

# AUMNIBUS

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## A Short Lesson In Brazilian Jiu-jitsu

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I'm approached on campus at least once a week by someone who knows that I practice a martial art. Generally, the conversation starts with, "Hey, you're that guy who does the karate stuff, right?" The art that I dedicate my time to is called Brazilian Jiu-jitsu and is very different from most traditional styles of self-defense. The sport puts an emphasis on ground fighting rather than the utilization of punches and kicks. This means that

the practitioner will look to take any given fight to the ground and will work to 'submit' an opponent through joint locks or chokes. The hallmark of jiu-jitsu is efficiency, which has contributed to the art's growth. This same efficiency has been amplified through mixed martial arts and has created a sport that everyone can participate in – big or small, male or female.

The reasons for which Brazilian jiu-jitsu has become so popular are varied, but its functionality in mixed martial arts competition is at the forefront. When mixed martial arts rose to prominence in the early 1990s, jiu-jitsu dominated every facet of the sport. A Brazilian man named Royce Gracie was chosen to represent his family in the Ultimate Fighting Championship, not for his size or athleticism, but for his small stature. Royce weighed in at just 150 pounds and at one point conquered a sumo wrestler, Akebono, who fought at 514 pounds. Royce only lost two fights out of his 16-fight career. Royce's small frame and success inside of the fighting arena meant that change was coming to the world of fighting.

I'm a small guy – I weigh only 140 pounds myself. I would definitely argue that part of the appeal to this martial art to me is its ability to minimize the advantage weight gives an aggressor. It is much easier to get yourself knocked out while standing up than it is when both combatants are on the ground. Things



Professor Erin Reilly (front right) demonstrates a kick with her Intro to Martial Arts class.

*Courtesy of Dr. Reilly*

