

# THE WORLD TAIJI BOXING ASSOCIATION

## FOUNDATIONS GRADING BOOK

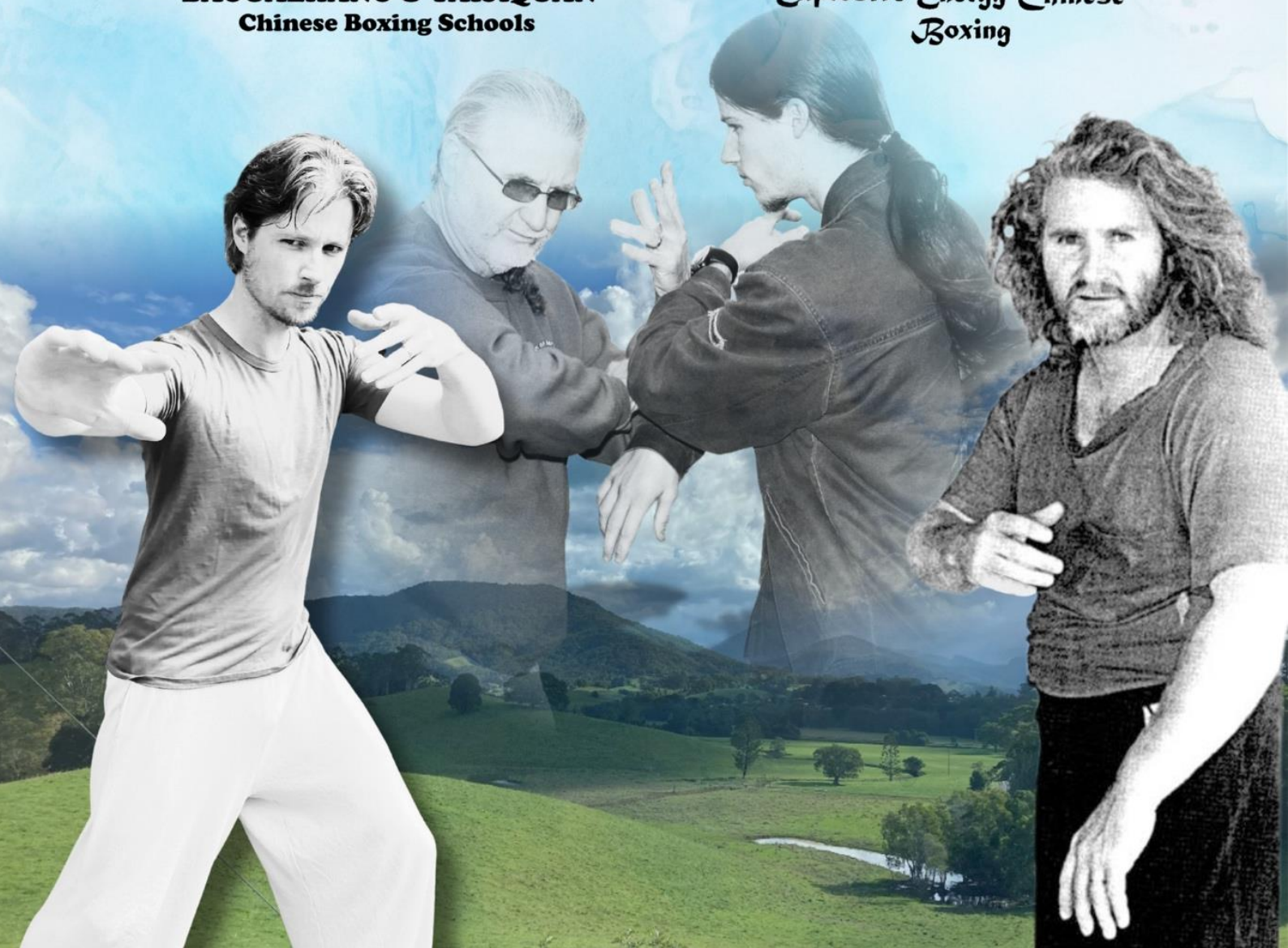
From Student to Instructor



**BAGUAZHANG & TAIJIQUAN**  
Chinese Boxing Schools



**Internal Chinese Gung-fu**  
**Explosive Energy Chinese**  
**Boxing**



**Current WTBA Grading Syllabus  
in use since the 1<sup>st</sup> of June 2025**

## **Welcome to your combat and healing journey with the World Taiji Boxing Association.**

I, Eli Montaigue, would like to welcome you to your new or continued journey with the WTBA. I hope this new book helps you with your training, to stay focused and push you toward your goals.

