

## Understanding Canine Behavior

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

**Available for 20% discount from [www.woofandwordpress.com](http://www.woofandwordpress.com)**

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

### **Suggested Secondary Texts, Highly recommended but not required**

- “**Inside of a Dog**” by Alexandra Horowitz
  - Available from [www.Dogwise.com](http://www.Dogwise.com)
- “**Changing People Changing Dogs**” by Dee Ganley
  - Available from [www.deesdogs.com](http://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

### **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.

### **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 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 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 (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

### **Classes 2 (90 minutes, no breaks)**

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

### **Class 3 (90 minutes, no breaks)**

#### **Stress in Dogs Part 2**

The relevance of stress in choosing dogs for canine careers  
Safety in dog parks  
Learned Helplessness  
Habituation  
Flooding  
Desensitization

### **Class 4 (90 minutes, no breaks)**

- Class discussion will focus on  
Displacement Behaviors  
Distance Increasing Behaviors  
Distance Decreasing Behaviors

### **Class 5 (90 minutes, no breaks)**

- Focus on Barrier Frustration Aggression
- Focus on Ritualized Aggression

### **Class 6 (90 minutes, no breaks)**

Continue discussion of aggression:

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

### **Class 7 (90 minutes, no breaks)**

- Class discussion will focus on  
Dominance: definition and relevance in behavior  
Social Hierarchies in domestic dogs

### **Class 8 (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

### **Class 9 (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 (90 minutes, no breaks)**

- Class discussion will focus on
- Epimeletic and et-epmiletic behaviors
  - Socializing
  - Socialization
  - Temperament Evaluations