MMA class offers alternative exercise

Leah Cavalier
leah2cavalier@gmail.com

In the judo room of Bourgeois Hall, students gear up to learn and practice the basic techniques of mixed martial arts from an accomplished professional.

Aaron Phillips, the instructor of KNEA 210, Beginner Mixed Martial Arts, said he has been studying judo since he was 7 years old, but his favorite martial art is kickboxing. Phillips said he has even traveled to Thailand for kickboxing matches.

The MMA class is a mixture of judo, jujitsu and kickboxing. This is the second semester this specific form of the course is offered; it was developed from the self-defense course into a kickboxing course into the course it is today, according to Phillips.

“A lot of people don’t realize that they can do all these different types of martial arts,” Phillips said.

Phillips said the MMA course is an alternative form of exercise because students use muscles they wouldn't use in a routine workout without noticing — this can help people become more flexible, develop dexterity and lose weight.

Luke Pryor, a student in the course, said he is benefitting from the instruction. Pryor is a paramedic and said he has used the skills he developed in the class on the job to help patients.

“It’s making me aware of what people can do and what I can do,” Pryor said.

The course enrollment is at capacity, Phillips said, with 35 students enrolled. Of these 35 students, only five are female.

“It’s a little intimidating,” said Brook Broussard, one of the women in the course. “But it’s OK because I’m going to do my own thing anyway.”

Broussard said she gets a good workout every time she attends and jokingly added that she’s been sore for two months because of it.

Phillips will soon be opening his own gym, Headkicks, in Southern Plaza on Johnston Street. He said because of the interest from his former students, he will be offering a course at a special “Red Dot” rate for University of Louisiana at Lafayette students.