My father Erle Montaigue honoured me with the position of WTBA Global Chief Instructor and named me as his successor to the Erle Montaigue System of Combat and Healing before his death in 2011. He stated that he had taught me almost everything he knows and that I was his equal in this system.

Not sure if I agree with him that I was quite his equal at that point, but maybe I'm getting closer to that now after another 14 years of solid training with his other trusted students around the world. It is therefore my responsibility and privilege to keep his legacy alive, but I can't do that without you, the student.

So, until I pass on the torch to my chosen successor, (which shouldn't be for a few decades yet) I am here to help you with your journey. You can follow our videos, online classes, workshops, camps, or local classes, but if you ever feel you need to ask me something, training or otherwise, please feel free to reach out.

After 25 years training and 21 years teaching, I think I can do a pretty good job of this now.

Kind regards,

# WTBA Foundations Grading Book

*From Student to Instructor*

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**Book assigned to:**

**Full Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date of birth:** \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

**Date you started training with the WTBA:** \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

If you started your training a long time before getting this book, you can write a date you think to be correct. This is only for your own reference to see how long it takes you to work through your first grade.

This book should be used to help you work your way through the WTBA grading syllabus up to Instructor 1<sup>st</sup> Degree. After this you will receive a new book for the higher grades.

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## Introduction

Grading in the WTBA is focussed on the most essential areas of training, meaning you do not need to learn every form and training method. This is to make sure your focus is on understanding the principles and developing with well-rounded skills.

***Please note:** Grading is recommended to everyone but is not mandatory unless you wish to teach for the WTBA.*

### Things Not Covered

The “extra” forms and training methods which are not part of the main syllabus, are there for people who want to specialise in a particular area for their own personal reasons, or to simply change it up. Sometimes it’s nice to try something different.

We suggest you stay focused on the grading content. If you feel like you want to learn something extra, perhaps a weapon form, you should ask Eli or your local teacher for advice on this.

It's great to try out other things, so long as they do not take away focus from your primary training.

## Taiji or Bagua

Some elements of the Erle Montaigne System are style specific, Taiji or Bagua. Other elements are applicable to both styles.

Taiji & Bagua come from the same source, so naturally there are a lot of crossovers in the two styles. When you get to the grading content pages, you'll see under each section "Required for **Taiji** students" or "Required for **Bagua** students" or "Required for **Taiji & Bagua** students"

**If you choose to learn Taiji, you do not need to worry about any methods that are for Bagua only, and vice versa. Unless you're learning both styles of course.** It's generally recommended to train in one till you are at least an instructor 1<sup>st</sup> degree.

Most people start with Taiji, for reasons explained in the FAQ article here:

[www.taijiworld.com/baguazhang-or-taijiquan.html](http://www.taijiworld.com/baguazhang-or-taijiquan.html)

The advice for most people is to start with Taiji, then start Bagua after instructor 1<sup>st</sup> degree at the earliest or after instructor 3<sup>rd</sup> degree at the latest. This is general advice. You might have a specific reason to start with Bagua or to choose one and never do the other. If that works, then it's the best path for you.

You can grade in the Full System Rank for Taiji, or the Full System Rank for Bagua, taking either of these styles right up to Master Rank. However, to be ranked as a "**Complete Erle Montaigne System Instructor**", you require **both Taiji and Bagua**.

*Ask Eli, if you're unsure which one you should start with.*

## How it all works

You can follow the **Full System** syllabus, or one of the four modified options. (**#1 #2 #3 #4**) This gives students different ways they can train, depending on their interests. For example, martial or non-martial.

What you are graded in is what you are permitted to teach once you reach the 1st instructor rank. There are a few other forms and drills that will come under a certain grade. More is explained on this in the **Extra Curriculum** section you'll see in the coming pages.

Simply put, you can't teach fighting if you're only graded in form and you can't teach specific Bagua methods if you're only graded in Taiji and vice versa.

## How and when to go for a grading

- Gradings can only be tested and issued by the WTBA Global Chief Instructor (Head of the WTBA). The position which is currently held by Eli Montaigne.
- Gradings are included at most of Eli's major training camps, meaning there would be no fee for you to test if you are attending one of these. Your test will not be done all at once, you will be tested during training without even knowing. For example, Eli will be testing your push hands during the classes on push hands, so for most things, there will not be an official time you're taken to the side and tested.
- You will get a signature in your grading book for each area of training. Once all boxes are signed, you have passed that grade.
- If you cannot attend a training camp and would like to book a standalone test, get in touch. You can also have your solo forms tested via video, this way your time in person can be used for the partner work.
- Standalone student grades are often done in a small group. Instructor Degrees are always tested one on one.

