

Ideas for a lesson plan for Meyer's rapier(2.3):

Divisions of the Combatant:

Vertical

- The combatant is divided into two on the vertical (left and right) as in long sword. But he is also divided further by adding lines down the right and left shoulders, these vertical lines divides the combatant into four sections outer right, inner right, inner left, and outer left. (I believe it has to do with adding three oberhauw's instead of the one used in long sword)

Diagonal (Or crosses)

The combatant is divided here with sloping lines that we use for "cutting the cross". Meyer here teaches that there are three crosses unlike the long sword which only has one. They are divided as such:

- The upper cross: the first sloping line starts at his left shoulder near the neck and goes though his upper chest to just under his right arm pit. The second sloping line is the mirror opposite of this line starting at his right shoulder near the neck and going though the upper chest and ending just under his left arm pit.
- The middle cross: the first sloping line of the middle cross starts just above his left hip and slopes down through his belly and stop just above his right thigh. And once again the second line is a mirror opposite of the first.
- The lower cross: now Meyer teaches this on the left leg but I feel that it can be done on ether the right or left as the opening presents itself. So for the lower cross on his left leg the first sloping line starts on outside thick part of his left thigh and slopes down just below the right side (or lower inside) of the left knee. The second line starts at the upper inside of the left thigh and slopes down though to just below the left side (or lower outside) of the left knee. Now to use this on the right leg the first line would start on the upper inside of the right thigh and slopes down to the right side just below the knee on the right leg. And as before the second line is pretty much the mirror opposite of it on the same leg.

The lines of these "crosses" are not really a division but rather show the path the blade will fallow when making a cut to "the cross" (if you are having trouble understanding why it is called cutting the cross then image a cross and then draw a X though its center). Another important note that these tree crosses teach us, and you should be made aware of is that the shortest distance between two points is a strait line. Keeping that in mind when you cut or thrust to the upper cross your shoulder should level and your arm in line with the center of the upper cross. This means that in order to keep distance when cutting or thrusting to the middle or lower crosses we must lower our bodies to make the lower attack. If you try to

attack the lower or middle crosses from a high and upright stance you will be out of distance and open your self up for a counter attack and probably not even connect with your attack as your being smacked in the head.

Divisions of the weapon:

The sword or in this case Rapier is divided much the same way as other bladed weapons. The weapon is divided into the blade and the handle (the handle being everything below the blade including the guard).

Now the blade is divided into four parts Weak, Strong, Long edge and Short.

- The strong is the part of the blade extending from the cross or guard to the middle of the blade.
- The weak is the part of the blade extending from the middle to the point.
- The long edge is the leading edge of the blade or front edge.
- The short edge is the trailing or back edge of the blade.

Scene in the case of rapiers there are many differ styles of hilts or guards we will not go into much detail about it the only thing to be aware of when talking about the hilt in Meyer's rapier are:

- The cross or quillons: these are the two bars some times sticking out from the blade just above the handle or grip.
- The handle: this is the part of the sword made for gripping.
- Pommel: this is the counter weight at the very bottom of the sword just below the handle.

Guards and postures with the rapier:

One thing you should know before you go on is that in the historical fencing the term guard is not really a guard as we think of it in modern fencing. It is in fact a position in which you stand to provoke a response or to seek an opening, and is not a parry as many modern fencers are use to. Also at the time it was considered a bad idea to stay in any one guard to long. as it allows your opponent time to find the opening hardest for you to close.

Meyer's 5 guards:

- Oberhut [High Guard] also know as Ochs [Ox]
- UnderHut [Low Guard]
- Eisenport [Irongate]
- Pflug [Plow]
- Langort [Long Point]

Oberhut or Ochs:

This guard has several variations and can perform a cut or a thrust with minor changes to the guard. The Guard is normally preformed from the right and so that is where we shall start.

- For thrusting on the right: stand with right foot forward hold your arm out and high and slightly to your right with the point in your opponent's face. If done correctly your long edge should be on the top.
- For cutting on the right: position yourself as before but instead of keeping your point forward, point it backwards over your shoulder leaving the long edge up.
- For thrusting on the left: stand once again with right foot forward holding your arm out and high as before but this time on the left side of your body with long edge up and the point in your opponents face.
- For cutting on the left: as before stand in the thrusting guard and point the point of the blade over your shoulder behind you with long edge up.
- Meyers teaches a center version of this Guard as well but says that it is for the cut but with little change can be used for a thrust. This guard is directly in between the thrusting ochs on the right and the one on the left.
 - A further note about the center Ochs unlike the right and left Ochs the cutting version of this guard is with the point threatening your opponent unlike the others where you bring the point behind you. Although I believe you can bring the point behind you as the wacht guard from Dusak here Meyers is quiet clear it's for the cut and not the thrust.

