“Krav Maga is not an art,” says Beyo, who once worked in Israel for a counterterrorism special unit under the office of the prime minister. “Krav Maga is much more immediate and uses natural reactions instead of trying to impose new techniques to our body.”

Ideally, says Beyo, Krav Maga (or “contact combat,” in Hebrew) is not about fighting. It’s about ending fights: the main goal is to neutralize a threat and finish things as quickly as possible. The defense system combines techniques from boxing, Muay Thai, jujitsu, wrestling, and grappling with realistic fight training.

The technique was developed in Bratislava, Slovakia, in the 1930s by Imi Lichtenfeld, who, along with a group of Jewish wrestlers and boxers, defended the streets of the Jewish quarter against anti-Semitic thugs.

Today the defense system, which has been refined over the years, is officially used for combat training in the Israel Defense Forces and has been adapted internationally for civilian, police, and military applications.

“It is an extremely useful and versatile self-defense system,” says Andrew Filippi (CAS’15). “I’ve taken several, but this one is probably the best.” ERIN THIBEAU (CAS’13)