

No Contracts. No Belts. No Kids.

Even before I founded the *Unbridled Martial Arts* school I used to say:

“Bellingham needs another martial arts school like it needs another Starbucks.”

That statement still holds true today. It's quite easy to start a school. It's time consuming and labor intensive to sustain one. There are many talented martial artists in Whatcom County qualified to teach martial arts. There are very few willing to sacrifice their personal time and energy to educate the community. Moreover, I have not encountered any with the vision to do what no other schools are doing or will do in the future. Ask yourself: Do any of these business establishments offer anything new to the martial arts community? Sad to say, a sizeable amount do more at fulfilling babysitting needs or granting the opportunity for people to brag that they have a colorful belt, compared to addressing physical fitness or modern-day, practical self-defense needs.

The following information point-blank defines *UMA*'s purposely crafted identity and discusses what continues to set us apart from all others. [Know this, we are unique in the venue of professional martial arts schools.](#) In a nutshell we are –“**The only non-commercial Mixed Martial Arts School in Whatcom County solely for teens & adults.**”

NON-COMMERCIAL: Our curriculum is not a [pre-packaged program](#) or [developed by an outside group](#). As a school owner I do not purchase other companies' trademarked programs such as “[Lean & Fit](#)” or “[Xtreme Martial Arts](#)” just to corner a certain market. All of our website and accompanying ads have been personally crafted and are not [mass-produced, generic media](#) sold by an outside martial arts [marketing company](#). I don't implement revenue-generating schemes such as a “Black Belt club.” I don't fabricate & charge for “specialized” job-training courses for careers in martial arts. I don't offer sample introductory classes, 2-week trials, special group rates, or any type of freebies to reel people in. We are not part of a commercial organization that we must answer to. Unlike some schools that compromise themselves by selling belts, we retain our integrity at all costs. There are no mandatory tests to pay for, or costly martial arts competitions you must perform at. Bottom-line, your dues sustain the school's operation and not a businessman's income. Unlike some commercial schools, *UMA* does not require your monthly tuition payments to be extracted by a third party billing company. Another commercial characteristic is a school “pro shop” and/or the requirement that you must purchase uniforms, patches, etc. through the school at a marked-up rate. (Conversely, our school does what no others do. We give you wholesale prices and the opportunity for you to use the school's membership account with some of the best supply chains in the market.) I don't call students at dinnertime wondering why they haven't been to class and I don't make confirmation calls to remind people to show up. If students want to train they'll be there. If a prospective student says they'll be in at class on a certain date, I believe them and I don't hound them prematurely.

MIXED: “Mixed” Martial Arts has become a mainstream catchall term for the practice of contemporary/ modern martial arts practice. In general, the objective of “Mixed” is to take what's most consistently effective, practical, and combat-proven from different arts and use it to create a well-rounded, competent martial artist. At *UMA*, we pride ourselves on the fact that members learn combative techniques and strategies that address all the ranges of realistic fighting; starting from the extension weaponry range, all the way to groundfighting range and everything in between. As far as art form or style, the combative systems that are taught are: Western Boxing, Muay Thai, kickboxing, street self-defense, Shamrock Submission Fighting, grappling, Judo, Brazilian Jujitsu, and Escrima (Filipino stick & knife fighting).

TEENS & ADULTS ONLY: No other school excludes children so that they can focus solely on teaching teens and adults. [This is unprecedented.](#) *UMA*'s 16-and-older policy greatly appeals to those who don't want young children underfoot during their workout. Or they simply don't want the progress of class slowed because young children have different needs. We don't have to censor or water down techniques for safety or maturity concerns.

Our latest advertisement touches base on these key points.

As you can see it illustrates that we do not have members with grandiose titles like "master." It delineates the simple fact that we want competency over imagery.

As you can see there are two pictures that have "buster" signs around them. This is not to knock any systems such as Tae kwon Do, Karate, or Kung fu. They all have immense value. It's just that those systems aren't us.

Most importantly, those are buster signs used to expose two obvious characteristics in the industry of martial arts that we do not uphold:



#1) The fixation on a coveted Black Belt. It is a general consensus that the black belt is indicative of expert fighting skills and knowledge, however, if the expert is adhering to impractical techniques for the sake of style, then the black belt has a lost significance. When someone begins with the sole reason to attain a black belt, they are perpetually preoccupied by a symbolic destination rather than focused on the day-in, day-out process of growing and improving.

There is a local [Tae Kwon Do school](#) with a prime example of a smug "master" status. The teacher states on the website "My goal is to have everyone earn a Black Belt." It doesn't read, "My goal is to have every student competent to defend themselves."

See what I mean?

Furthermore, there are lots of martial arts advertisements that wholeheartedly objectify earning a black belt. Like it's a status symbol, or the end-all, be-all to your training. You may know the ones I am talking about. They frequently have a prideful guy displaying a belt around his waist as if to declare, "Come to this academy and maybe one day, you too can be a champ and have a black belt like mine!"



At *UMA* we try to cultivate humility by not focusing on our rank status.

#2) You may see other local ads typifying *antiquated fighting forms*. (For a great visual example look at pg.3 from the July 2005 issue of [The Bellingham Weekly](#). PDF format 10.9MB)

Nothing wrong with Kung-Fu or embracing a classical art, but god forbid, if you every have to protect yourself I highly doubt you will find yourself in either the flamboyant positions pictured in that ad. `nuff said.

This just goes to clarify we want more substance and less "Matrix."

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