For up-to-date fees for grading, please contact us at [www.taijiworld.com](http://www.taijiworld.com)

## How strict is the test

The instructor's test is very strict, as you are not only grading to see your progress. When you are given a degree, you are representing the quality of the WTBA at that level.

Student grades are less strict, as it's important for a student to move on before perfecting each area. Often movements later in your training may be what make things click.

*The WTBA has a very strict standard as of June 2025. For instructor rank your skills must be top notch, showing no major errors that you could pass onto others. The only exception to this, is if someone has a physical disability and they can't for example leap in the air due to a permanent back injury, they will then perform a modified version of the movement.*

**Age is considered.** If you are for example in your 20s and cannot do a movement correctly due to a lack of strength or flexibility, you would be expected to remedy this. However, if you're in your 60's we would be more lenient. That's no excuse to be lazy though. Things like this are taken on a case-by-case basis, and leniency is granted at Eli's discretion only.

**The amount of force you must deal with in martial drills.** This would be suitable for your size, meaning when you are tested on martial components, you would need to be able to deal with the full force of someone the same size and strength. Age is also considered here.

**Your character will also play a part in this.** We will not give out instructor rank to someone we feel will not be a responsible and humble teacher.

**Apprentice Instructor Degree.** There are some situations where we will give out this degree, to someone who has not yet completed everything for the instructor 1<sup>st</sup> degree. For example, when someone knows almost everything required, only missing a few parts, but they need to start teaching now. A reason could be to keep a school from closing due to the main instructor moving away.

Another example: You've got a group of people that really want to start a class and there are no other WTBA teachers in your area, you've only passed grade 1 student, but you are an experienced practitioner of another form of movement. This could mean we can trust you to teach what is covered in grade 1 student, then when you pass grade 2 you can teach that, and so on.

With the "Apprentice Instructor" certificate, you can start teaching as you work your way up to a full instructor rank. An apprentice must be checked on by Eli at least once a month, this can be done online. They must also prove dedication by reaching the next grade within 12 months. This also means for example, you reach instructor 1<sup>st</sup> degree rank, you are now a qualified teacher, so, while you are working towards your 2<sup>nd</sup> degree, you can teach any 2<sup>nd</sup> degree content which you have been tested on. For example, you have a natural ability in push hands, but not form, you might pass the push hands part of your degree before the form part. If you have been tested and passed that section, you can add that into your classes. Though you will not be considered a 2<sup>nd</sup> degree instructor until you have passed everything you need for that grade.

### **Focusing on your grade**

The student grades are essentially the same content as what you need for your 1st instructor degree, done in a simplified way and split up into four small manageable grades. Therefore, it's often the case that you will train some things from grades 2, 3, & 4 even if you have not yet passed grade 1. The content in grade 2 for example, is not more advanced or more difficult than grade one, it's just different. So, you can practice along with whatever is being taught in class in any of the student grades. Just try to keep your focus on the grade you're working towards.

For instructor degrees however, there is a lot in each one, so it's best to stick to the one you're working towards. Of course, there's still nothing wrong with having some fun in something from a higher degree, but don't let it take your focus from the degree you are working on.

### **Grading Requirements**

Everything you need to know for each student grade or instructor degree will be covered in the videos for that grade/degree. *(Please note, this is a work in progress, some videos might not be available yet).* There will be a "box set" available for each grade/degree and everything you'll need will be in that set. Your WTBA Instructor should also know what you

need to be learning for each grade, if they have an up-to-date Unified Instructors Degree. It's always good to have the videos for practice at home even if you have a good teacher.

**How to use this grading book:**

- Track your progress by ticking off the boxes next to each area of training. **Box 1** when you start training it. **Box 2** when you feel confident in it. **Box 3** When you think you are ready to be tested.
- Once you have ticked all boxes for a section in a grade, you should then ask to be tested. If you pass, you'll get a signature for that section. Once you have a signature for each section of a grade, you will then be awarded that grade. Please note, for instructor degree, you need to perform each section within a 12-month period. For example, if you pass the test on push hands, but then don't pass your form test till 18 months later, you'll need to show the push hands again.
- You'll see a **Notes** page at the end of each grading section and you can use this page to mark down important things you need to remember during that grade.
- This book does not explain the details of every method. You'll see things like "Stage 1" or "Bag works combos 1 and 2". To know what these are, you need to start training with your instructor or the videos. You'll know what everything in the book means once you have started training in it.

*Please note: Always bring your grading booklet anytime you're going to see Eli for training. You never know when he might pass you on a section.*

**Full system or a modified option:**

First you need to choose **Taiji** or **Bagua**, then either follow the full system, or one of the four modified options.

