

The Sword Conservatory

Independent Study (Knight Errant)

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Overview

The typical curriculum students have learned for other weapons were surveys of many different sources. They are intended to give students as broad a range of experience in as little amount of time as possible.

The Independent Study is the Student's chance to delve deeper into a weapon of their choosing. As such, the requirements for their Study are more in depth than the curriculums previously taught. Most students take 6 – 12 months to complete their Independent Study.

Weapon Selection

It is recommended that the student have 3 possibilities in mind and submit them to the instructor for approval. This will give the student options if they find one weapon lacking in sources or final interest. Options for weapons are as follows.

- Weapons that have already been studied, but with specific focus on a particular book/master, a particular version of the weapon, fighting style, or tradition.
 - Book/master examples include Talhoffer, Fiore, Wallerstein Codex.
 - Care should be taken to demonstrate the major differences between the chosen subject and other sources.
 - An example would be the I.33 Manuscript that is known for buckler strikes to the forearms.
- Weapons from Medieval Europe that have not been specifically covered.
 - Examples are Bill Hook, Montant, Spear and Shield, dueling shield, fencing gauntlet, and Hand and a Half Swords.
- When choosing a “style” or situational technique to focus on, apply this to a variety of weapons. For example:
 - Full-sword or half-sword techniques are applicable to 1-hand, 2-hand, and even daggers.
 - Offensive use of shields. For this, the shield would be what “wins” every combat drill. A variety of shields should be used such as buckler, heater, Viking, and kite.
 - Non-lethal techniques would apply to any weapon, even unarmed.
- Weapons that could have possibly made their way into the hands of a Medieval European.
 - Examples are Katana, and Scimitar.
 - Care should be taken to ensure that a Medieval European mindset is taken when creating the curriculum.
 - For example, the Katana would be fought differently by a samurai than a knight, mainly due to the difference in armor that each would have seen.

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Study Format

Studies will consist of a brief discussion on the history of the weapon, a list of all the basics (guards, attacks, grips, etc.) that can be done with the weapon, and a discussion of any new basics to explain any nuance needed.

History

- Should include
 - When was the weapon used
 - Where was the weapon used
 - Historical examples, if available
 - Historical works where the weapon is found, particularly fight books.
- A brief discussion on the student's reason for choosing the weapon can be added if desired (not required).

Basics

- Must include all previous basics that apply to the weapon.
- List any weapon-specific basis.
 - Examples include strapped guards used in sword and buckler and hooking techniques that are available to pole arms or when holding a sword full-sword.
 - Each new basic needs a brief description about the technique such that anyone reading would be able to perform the technique.

Combat Drills, Box Drill, Form, and/or Mini-Form

The bulk of your Independent Study consists of creating and demonstrating fighting techniques. There are a few options for this:

1. Combat Drills
 - a. Create a total of twenty-five (25) combat drills.**
 - b. These can be inventions of your own, adaptations of Combat Drills already studied, and/or “translations” of Combat Drills from historical sources.
 - c. When using historical sources, include a citation of the source.
 - d. Usually, your chosen weapon should win the Combat Drill.
 - e. However, it is also acceptable to create a Combat Drill that demonstrates how to “beat” your weapon, particularly if it is “big”. I.e. if your chosen weapon is a pole arm, show how someone can beat it with a dagger.
 - f. About half of the Combat Drills you create should be against weapons other than your chosen weapon. AKA “off-weapons”.

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2. Box Drill

- a. Create and demonstrate a circular Box Drill using your weapon.
- b. You may use the standard Box Drill for 1-handed/2-handed sword as your basis or create one from scratch.
- c. Adapting the standard Box Drill will count as three (3) Combat Drills.**
- d. If you create a Box Drill from scratch, it will count for at least five (5) Combat Drills, depending on how long/complicated it is.** For Example:
 - i. The “Bloody Drill” (dagger box drill) would count for five (5) Combat Drills, being very simple.
 - ii. The Sword-and-Buckler box drill demonstrates every guard in MS I.33 and the typical attack that it defends against. It would count for ten (10) Combat Drills.

3. Form

- a. A form is a choreographed fight which demonstrates the core ideas of the weapon, including many of the basics, and some of the techniques particular to the weapon.
 - i. It must include at least 40 total techniques (attacker + defender).
 - ii. Ideally, you will want a partner to help you create and demonstrate the form, but it is possible to demonstrate the form without a partner. You will need to demonstrate the attacker and defender size.
 - iii. Usually both the attacker and defender will be using the Independent Study weapon. See instructor to discuss if necessary.
- b. The biggest challenges with a Form are finding a partner who can help you consistently and memorizing the Form in order to demonstrate it.
- c. Creating a Form will count as fifteen (15) Combat Drills.**

4. Mini-Form

- a. Like a Form, but one-sided and relatively simple.
- b. You can think of it as a 1-sided Combat Drill that demonstrates a technique that's a little more complex than a Combat Drill.
- c. Figure that this consists of 4 – 8 moves.
- d. Examples:
 - i. Unhorsing a Knight (Pike)
 - ii. Winding Mini-Form (2-Handed Sword)
- e. Creating a Mini-Form will count as two (2) Combat Drills.**

