

Understanding Canine Behavior

Primary Textbook: “*Canine Behavior: A Photo Illustrated Handbook*”, by Barbara Handelman, M.Ed., CDBC,

Available for 20% discount from www.woofandwordpress.com

Articles as assigned and made available on-line by the instructor.

Secondary Required Textbook: “*Inside of a Dog*” by Alexandra Horowitz

Available from www.Dogwise.com and Amazon.com

Suggested Secondary Texts, Highly recommended but not required

- “*Changing People Changing Dogs*” by Dee Ganley
 - Available from www.deesdogs.com

Purpose: Students will learn to observe and interpret canine behavior. Their new understanding will help them prevent potentially dangerous dog to dog, or dog to human interactions.

Course Objectives:

As a result of this class, students will:

- Be able to define “behavior” as a concept
- Become skilled observers of canine behavior
- Recognize the signs of mild, moderate and severe stress in dogs
- Recognize different categories of aggressive dog behavior
- Develop awareness of how anatomy is relevant in understanding and interpreting behavior
- Recognize and understand:
 - Displacement Behaviors
 - Distance Increasing Behaviors
 - Distance decreasing Behaviors
 - Dominance: definition and relevance in behavior
 - Epimeletic and et-epmiletic behaviors
 - Metasignals
- Differentiate different types of canine play
- Understand predation in domestic canines
- Understand the difference between socializing and socialization
 - Be conversant with early socialization and temperament evaluation techniques
- Understand social hierarchies in wild and domestic canines

Live Course Format:

This ten-week course will be presented in “seminar style” with ample opportunity for discussion and Q & A with fellow students and the instructor.

Reading assignments will be from the primary class text: *Canine Behavior: A Photo Illustrated Handbook*. There will also be supplemental readings from the most current literature in the field.

- Class will meet at a specific time each week.
Material from missed classed will be available on line, but the opportunity for real-time discussion will happen only during designated class times.
- This class will be graded on a “pass/fail” basis,
CEUs will be given only to those whose active participation in class discussions proves a grasp of the reading materials and the class content.

This course can also be taken On-Demand:

On-demand students can take the class at their own pace and do not have to be available for a set meeting time each week. Contact with the instructor takes via email. On-Demand students have access to the guest speakers via a recorded version of the class in which the guest appeared.

Expectations:

- Quizzes: will not be graded because they are an integral part of how each class will be structured, and the answers will be provided as part of the discussions.
- Participation and Attendance: All students of the live classes will be expected to participate in discussions of reading material and material presented during class. Students will be prepared to analyze canine behavior interactions presented by the instructor. **If you must miss a class, you will be expected to catch up using the recorded meeting of the class on-line, and respond to the material in writing.**
- All of the readings and class materials build on each other, so missing a class or failing to read an assignment will make following the material in future classes more difficult.
- Readings: Students must read all assigned articles and sections of the primary text. Students should plan to read the entire primary textbook, *Canine Behavior a Photo-Illustrated Handbook*, to enhance learning throughout the course.
- Reading the secondary text is highly recommended but not required.

Class 1: May 10 (90 minutes, no breaks)

Overview of Course Objectives: (Instructor goes over what the students will learn over the next 9 weeks.)

- What is behavior
- Becoming a skilled observer
- Observing canine behavior without making judgments about intention
- Anthropomorphism

Class 2: May 17 (90 minutes, no breaks)

- **Stress in Dogs Part 1**
Identifying signs of stress

Class 3: May 24 (90 minutes, no breaks)

- Q & A with Author, Alexandra Horowitz: Addressing Canine Cognition and “The Nobel Mind”

No Class May 31 in observance of Memorial Day

Class 4: June 7 (90 minutes, no breaks)

- Class discussion will focus on
The relevance of stress in choosing dogs for canine careers
Safety in dog parks
Learned Helplessness
Habituation
Flooding
Desensitization
Displacement Behaviors
Distance Decreasing Behaviors

Class 5: June 8 (90 minutes, no breaks)

Aggression in Dogs, Part 1

- Distance Increasing Behaviors
- Barrier Frustration Aggression
- Ritualized Aggression

Class 6: June 14 (90 minutes, no breaks)

Aggression in Dogs, Part 2

- Dog to dog aggression
- Dog to human aggression, with specific emphasis on resource guarding, prevention and remediation

Class 7: June 21 (90 minutes, no breaks)

- Class discussion will focus on
Dominance: definition and relevance in behavior

Social Hierarchies in domestic dogs

Class 8: June 28 (90 minutes, no breaks)

- Class discussion will focus on:
Metasignals
Differentiating different types of canine play
Self-handicapping
Play skills deficits
Play arousal escalation to aggression

No Class July 5 in observance of 4th of July Holiday

Class 9: July 12 (90 minutes, no breaks)

- Class discussion will focus on:
Predation in domestic canines
Fixed action patterns
instinct
Breed specific behaviors
Relevance to training and owner challenges
Predatory Play in relation to objects and other animals

Class 10: July 19 (90 minutes, no breaks)

Class discussion will focus on:

- Epimeletic and et-epmiletic behaviors
- Puppy Behavior and Development
 - Socializing
 - Socialization
 - Temperament Evaluations