Full System Everything the system has to offer	Modified Option 1 Slow Form & Qigong	Modified Option 2 Slow Form & Qigong + Push/Sticky Hands	Modified Option 3 Slow Form & Qigong + Solo Martial	Modified Option 4 Forms & Qigong + All-Martial
All elements of form and qigong training. All partner drills including combat and sparring. Training every aspect of your chosen style, Taiji or Bagua, or both.	Slow & gentle elements of form & Qigong.	Slow & gentle elements of form & Qigong.	Slow & gentle elements of form & Qigong, and martial explosiveness.	Everything you would train in the full system, minus the combat drills and sparring.
No partner drills.	No partner drills.	Push and sticky hands in a gentle manner	Includes solo Small San Sau and bag work.	Full force partner drills but not free sparring.
If combat is not for you, then choose one of the 4 modified options to the right.	No rough or fast movements.	No rough or fast movements.	Any Martial training that can be done with no partner.	A full balance of yin/yang training. Solo & partnered.
A calm and relaxed solo training programme.	A calm and relaxed solo training programme.	A calm and relaxed solo & partnered training programme.	Calming and explosive solo training program. With good yin/yang balance.	For people who can't spar but still want as much from the system as possible.

On the next pages you will see more information on the options we offer for you to train in and maybe one day teach.

Think about what you want from your training and choose the option which reflects this best. Remember you can change at any time. *If unsure about anything you read in this book, please get in touch and Eli will help you out.*

The internal martial arts have a very broad scope of training, from soft and gentle qigong to explosive combat training for self-defence, as well as the choice of Taiji or Bagua. Training in all areas will take you to the highest levels of understanding. However, even if you choose to practice only slow form and qigong, you will still gain many great benefits from this.

### **Full System | Combat & Healing | Taiji, Bagua, or both?**

You can choose to do the full system in **Taiji**, or the full system in **Bagua**. You can take either of these all the way up to Master Rank. Your certificate will state if you are a Taiji or Bagua instructor within the Erle Montaigne System. If you practice both, then your certificate will state you are a *Complete Erle Montaigne System Instructor*.

The Erle Montaigne System of Combat & Healing, known as “Fa-Jing Ch’uan” meaning *Explosive Energy Chinese Boxing*, is the compilation of all Erle’s knowledge that he gained over his years learning. The bulk of which is made up of Taiji and Bagua but also includes some other fighting methods that Erle and Eli have found to be a useful addition.

Every aspect of training is covered here, including forms, qigong, partner drills and combat sparring, taking all areas to their highest level of internal understanding. However, you should still choose the focus to be on Taiji or Bagua in the beginning at least.

The way we train combat is to get the highest level of skill we can, without any long-term injuries such as brain damage associated with boxing or joint problems associated with grappling. Bumps and bruises sure, maybe a broken toe, but nothing serious.

*Sparring doesn’t have to be done with a lot of pressure; therefore, the full system is suitable for most people. Full force in drills mean dealing with the full force of someone your size.*

Often people think that more practice in form & qigong is the best way to gain the highest levels of inner development, however, this is absolutely not the case. The highest levels are attained through the balance and understanding of the full system.

*The ability to protect ourselves and our family is one of the main factors in achieving inner peace.*

**Please note:** *We train to fight only when it’s unavoidable, deescalating and walking away are always the first line of defence.*

There is a fine line between standing up for yourself and starting a fight. You can hold your ground and still deescalate the situation. However, this is not always possible, for this we need to know how to survive and protect our family. This could be with the use of non-lethal methods to subdue someone when the situation is not serious, or with the use of deadly force if your family’s lives are at risk.

*A true warrior stays calm & deescalates where possible.....But fights when they must*

*When we train in combat, we do so with the highest care taken for safety, as we don't want any of the long-term injuries associated with Boxing or MMA. Even if this means not being the number 1 ultimate fighting champion, we will still be able to protect our family from 99.9% of people out there, while keeping our health.*

### **Extra Curriculum**

There are many forms and training drills not covered in the **Full System** grading syllabus. They are not considered necessary to take your training to the top, but they can be a lot of fun and can help some people by seeing the same thing from a different angle. If you are interested in learning some of these, you can learn either from video or your instructor (if they know them).

Each extra drill or form you see in the videos on the website, will state which grade you should be at to start learning it. It will also state whether you need to take a separate test to be able to teach it. Some things can be taught as an inclusion of your current degree. These would be very similar to what you already know so there would be no need to take another test.

#### **For example:**

- If you are an instructor 1<sup>st</sup> degree in the **Full System** or Modified Option **#4**, you can teach Dragon Prawn Boxing drills and the Wudang Hand Weapons.
- If you are an instructor 3<sup>rd</sup> degree in the Bagua, you can then teach the animal forms.
- Something like a weapon form would need a separate test.

