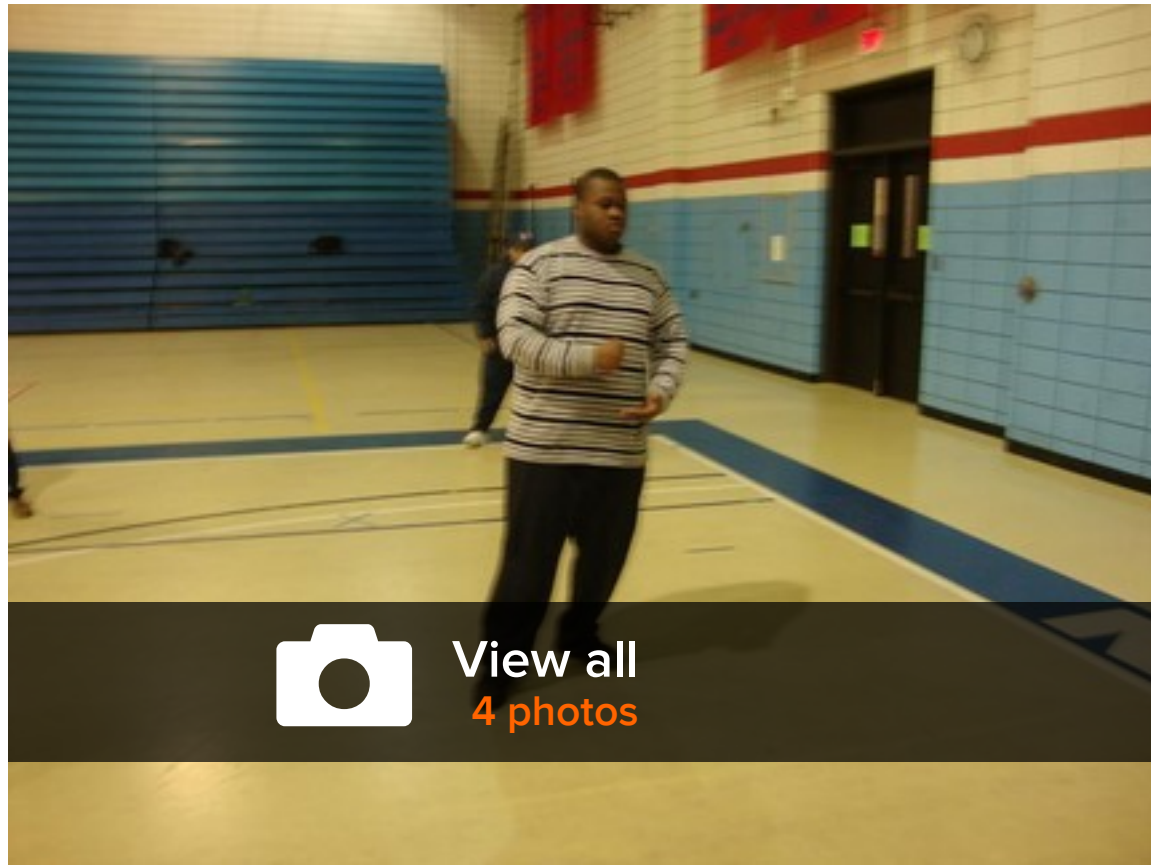


# College Life, Stress, and Taichi

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Jin Gang Dao Dui



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Mr. Richard Wilson demos Dan Bian (or Single Whip)

Colleges used to be called the Ivory Tower where intellectuals pursue ideas, concepts, theories and knowledge, which may or may not have a direct impact or immediate application for most people's day-to-day life. Most of the community colleges around the nation are little bit different in their mission though. Students at community colleges want

more than just to advance their knowledge and a degree; they also want to learn something practical, which can benefit them immediately. The NBC TV series *Community* is not a perfect portrait of a typical community college. It does reflect some features and values that a community college holds. Many of the community college students are not as young as an average four-year university student. A good percentage of the students work outside a school and some of them have a full-time job, a family, or both. Life can be a constant juggle for community college students. In the past couple of years, the economy has been in a recession, which adds another layer of stress to community college students. Fortunately, at St. [Louis Community College](#), all three major campuses (Florissant Valley, Forest Park, and Meramec) offer [Taichi](#) classes to help student cope with stress.

Shifu [Justin Meehan](#) pioneered the Taichi program at St. Louis Community College over 10 years ago. Currently, Shifu Meehan's student Kathy Hardy teaches at the Meramec campus and [Richard Wilson](#) teaches at Florissant Valley and Forest Park campuses.

Fifteen years ago, Richard Wilson started to learn Karate, an external style of martial art, and hurt his knees. However his passion for [martial arts](#) did not die with his knee injury. After researching, he came across Taichi. He learned the [Yang Style](#) for a short period of time before he switched to Hun Yuan Taichi, a derivative of [Chen Style Taichi](#). He studied from Shifu [Herb Parran](#), a student of Shifu Meehan. Richard has been practicing Taichi for twelve years and teaching Taichi for five years.

