

AGGIELIFE

THE BATTALION

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Aerobic hustle

Students exercise their rights to get in shape and burn some calories

By Lyndsey Sage
THE BATTALION

Working out is as much a part of the day as sleeping, eating and going to class for Jillian Olguin, a sophomore electrical engineering major. However, her workout isn't the usual running or lifting weights. Instead, Olguin is an aerobics instructor at the Student Recreation Center five days a week. The Rec Center offers students and members a unique alternative to individual workouts through group exercise programs. These classes, which range from beginning to advanced fitness levels, are a diverse mixture of upbeat dance and step classes that get one ready for a night out to tranquil yoga and pilates that provide a soothing hour after a stressful day.

Olguin, who teaches everything from cycling to kickboxing to hip-hop dance classes, said that being part of a group gives participants a common interest from which friendships are formed.

"You meet a lot of people though the classes. There are some people that come in and out, but there are usually regulars in the classes as well, especially in the cycling and athletic conditioning classes," Olguin said. "You see many of them in your classes or around campus."

Benjamin Bryan, an international affairs graduate student, said one reason he goes to class once a week at the Rec Center is to try something different.

With such a wide variety of classes to choose from, each offers a distinctly different experience, Bryan said.

Bryan, who usually attends the hip-

hop class, classifies it as "fun exercise."

"I don't like to exercise, but it isn't until the end of the class that you realized you just exercised," he said.

Cynthia Zuniga, an international affairs graduate student, said the hour she spends in the class goes by much faster than an hour on a treadmill would. Zuniga credits this phenomena to the class' group atmosphere.

"Exercising with a group helps you stay motivated because you encourage each other," she said.

Zuniga said it is easy to walk out of the weight room before finishing an individual workout, but the environment and structure of the class gives one an incentive to stay and complete the workout.

Zuniga said, the assortment of classes and fitness levels allows for students who are in top shape to participate. Students who have never even touched foot on the third floor of the Rec Center, where the aerobic classrooms are located, can participate as well.

"There are so many different classes," Zuniga said. "You don't have to be an exercise guru to go."

Whether searching for a way to mix up a workout routine or just wanting to start one, students find that from the wide array of aerobic classes that the Rec Center offers, they are able to find one that fits their personal style and level.

According to Olguin, the most popular classes are kickboxing and cycling. Athletic conditioning, which is a compilation of running, sprints, jump rope, squats and other training procedures that athletes endure, also ranks among



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Nicole Gabilondo, a senior accounting major, instructs her step aerobics class Monday morning at the Recreation Center.

the classes with the highest attendance.

Also available are step, yoga and dance classes, in addition to classes that focus on certain parts of the body including abs and back and classes that offer a variety of cardiovascular and muscle strengthening exercises.

Olguin said kickboxing and cycling are the most challenging; however, the intensity level is dependent on how hard instructors push the class as well as the area of the body they choose to focus on.

"I usually do legs," Olguin said. "Everyone in my classes know that I will kill them on legs."

Even though the workouts can be intense, Olguin said that the classes calm her down after a day of stress and give her a feeling of accomplishment at the end.

Chandra Chellappan, a medical graduate student and a yoga instructor at the Rec Center, said, not only does one physically feel better when in shape, but also sleeps sounder.

"Studies show that working out is just as effective as taking Prozac to fight depression," Chellappan said. "It makes you a happier person overall."

In addition to raising endorphins and giving one a sense of physical well-

being, classes allow participants to target specific areas of the body or work on a certain type of exercise. For example, yoga's benefits include increased inner core strength, muscle tone and flexibility. Also, with certified instructors as guides, students learn the correct way to perform stretches and other exercises that they may not have known on their own.

Aside from these benefits, Chellappan, who starts some of her mornings with a 6:30 a.m. yoga class, said exercising is just a nice way to wake up because it energizes you for the day.

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