In the description of a video, you'll see something like: *"The content of this video can be taught by an instructor 3<sup>rd</sup> degree or higher". Or "To teach this subject as a WTBA instructor you'll need to take a separate test on this as an Extra Curriculum Degree".*

**Please note**, we are currently adding this information to our video descriptions on the website, if a video you're looking at does not yet have this info, please get in touch.

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**Now let's see the next pages to look through the four modified options in greater detail, for those not wanting to train the full system.**

#### **Remember**

*"**Martial**" in the WTBA, means doing explosive movements in forms, or rough partner drills involving impact and bruising, also striking training on the bag. Essentially, doing martial training for the purpose of fitness and understanding the body.*

*"**Combat**" on the other hand means learning how to fight for self-defence. This involves sparring.*

### **Option #1 | Slow Form & Qigong**

In this option you will train only the slower more gentle elements of form and qigong, without any partner drills. This will still have a balance of Yin Yang, as you can get some yang activation without doing the faster more explosive movements.

This is for people who don't have anyone to train with and who have problems with their body and are unable to do any kind of fast or rough movements.

It is also good for people doing some other kind of rough yang sport, who are looking for a simple syllabus to follow for calming down and staying relaxed, to learn more about yin.

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### **Option #2 | Slow Form & Qigong + Push/Sticky Hands**

Everything from option #1 plus push hands & sticky hands done in a gentle manner.

This option is for people wanting to do some partner work to better understand movement but cannot handle the bumps and bruises involved with striking drills.

Push hands and sticky hands can become very rough, but in this option you will stick to the gentle areas. You will gain a much higher understanding of movement through the partner work, compared to the solo forms alone. Your forms and qigong will come alive from the partner training, helping you to better understand your own body and mind.

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### **Option #3 | Slow Form & Qigong + Solo Martial**

Form and qigong like in option #1 but eventually incorporating the martial explosive movements. All martial training that can be done **without** a partner will also be included, such as solo san sau forms and bag work.

This is obviously for those people who want to learn the martial side but have no one to train with. So, you will train everything you can do on your own. This will give you a far higher understanding of movement compared with only doing slow form which will therefore increase all the benefits the art offers. By following this option, those who want to practice partner drills will have much more time free at training camps to do this, since the solo training will already be proficient. Also, you'll be one step forward on partner work, since you'll at least have done the solo forms that can then be done with a partner, as well as bag work for striking.

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### **Option #4 | Forms & Qigong + All-Martial**

In this option, you will practice everything from the **Full System**, minus the combat drills & sparring. This means you will learn almost everything about movement and self-development only missing out on learning how to fight.

You will be doing partner drills full force, but since it's not free sparring, the strikes won't get through...Usually. Age is considered here, for example if you're 70, you can do all the drills correctly, but can't handle full force, you'll still be awarded the grade. Remember, full force is only from someone your own size. This option 4 is for people who want to feel all the martial training, but don't want to get punched in the face or thrown on the floor.

Remember though, the sparring and combat drills in the full system does not have to be done with heavy force. If you're considering the full system over this option 4, but not sure about getting hit, just ask Eli.

# Student Grade 1 (Novice) Requirements

**Please note:** Look out for **Taiji** or **Bagua** to know which parts you need to complete for your chosen style. If you are following a modified option you also need to look out for your option number on each section, for example, "Required for modified options #1 #2 #3 #4."  
If you are following option #3, then you would need to complete all areas requiring option #3.

## Taiji YLC Form | Stage 1 | Till Double P'eng

(Required for **Taiji** students following **Full System** or modified options #1 #2 #3 #4)

- Form done both sides, slowly with basic structure and movement.
- Showing flow and synchronisation of the breath.

Tick & Date here when you started training this  Date \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_  
Tick & Date here when you feel confident in this  Date \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_  
Tick & Date here when you think you're ready to test  Date \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

Eli Montaigne Confirmation Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Confirmation: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

## Bagua Circular Form | Stage 1 | First Palm Change

(Required for **Bagua** students following **Full System** or modified options #1 #2 #3 #4)

- Form done slowly with basic structure and movement.
- Showing flow and synchronisation of the breath.
- Walking is done slowly, movement from hips, slip & pigeon step, while maintaining correct hand position.

Tick & Date here when you started training this  Date \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_  
Tick & Date here when you feel confident in this  Date \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_  
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### Taiji YLC Form Applications | Stage 1 | Till Double P'eng

(Required for **Taiji** students following **Full System** or modified options #2 #4)

- Applications done both sides with a partner, at a slow to moderate pace.
- At this level, the applications only need to be understood, to get the correct intent in the movements. You will not be tested at a martial level.