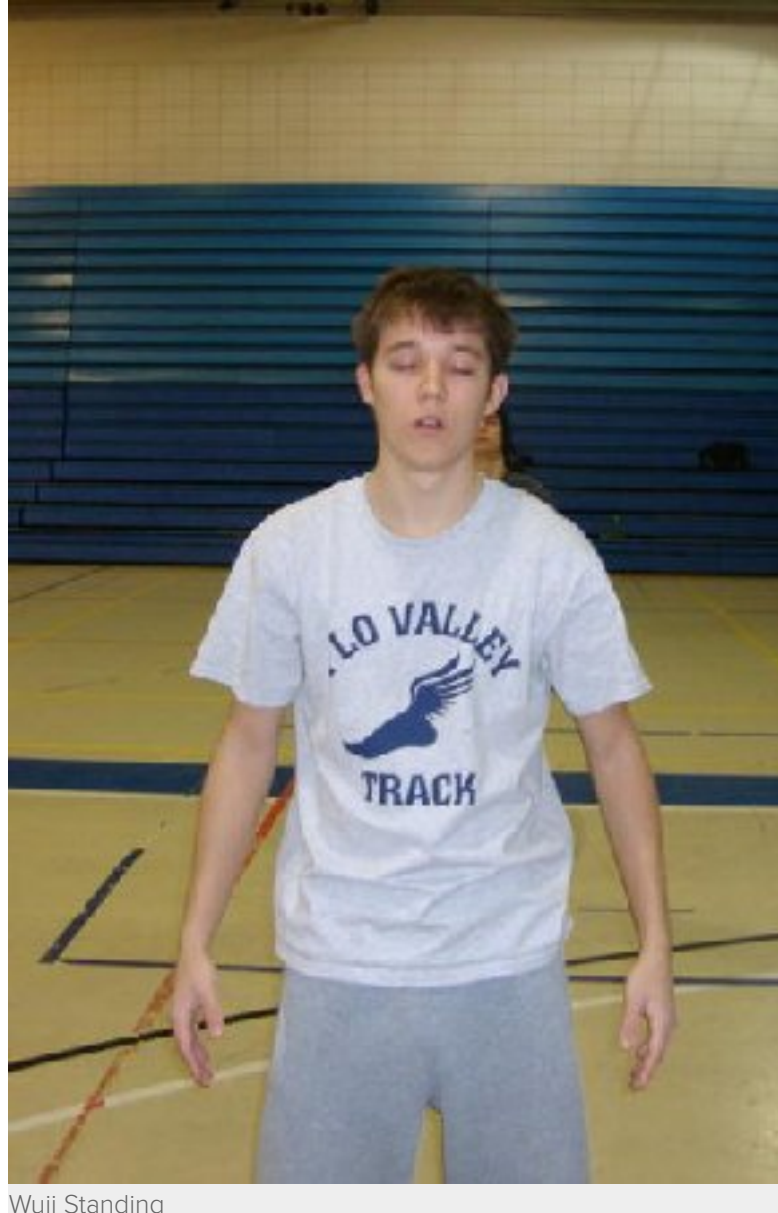


Taichi class at Florissant Valley Community College

To Richard, Taichi is not just a workout regimen. It is an attitude a practitioner cultivates toward oneself, others and nature. Mr. Wilson says that Taichi is very profound and offers multi-dimensional benefits to a practitioner. He tries to bring a balanced curriculum to his students so they can have a certain degree of appreciation for the richness of Taichi philosophy, in addition to its form.

The Taichi program at St. Louis Community College is a one-credit class. It is open to all students and non-students can audit it. Since the room has limited space, early registration is important. It is an 8-week program at the Florissant Valley and Forest Park campuses. The class is 90 minutes long and meets twice a week. Mr. Wilson structures his program with lectures and form practices. The lecture portion includes a brief Taichi History, an introduction of five Taichi Family styles, Five Elements of nature and body, body anatomy and physiology. He uses [Tai Chi Chuan for Health and Self Defense by T.T Liang](#) as a reference book. In the form practice portion, he teaches [Silk Reeling](#), [Chi Gong](#), and Hun Yuan Style's *Che-Shi* (the beginning) and *Jin Gang Dao Dui* (Warrior Pounding). There are two practical tests for the form and one final written test. He asks students to practice outside the class to gain the full benefit of [learning](#) Taichi. He urges students to

be mindful when practicing Taichi. Many of the students reported that Taichi helps them to reduce stress. One of Richard's students is a mother with three children. She told him that one of her kids was wondering what happened to her since she was calmer and no longer yelling at her children.



Wuji Standing

**For more info:** You can contact Mr. Richard Wilson at [mrssoftaiji@yahoo.com](mailto:mrssoftaiji@yahoo.com).



## **Violet Li**

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