Underhut [low guard]:

This guard is also preformed on the right left and middle and should be the end result of a Zornhauw [wrath Cut] or an Oberhauw [straight cut from above].

- For in the center (true Underhut): position your self with right foot forward and your sword extended out and down toward the ground in front of your right foot long edge facing down. This is the end result of an Oberhauw.
- For the right side: stand with your right foot forward holding you sword out and down just outside your right thigh. This is the end result of a left Zornhauw.
- For the left side: stand as before but bring you sword to the inside of your right thigh. This is the end result of a right Zornhauw.

Eisenport [Iron Gate]:

This guard is one of the two middle guards taught by Meyer and has three versions which are center, on the left and on the right.

- For the center (The true Eisenport): position your self with right foot forward and your sword arm out and down with the hilt of the weapon in front of your right knee and the point aimed at your opponents face and the long edge facing forward.
- For the right and left side: stand as before but move your weapon to the right or the left. Meyer does not talk about blade alignment here but I believe you move the long edge to face the side you guard so for the left side the long edge faces out to the left and for right it faces out to the right. Remember to keep your point threatening your opponent's faces when in any of the Eisenports.

Pflug [Plow]:

This guard is the other middle guard and like Eisenport has three versions which are center, on the right and on the left. Unlike many of Meyers guard this one is nothing like its long sword named counter part.

- For the center (true Pflug): position you're self with right foot forward and lean slightly over your right knee. Now hold your weapon with hilt in front of your right knee and the quillons parallel to the ground so that the flat is facing upward. Now place your thumb over the flat of the blade and aim the tip of your sword at your opponent's belly.
- For the right and left side: like Eisenport we just move the weapons hilt to one side or the other making sure to keep the blade alignment and grip the same (in other words flat of the blade up and thumb on top with point threatening the middle cross).

Langort [Long point]:

Langort is the end result of a thrust. This guard only really has one version but can be executed in tree ways. The only difference between them is your intended target in which your wish to threaten. To perform this guard you stand with right foot forward and extend your arm and point out till they are level with the shoulder. Now as for the different intended targets they are the head or upper chest, the belly and the groin. To achieve these targets all you do is widen your stance and there for lower yourself to the target. Although I recommend avoiding the groin as lowering you stance that much takes great skill and strength to fence from.

A finally word on the guards:

There a few things that are assumed above that I will clarify here. One being that when in these stances, I assume you already know the proper position of the legs and feet. To achieve this stand with feet slightly apart with bent knees and your front foot facing forward and back foot face ether 90 or 45 degrees out form your front. The proper distant for your feet for normal movement is that your heels should be directly under your shoulders, but the distance can change in order to lower your stance.

The second part is that while in guard except the times when specially said otherwise. You should keep the point of your blade threatening your opponent as to keep him from rushing you.

Concerning the cuts:

- Schedelhauw [Scalp cut] or Oberhauw [High cut]
 - This is a strait down cut to perform this cut start in high center Oberhut and cut strait down in to center Underhut. When preformed correctly u should cut down the center line of your opponent hitting him in the head.
- Dempffhauw [Suppressing cut]
 - This is a counter cut use against your opponent's diagonal cuts. To perform the Dempffhauw against a cut from the right. Step out from your opponent's cut toward his left side with your right foot and cut down from oberhut on the right, into Eisenport on the left but as you land your blow on to ether the strong of his blade or right arm you should step wide so that you lower your stance. In doing so you will suppress his blade & cut downward. To perform this from the left you simply mirror the actions done for the right.
- Schielhauw [Squinting cut]
 - This is a counter performed from the Oberhut guard against your opponents cut using your short edge. To perform this cut start in Oberhut on the right, as your opponent cuts at you step away from his cut and counter cut downward onto his strong but do so that you hit with your flat or short edge. If you do not hit your opponent with the short edge weak of the blade you can always thrust to his face after stopping his blow. Small note the closer the two strong parts are together the better chance you have of hitting him behind his blade.
- Oberhauw Schlims [Diagonal high cut] (also known as the Zornhauw or the Wehrstreich)
 - This cut can be use in many different ways and at all three of the crosses. As a matter of fact when Meyer talks about "cutting the cross" he is talking about two of these cuts one after the other to opposite sides. First we shall talk about to perform the cut it's self. To perform this from above start in the cutting oberhut on the right and cut with long edge to langort and continue down to left unterhut. This cut can be performed from below as well just by reversing the steps and can be preformed on the left just by switching guards to the opposite side. The Zornhauw with the rapier as in all the other weapons can be used to attack (this is when we call it a Zornhauw) or defend (this is when it is called a Wehrstreich) just by changing the target from body to blade (or hand). And as mentioned before in order to attack the middle and lower crosses you must widen your stance to lower body to the