Tick & Date here when you started training this  Date \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_  
Tick & Date here when you feel confident in this  Date \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_  
Tick & Date here when you think you're ready to test  Date \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

Eli Montaigne Confirmation Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Confirmation: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

### Bagua Circular Form Applications | Stage 1 | First Palm Change

(Required for **Bagua** students following **Full System** or modified options #2 #4)

- Applications done both sides with a partner, at a slow to moderate pace.
- At this level, the applications only need to be understood, to get the correct intent in the movements. You will not be tested at a martial level.

Tick & Date here when you started training this  Date \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_  
Tick & Date here when you feel confident in this  Date \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_  
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Eli Montaigne Confirmation Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Confirmation: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

### Small San Sau Solo | Stage 1 | Till Double P'eng

(Required for **Taiji** students following **Full System** or modified options #3 #4)

- Basic structure and movement done both sides at a moderate pace.
- All strikes done on pads.

Tick & Date here when you started training this  Date \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_  
Tick & Date here when you feel confident in this  Date \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_  
Tick & Date here when you think you're ready to test  Date \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

Eli Montaigne Confirmation Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Confirmation: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

### Small San Sau Partnered | Stage 1 | Till Double Peng

(Required for **Taiji** students following **Full System** or modified options **#4**)

- Basic structure and movement done both sides defending medium pressure & speed.
- Accuracy to correct targets for A and B side.
- Offering the target on B side

Tick & Date here when you started training this  Date \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_  
Tick & Date here when you feel confident in this  Date \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_  
Tick & Date here when you think you're ready to test  Date \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

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### Bagua Circle Sparring | Stage 1

(Required for **Bagua** students following **Full System** or modified options **#4**)

- Inside/outside changes, upper & lower outside attack/defence.
- Medium pressure & speed.

Tick & Date here when you started training this  Date \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_  
Tick & Date here when you feel confident in this  Date \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_  
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Date of Confirmation: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

### Standing Three Circle Qigong | Stage 1

(Required for **Taiji** & **Bagua** students following **Full System** or modified options **#1 #2 #3 #4**)

- 10 minutes, with assistance to maintain correct posture.

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Tick & Date here when you think you're ready to test  Date \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

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Date of Confirmation: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

**Sticky Hands | Stage 1 & 2 | Circular flow listening, at moderate speed**

(Required for **Taiji** & **Bagua** students following **Full System** or modified options **#2** **#4**)

- Stage 1, Both hands over or under. Basic top and bottom strikes, listening to yield.
- Stage 2, same as stage one, but now with one hand on top and one under. Also, the same attack defence, but now with a single hand, while covering with the other.

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Date of Confirmation: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

**Push Hands Free Play | Stage 1 | Fixed Hands**

(Required for **Taiji** & **Bagua** students following **Full System** or modified options **#2** **#4**)

- Remain stable and upright | Fixed stance | No force on force | Maintain guard.

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**Bag Work | Stage 1 | Combos 1 & 2**

(Required for **Taiji** & **Bagua** students following **Full System** or modified options **#3** **#4**)

- Done both sides, with connection between weight shift, centre movement & alignment. Maintain guard. Light Power and flow.
- Direct connection for strikes, elastic connection used on final strike

Tick & Date here when you started training this  Date \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_  
Tick & Date here when you feel confident in this  Date \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_  
Tick & Date here when you think you're ready to test  Date \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

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### Chinese Boxing Drills | Stage 1 | Drills 1 & 2

(Required for **Taiji** & **Bagua** students following **Full System**)

- Solo and with partner, showing flow and balance at a moderate pace and pressure.
- Done both sides

Tick & Date here when you started training this  Date \_\_/\_\_/\_\_\_\_  
Tick & Date here when you feel confident in this  Date \_\_/\_\_/\_\_\_\_  
Tick & Date here when you think you're ready to test  Date \_\_/\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Eli Montaigne Confirmation Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Confirmation: \_\_/\_\_/\_\_\_\_

### Interactive Pad Work | Stage 1 | Drills 1 & 2

(Required for **Taiji** & **Bagua** students following **Full System**)

- Showing flow and balance at a moderate pace and pressure, both sides

Tick & Date here when you started training this  Date \_\_/\_\_/\_\_\_\_  
Tick & Date here when you feel confident in this  Date \_\_/\_\_/\_\_\_\_  
Tick & Date here when you think you're ready to test  Date \_\_/\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Eli Montaigne Confirmation Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Confirmation: \_\_/\_\_/\_\_\_\_

### Combat Sparring | Stage 1 | Striking

(Required for **Taiji** & **Bagua** students following **Full System**)

- Controlled touch contact with gloves.
- Using techniques learnt in Chinese Boxing Drills 1 & 2.

