

## **What is the international Senshusei Course?**

The international Senshusei course is an 11-month program that allows dedicated students to learn Yoshinkan Aikido in the true spirit of Yoshinkan founder Gozo Shioda. The goal of the course is to earn a 1st degree black belt and instructor's license (able to grade up to 4th kyu).

Under normal circumstances, reaching 1<sup>st</sup> Dan black belt level in Aikido takes many years, but this course condenses that learning into just a few months. As such, the training is very intensive; building up your body with physical conditioning, and being drilled on techniques by incredibly high level instructors, the senshusei (special course students) train in the dojo 5 days a week. Even in the event of a senshusei suffering an injury, he/she will still be expected to attend all classes and observe what is being taught.

The practice of Aikido is a form of budo (Samurai martial arts), and there are many cultural behaviours which are adhered to; as Senshusei, you will be responsible for maintaining these practices. For example, the students are supposed to treat the dojo as a holy place and act accordingly while being inside. They also have everyday duties outside of training such as cleaning the building, greeting the senseis in formal budo-style, keeping a training diary etc. and many of these tasks need to be carried out to a strict schedule. This mental and behavioral aspect of the training might appear old-fashioned or even irrational for many modern people, however, it has proven to be an effective way to develop the essential qualities of a martial artist such as concentration, attention to detail, awareness of your surroundings, and composure, as well as demonstrating respect towards the dojo and your seniors and, most importantly, instilling a humble attitude.

In conclusion, we'd like to emphasize once again that the course is very tough, both physically and mentally, and not everyone is able to finish. But, as a reward for such hard work and dedication, the students who make it through graduate as esteemed and mindful individuals and instructors, worthy of representing the Headquarters dojo of Yoshinkan Aikido, both in Japan as well as the wider world.

### **Training Schedule**

Tuesdays and Thursdays: 10:00 ~ 11:30, 12:00 ~ 13:30

Wednesdays and Fridays: 8:30 ~ 9:30, 10:00 ~ 11:30, 12:00 ~ 13:30

Saturdays: 8:30 ~ 9:30, 10:00 ~ 11:00, 11:30 ~ 12:30

Sundays: Day off

Mondays: Dojo closed

Note: you will be expected to arrive at the dojo an hour earlier and leave an hour after your scheduled training, as this is the time when you will need to carry out your senshusei duties.

## **Yearly Schedule**

**April:** Opening Ceremony, start of four-week probation period

**May:** Spring vacation (one week)

**June:** First Examination, summer camp

**August:** Summer party, Second Examination, summer vacation (one week)

**October:** Yamanashi demonstration, all-Japan Yoshinkan Aikido demonstration

**December:** Shodan examination, “Year-end” party, winter vacation (two weeks)

**January:** “Breaking of the mirror” ceremony with demonstration

**February:** Instructor’s examination, graduation ceremony

Note: attendance at all of these events are compulsory for senshusei, unless there are special circumstances, which would need to be agreed with Dojocho.