lower crosses. Note of safety: the lowest cross is not a target for every age and injure can make getting to the lowest cross hard and may do you more harm then good.

- Hüffthuaw [Hip cut]
 - This is two cuts instead of one. The first cut is to provoke a response (this is some time called second intention) and the second to hit where you really intended. And is preformed thus: cut to his head and just before hitting turn your short edge inward sending your tip in toward his left ear forcing him to parry deeper. As he come up to parry bring your hilt around in front of your face to your left side and then cut down diagonally at his right hip. This is all done with one step of the right foot so you should step down on your right as you hit your opponent's hip.
- Rundstreich [Round stroke]
 - This is two cuts done in one fluid motion. The first cut is a mittelhauw (which is a horizontal cut through the center of the cross) to his right through his face and then diagonally down from your right through his right thigh or knee. This can be done from the right or the left.
- Doppel Rundstreich [Double Round stroke]
 - This cut is two fainting cuts and a real cut in a fluid motion. Start by cutting a mittelhauw from your right at his head but do not let it connect. Instead pull your hilding into left Ochs and then cut a Zornhauw through his shoulder right shoulder but still not connecting pulling your shot so that you can cut a Zornhauw from your right through his right thigh. The stepping with this is more complicated then the in single Rundstreich where with the first to cut are done is a very shallow step and the last one with a real step putting you in proper cutting distance.
- Halßhauw [Neck cut]
 - Start in the ether Eisenport or unterhut and wait for him to attack your middle cross with a horizontal cut. Now if he attacks your left side step away from his strike and at the same time with the flat of your blade strike the strong of his blade from above forcing it down. Now as soon as they connect then step again farther around him and draw your long edge across his right side on his neck. This can be done from either side and without the suppression of the flat. To perform this cut without using your flat to suppress his blade wait till he has reached the furthest point of his cut and then strike a middle cut across his neck from the side his cut delivered.
- Fußhauw [Foot cut]
 - This is any cut to the "Foot" but Meyer doesn't really mean the foot! He means any part of the leg below the knee. This cut can be a Zornhauw or a Mittelhauw, as long as it is to this lower part of the leg. This cut should be used with great care as it requires perfect timing and distant and is normally done after your

opponents blade has been thrown off time or if he is too slow in his retreat or has no mastery of distance.

- Handthauw [Hand cut]
 - This cut is any counter cut done to the opponent's sword hand. It is normally executed when your opponent cuts to the leg or cut a high cut to wide as he must stretch out his hand to make these shots.
- Doppelhauw [Double cut]
 - This is a counter cut followed by two cuts. To perform this cut wait till your opponent throws a cut from above at your left side. Now, meet his cut with a mittelhauw or unterhauw from your right the higher they meet the better. Now as soon as your blades meet turn your short edge on to his blade and cut with the long edge of the blade across his face, and with this cut bring your hilt up under his blade while stepping with the right foot far to his right side so you are leaning to your left, and as you put your right foot down cut with your long edge at his head over his right arm.

Concerning thrusts:

Meyer teaches that there are three main thrusts from which all other thrusts arise. They are from above and below which can be done from the right or the left, and middle which is the transition from Eisenport to Langort. Meyers describes the basic thrust from above as starting off in right Ochs and raising your right foot as you push your tip forward into your opponent's chest and step well forward and as your foot lands you turn your long edge to the ground and your knee should be well bent and your body is leaning over it. If done correctly you should be in an extended version of the Langort guard. This basic thrust can be done from both sides and to any of the opening as need by adjusting the end body position to meet the opening needed.