Tick & Date here when you started training this  Date \_\_/\_\_/\_\_\_\_  
Tick & Date here when you feel confident in this  Date \_\_/\_\_/\_\_\_\_  
Tick & Date here when you think you're ready to test  Date \_\_/\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Eli Montaigne Confirmation Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Confirmation: \_\_/\_\_/\_\_\_\_







# WTBA Student Grade Pass Chart

## Grade 1 (Novice)

### Graded with **Taiji** form

	Date	Eli Montaigne Signature
<b>Full System</b> Combat & Healing	___/___/___	_____
Or a Modified Option:		
<b>#1</b>   Slow form & Qigong	___/___/___	_____
<b>#2</b>   Slow Form & Qigong + Push/Sticky Hands	___/___/___	_____
<b>#3</b>   Slow Form & Qigong + Solo Martial	___/___/___	_____
<b>#4</b>   Forms & Qigong + All Martial	___/___/___	_____

### Graded with **Bagua** form

	Date	Eli Montaigne Signature
<b>Full System</b> Combat & Healing	___/___/___	_____
Or a Modified Option:		
<b>#1</b>   Slow form & Qigong	___/___/___	_____
<b>#2</b>   Slow Form & Qigong + Push/Sticky Hands	___/___/___	_____
<b>#3</b>   Slow Form & Qigong + Solo Martial	___/___/___	_____
<b>#4</b>   Forms & Qigong + All Martial	___/___/___	_____

Full Name of Student

\_\_\_\_\_

*Has successfully passed all criteria for the grades signed above.*

\_\_\_\_\_

*Tested by Eli Montaigne, WTBA Global Chief Instructor.*



## **Congratulations!**

You've passed the first milestone in your training.

You've got some good foundations under your belt now.  
Moving onto the next student grades from here should be a breeze.

Well done, keep up the good work and dedication!

## **Student Grade 2 (Intermediate) Requirements**

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**To see the rest of the grading content, please order your copy of the book.**

**Remember, if you are an allied member of the WTBA, your copy is free of charge, just let us know you'd like one.**

# Congratulations!

*You can now register and request a WTBA Instructor Certificate. Once issued, you will be a certified instructor for the World Taiji Boxing Association.*

*The WTBA has one of the toughest instructor tests out there, and you passed it!*

## **Remember to be humble.**

You are only a 1<sup>st</sup> degree foundations instructor; you will still need regular guidance to stop you from falling into bad habits and to help you progress to the higher levels.

## **Where to from here:**

- Remember your grade is only valid with up-to-date instructor registration. Make sure you maintain your registration, otherwise you'll have to **retake your test**. Requirements for this are at the end of this list.
- If you want to start teaching, ask Eli for some advice.
- Start working towards your 2<sup>nd</sup> degree, or if you did your 1<sup>st</sup> degree as a modified option, you could start working towards a higher option or even the Full System Rank. If you're happy to stick with the same option however, you can move onto your 2<sup>nd</sup> degree training.
- Request your WTBA Instructor Grading Book. This will take you through all the higher instructor ranks just like you've done with this book.

## **Requirements to be listed on the WTBA Instructors Register**

To represent Erle Montaigue, Eli Montaigue and the WTBA and to teach the Erle Montaigue System, you must be listed on the WTBA Instructors Register. Erle wrote explicitly about this before his death. He did not want anyone claiming to represent him or his system who had broken ties with the WTBA. ***Eli upholds this request.***

You can still train and teach different styles and represent other schools as well, we're easy going like that.

## **WTBA Instructors**

An instructor who passed their test before June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2025. They have maintained their instructor status but have not updated to the new syllabus.

## **WTBA Unified Instructors**

A unified instructor is one who either passed their test after June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2025, or updated their old degree to the new teaching syllabus. They are up to date with the wtba teaching methods and are able to teach the content of this grading book.

### **WTBA Legend Instructors**

This is a special award given out to only a select few. There is no set requirement to attain this, but usually it is given after around 20 years of extreme dedication and support to the WTBA. For example, they may have attended regular classes for 20 years, as well as teaching for the WTBA and setting up workshops at their school for Erle or Eli.

Therefore, they have earned their leave of absence & will remain on the instructors register even if we have not seen them in a while. A legend has had so much training time with Erle or Eli, that even without the regular updates, they are highly unlikely to fall into any major bad habits.

### **No one is above needing guidance to maintain correctness and further development.**

Eli needs to be kept in check as well, even Erle when he was still alive.

Think about it, the world's greatest fighters still have coaches, someone to point out their errors and what they should be working on.

Eli meets up with the other senior instructors as much as he can to further his own development as well as share his knowledge and skill.

