

Students stay fit by learning Israeli self-defense

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This semester, Tulane Hillel is offering free classes for students who want to learn Krav Maga, the official self-defense system of the Israeli Defense Forces.



Alli Garner, right, a junior from Boca Raton, Fla., learns a move from Louis Charron, a certified, level 3 commando Krav Maga instructor. Charron works for Close Combat and Fitness New Orleans. (Photo by Erica H. Taylor)

“The defense system is known for its focus on real-world situations, and it teaches students to instinctively respond to a wide variety of attacks,” says Hen Caspi, who organized the class.

Caspi, who received a degree from the Ben Gurion University of the Negev in 2011, is at Tulane this academic year as the first Israel Fellow directing Israel programs at [Tulane Hillel](#). She served in the Israeli Defense Forces for three years, and was an operations officer with the Israeli Air Force.

“I was initially exposed to practicing Krav Maga while I was in boot camp in the IDF. Most Israeli soldiers are familiar with Krav Maga and are trained in it while in

service,” Caspi explains.

“It's an amazing way to bring another aspect of Israel to New Orleans and for students to increase their self-confidence and get in shape in a fun, energetic way.”

In the Krav Maga classes, students – both male and female – learn an efficient way to defend themselves in common daily situations, Caspi says.

“It doesn't matter where you live; it's important to be aware of your surroundings,” says Alli Garner, a junior from Boca Raton, Fla., majoring in sociology with a double minor in psychology and Jewish studies.

After attending the introductory Krav Maga class, Garner says, “You learn to keep calm in a situation by being prepared for it. For me, it's my peace of mind.”

The classes will be held every Thursday at 7:30 p.m. at the Goldie and Morris Mintz Center for Jewish Life. The classes are open to all students but registration is required by contacting [Hen Caspi](#) or calling 504-866-7060.