Meyer also teaches 7 other types of thrust or trick thrust. They are:

- Gesichtstich [Face Thrust]
 - Start in left Ochs and when your opponent thrust at your right side then step with your right foot away from it, and thrust him in the face over his arm. Now this move is suppose to be performed with out touching your opponent's blade as during the time it was consider better to avoid your opponents attack while making your own, then to defend your self then return an attack as many modern sport fencers do today.
- Gurgelstich [Throat Thrust]
 - If your opponent is in Eisenport then take up the guard of left Ochs and proceed to fake a high thrust over his right arm at his face with a little bit of a step out to that side. Now if your opponent raises his guard to defend him self then drop your tip down and bring it under his arm while

turning your long edge down and then thrust to his throat from under his arm until you find yourself in the guard of Langort. This should be done in one fluid motion and with proper distance.

- Hezstich [Heart Thrust]
 - If your opponent strikes at you from his right then do the same but step under his blade (to the left) and try to catch his blade on your strong as high and as close to his hilt as possible. Now once the blades connect turn your point toward the left part (your right his left) of his chest bring your short edge to bear on his blade and thrust him in the heart. Now while you have your short edge on his long if you start to feel as if he is trying to force your blade away then turn your long edge back to his and strike as the opening presents itself.
- Gemechtstich [Groin Thrust]
 - If your opponent strikes to the out side of your right thigh or knee then counter cut from your left into a right unterhut while at the same time stepping away from his strike with your left foot. Once the blades connect then turn your point upward and step with your right foot toward him and thrust him from below in his Groin.
- Verkehrter Stich [Reversed or inverted Thrust]
 - If your opponent use strait parrying (defends only doesn't counter cut or thrust or voids just blocks) and is in the guard of Eisenport. And you are in the right Unterhut then thrust up at his face as close to his blade as possible with your long edge facing his blade and let him push you aside but in doing so drop your point down and go under his arm and thrust to the other side of his guard at his face with short edge facing his blade.
- Doppel Stich [Double Thrust]
 - If your opponent uses strait parrying and is in the guard of Eisenport, and you are in right unterhut then thrust up at his face as close to his blade as possible. Now if he comes up with his hilt to parry then turn your short edge against his blade and raise your hilt turning your low thrust into a high thrust, and thrust around his guard into his chest.
 - Another way instead of thrusting around his guard snap the blade around under his guard into left Ochs and thrust from the left to his right side stepping out to your left as you thrust.
 - This thrust can be done many ways the main idea is to use second intention by throwing a thrust to draw guard to close that opening while opening up another and then as quickly as possible thrusting to that new opening.

- Verfierte Stich [Deceitful Thrust]
 - To perform this thrust start in the guard of right Ochs. Now start to deliver a thrust to his face from this guard but as you start to do so sweep your point and hilt down and lower your stance by making your lung deeper in doing so you hit him in the belly while he defends his face.
- Fliegender Stich [Flying Thrust]
 - This is nothing more than a series of thrust performed in rapid succession each with a good step forward. Meyer teaches this from the unterhut but I see no reason why we can't do it from any guard. The things to remember when performing this move is to fully thrust on each one meaning keeping your arm straight and stepping as deep in the lung as you can and keep aligned with your target's opening. After you have delivered the first thrust. Do not retreat! But bring your back foot up into a proper stance and bring your blade back into a guard (normally the one you were in before but you can change it up if you feel you should) and rapidly repeat 1 to 6 times.

The transformation from cut to thrust and thrust to cut

Meyer teaches many ways to do this. Here I will show you one for each so that you have a basic idea on how to proceed. To transform a cut into a thrust all you have to do is as your opponent goes to counter cut or block your sword pull it slightly back so they do not connect making sure that you keep your point facing your opponent as it would if you were to cut from an Oberhut into a left or right Eisenport. Then proceed to thrust from there. Now to transform thrust into a cut is even easier. As you deliver your thrust and your opponent counter cuts or pushes you off with a straight parry then let the force push your tip around in a circle and cut with the motion to the direction from which his counter came.

The Parry

In Meyer's treatise he teaches us 8 types of parrying:

1. Absetzen [Setting Off]
 - This is when from any of the four guards. you use your long edge to catch his incoming cut or thrust with a slight step away from his attack, and then proceed into Langort for your repost.
2. Abschneiden [Slicing Off]
 - As your opponent begins to strike or thrust. pull your hand up keeping your point online and as his attack comes in punch out with arm and blade in a downward motion still keeping your point on line

but forcing his blade down in a slicing motion. This should be done with the long edge.