Eli & the wtba senior instructors work together, correcting, guiding & sharing knowledge, keeping each other in check to make the WTBA stronger.

### **To quote Erle Montaigne**

*"this is essential is getting a uniform WTBA teaching criteria and also so that we can be assured that our instructors haven't gone upon their own paths TOO much in the absence of corrections from "Head Office"."*

### **Requirements to maintain WTBA instructor or unified instructor status:**

*(Originally set by Erle Montaigne in 2008 and updated (softened) by Eli Montaigne in 2024.*

*To see the original requirements and Erle's words on this please see our website*

*<https://www.taijiworld.com/wtba-instructor-requirements.html> )*

1. Must have a valid WTBA instructor degree, signed by Eli or Erle.
2. Must be listed on the WTBA instructors register at [www.taijiworld.com/wtba\\_instructor\\_list.html](http://www.taijiworld.com/wtba_instructor_list.html)
3. If teaching, must do so in support of the WTBA.  
You can still have your own school's name but should include "WTBA" or our logo somewhere on your website/social media etc, to show you are part of the WTBA.  
You can also put WTBA into your school's name as you see fit.
4. Must only teach what you have been given permission to teach regarding the Erle Montaigne System. You can of course teach what you want from other styles you might know, so long as it's clear to the student which parts are WTBA.  
You teach only what you can correctly do yourself, we don't want you teaching things incorrectly and passing on any bad habits.
5. Unified instructors must train with Eli in person where possible or online:  
1<sup>st</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> degrees, at least once per year.  
4<sup>th</sup> degree, at least once every 3 years.  
5<sup>th</sup> degree & higher, at least once every 5 years.
6. Instructors with an old certificate, pre-2025, must train with Eli in person where possible or online:  
1<sup>st</sup> degree, at least once per year.  
2<sup>nd</sup> degree, at least once every 2 years.  
3<sup>rd</sup> degree, at least once every 3 years.  
4<sup>th</sup> degree, at least once every 4 years.  
5<sup>th</sup> degree & higher, at least once every 5 years.
7. If you do not maintain your instructor status, you will need to retake your test.

### **Requirements for WTBA Unified Legend Instructors:**

1. To show support to the WTBA and the Montaigne family, even if from a distance.

**Don't lose this great momentum!**

Keep training and working hard as you obviously have been.  
Set your goals for the next year and stick to it.  
Don't forget I am always here to help if you get stuck.

Kind Regards,

Thank you for following the  
**WTBA Foundations Grading Book**  
From Student to Instructor

Written by.....Eli Montaigne

Layout and design by.....Eli and Francesca Montaigne

Proof reading and phrasing input.....Francesca Montaigne & Bettina Kager

*Special thanks to my amazing wife Fran, for all her help and input in the creation of the 2025 updated WTBA grading syllabus and grading book.*

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[www.taijiworld.com](http://www.taijiworld.com)

**Artwork for background of instructor certificate accredited to**

<a href="https://lovepik.com/images/creative-abstract-light.html">Abstract Light by Lovepik.com</a>

**Background artwork for student certificate accredited to**

<a href="https://www.vecteezy.com/free-vector/colourful-background">Colourful Background Vectors by Vecteezy</a>

**This book is for working your way through the  
WTBA foundations grading syllabus.**

Use this as a guide to keep on track with your training as you progress through each grade till you reach the first instructor rank.

**Choose an option that suits you**

The full system of Combat & Healing, or one of the four modified options.

The internal martial arts have a very broad scope of training, from soft and gentle qigong to explosive combat training for self-defence.

Training in all areas will take you to the highest levels of understanding. However, even if you choose to practice only slow form and qigong, you will still gain many great benefits from this.

**Grading is not mandatory**

You might feel you don't want to take grading tests, that's fine, just keep in mind that tests are the best way to stay focused on what is important.

As a general rule, those who follow a structured path will learn and truly understand what they are taught at a far greater rate.

Moving forward to the next level at the right time is one of the most important areas of training. Most people move forward too soon, causing them to learn nothing on a deeper level.

**Eli Montague's thoughts**

As of 2025 I have been teaching this system for 21 years as my full-time profession.  
16 of those as the head of the WTBA & the first 8 as my father's right-hand man.

Teaching hundreds of students all over the world & in my own local classes, as well as considering my father's different teaching methods over the decades and which of his students succeeded, has shown me what works and what gives students the best chance to succeed.

*All this knowledge & experience has been used to formulate this latest addition of the  
WTBA Grading Syllabus.*



**BAGUAZHANG & TAIJIQUAN**  
Chinese Boxing Schools

Contact us for more information  
[www.taijiworld.com](http://www.taijiworld.com)