or not is held in the hands of the fighters on the field.

A struck combatant must acknowledge a blow by loudly calling where it landed (e.g. "Good!" or "Arm!" or "Cut to Arm!"). If you have thrown an attack that you do not believe to be good, acknowledge that. Never allow someone to take an imprecise or poorly thrown hit. If a dispute arises over the validity of a blow or if you believe a blow has not been taken that should have been, ignore the pass. Judging the true validity of a strike can be difficult and isn't worth quibbling over.

### *A Decisive Hit or Ending a Bout*

A decisive hit is a hit on any part of the body that would have successfully disabled that part (i.e. a solid thrust or cut to the arm, head, body, groin, or leg.) Some people may be able to withstand and fight through any number of injuries, but the objective of the school is to encourage as clean a fight as possible.

If you believe that the strike would not have pierced clothing and still have enough force to leave a wound, it is as good as a miss. Grazes can be reasonably discounted. Cuts must be palpable, but not injuring.

### *Excessive Force*

Attacks must be delivered with enough impact to be felt while light enough to not injure. This does take time to develop and students are encouraged to fence at slower speeds while they develop their ability to control their weapons and bodies.

It is the responsibility of each fencer to use proper protective equipment.

Consistent incidents of excessive force should be reported to a senior instructor so that appropriate action can be taken.

### *Blade Grasps*

Grasping the blade with the hand (as opposed to open-handed parry or beating aside the blade) must be done with great control. A blade must be grasped at its midsection or *forte*. If a blade is grasped at the tip or slides in the hand when held it is counted as a strike.

Blade grasps are discouraged in general as it leads to sloppy fencing.

### *Forearm Contact and Seizure*

The forearm of your opponent up to the elbow may be contacted by your offhand in order to control their blade or push your opponent away. Further grappling is covered in the optional rules below.

### **Optional rules**

These rules are optional and may be used if both combatants agree to use them before the bout begins. See ‘Sparring Conventions’ above.

#### *Disarms*

Disarms must be conducted with care. If you are about to conduct a disarm that could cause real injury to your opponent stop just before execution of the move.

#### *Grappling*

Grappling will not be taken to the ground. The following are disallowed: hand and foot strikes (punching and kicking, etc.), lifts, and throws (as opposed to controlled take downs).

Note that, due to the potential for injury, holds may be called against grapplers. The call of “hold” is always to be respected, regardless of any prior agreement by the fencers.

#### *Buckler Punch/Pommel Strikes*

Any blunt weapon technique must be used with extreme caution. Damage to the mask or weapons of the opponent constitutes excessive force. If buckler punches are permitted, a blow to the face is decisive. Buckler punches are only to be performed with the flat/boss. Striking with the buckler edge is strictly prohibited.

### **Heavy weapons**

Because heavier weapons (eg. sideswords & longwords) have a higher potential to injure, control becomes more critical. Greater control of strikes is important, and fencers should recognize and acknowledge blows that are delivered “lighter” in order to prevent injury – it is done ultimately to protect you. This is particularly true of the thrust where it is good form to assume the blade offers an additional inch rather than require a stout poke with a stiff blade. If the attacker who lands a blow believes it would have landed lightly they may call it back.