3. Dempffen [Suppressing]
 - This is pretty much an Oberhauw onto the strong of his blade with a double step away from his attack and toward him.
4. Durchgehn [Going Through]
 - This is like a very wide circle parry from modern fencing. This parry is preformed thus: as your opponent cuts at your left while you stand in right Unterhut then bring your weapon across to your left with the blade hanging under his blade once your tip is under his sword then bring it up in a arch striking his blade from the side it came from and forcing his blade down and to your right. Now Meyer say you should end in the right Unterhut from which you started but I find it better to be in right Eisenport cause from here you can trust over his arm at his face. Also this should be perform with ether a lean back on your back leg or step through and toward him so that you void his incoming attack. For some reason Meyer doesn't say anything here about stepping or body movement unlike the many Italians of his time using the same move.
5. Verhengen [Hanging]
 - This is a high guard for defending your head. Bring your hilt up above your head but leave the blade in a hanging position down toward the ground. So that if your opponent had cut your head it would hit the flat and slide down your blade to the ground. This is preformed pretty much the same way as the long sword and dusak.
6. Sperren [Barring]
 - This is a low parry for the legs. To perform this parry when your opponent cuts at your right leg from the left then step away from it and move your blade with hilt up and blade strait down as to catch his blade on yours and stop his attack. When done right this should be similar to the long sword cross guard.
7. Außschlagen mit hangender kling [striking out with hanging blade]
 - This is pretty much a Durchgehn done from above instead of below. To perform this parry start in the right Oberhut and when your opponent cuts or thrusts at your mid section. then bring your right

foot back to your left and at the same time bring the tip of your blade down and to the left and in a sweeping arc your tip will carry through back to the right carrying your opponents blade to your right (the end result is a high right Sperren). From here you should work quickly your counter attack before your opponent continues his device.

8. Außnehmen mit halber schneid [taking out with the short edge]
 - This is just an Unterhauw from left Unterhut to your opponent's blade with the short edge. Although Meyer wants you after words to bring the tip around your head and into the guard of right Ochs. The parry its self is pretty much just the striking part.

Other important parts of rapier are:

- Wechseln [changing]
 - Wechslen as its name implies, means to change your cut from one thing into another so if you cut to his left just before it hit or he makes his parry you turn it into a cut or a trust to the other side.
 - There are two types of wechslen, Durch and Um.
 - Durchwechslen [changing through]: this means taking your cut and during the change go under his sword. For example if you cut your opponents left side, and he goes to block. Then right before your blade hits his, pull your blade back slightly so you don't hit his and travel under his blade and then thrust to the other side.
 - Umwechslen [changing around]: this means to go over his blade. For example if you cut this left side and he goes to parry then before you hit, turn your cut into a thrust and thrust over and around his sword.
- Nachreisen [chasing]
 - This is pretty much striking where he was. If your opponent is in right oberhut and you are in left unterhut then as soon as he move to left unterhut thrust or cut to where his blade was with long edge toward the direction his blade traveled. So if he goes from right oberhut to left unterhut then cut a right oberhauw to his upper right opening. And if he goes from left unterhut to right oberhut then cut a right unterhauw to his lower left opening.
- Bleiben [Remaining]
 - Meyer is very unclear about what he meant in the rapier section. He refers us to the long sword section where he say that there are two types one is feeling which we'll get to in

a second and the other is when you strike on area and then faint has if you are going to pull back and strike another opening but instead strike that same opening again with the short edge.

- Fühlen [feeling]
 - Fühlen is feeling what your opponents doing while in the bind. So if your blades are locked and you feel a release of pressure then you know the is pulling away and you can then use Nachreisen to strike him by following his blade or if you feel him increasing pressure then you can redirect his force away from you. Thus you “FEEL” what he is doing.
- Zucken [pulling]
 - This is just to pull your blade back quickly before or after contact with your opponent’s blade.
- Winden [winding]
 - Winden like wechslen can be done ether Durch [through] or Um [around or above]. Winden is maneuvering your blade to strike your opponent while still remaining in contact with his blade. The Durch and Um part refers to weather your pommel goes over his blade (Umwinden) or under his blade (Durchwinden)

As far as stepping is concerned Meyer teaches everything about stepping in his devices. This is done because in all honesty there are too many rules concerning this and all of them can change in an instance. So I will not going to detail on stepping in this document at this time. But I am working on some ground rules.

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