



## **Behavioral Health for Shelter Dogs and Cats**

VME 6813

3 credits

University of Florida Distance Education Graduate Program in Shelter Medicine

### ***Instructors:***

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### ***Course Coordinator:***

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### ***Course Description***

Introduces canine and feline behavior so students will understand how and why dogs and cats end up in shelters, what can be done to enhance their behavioral health while they are in the shelter, how to manage common shelter behavioral issues, and how behavior influences adoptions and retention.

### ***Course Content***

At the successful completion of this course, students will understand: canine and feline communication; the influence of behavior on relinquishment, adoption and retention; how to assess and enhance behavioral wellness through interactions with others and the environment; and ways to use elementary training and learning principles to change common shelter pet behaviors.

### ***Course Prerequisites/Co-Requisites***

None

### ***Course Website***

<https://onlinesheltermedicine.vetmed.ufl.edu/>

### ***Course Objectives***

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

#### Part I: Canines

1. Know the evolutionary history of dogs.
2. Recognize typical canine behavioral characteristics.
3. Identify the stages of canine ontogeny and socialization.
4. Explain the influence of neutering on canine behavior.

5. Recognize the methods dogs use to communicate: visual, auditory and olfactory.
6. Interpret the meaning of canine body signals (e.g. relaxed, fear, arousal).
7. Use common methods to measure stress in shelter dogs.
8. Assess behavioral wellness of shelter dogs.
9. Use shelter housing and enrichment techniques to prevent or remedy behavioral distress and to promote well-being of shelter dogs.
10. Apply learning principles and elementary drug therapy to develop remedy programs for common shelter dog behavioral issues.

## Part II: Felines

1. Know the evolutionary history of cats.
2. Recognize typical feline behavioral characteristics.
3. Identify the stages of feline ontogeny and socialization.
4. Explain the influence of neutering on feline behavior.
5. Recognize the methods cats use to communicate: visual, auditory and olfactory.
6. Interpret the meaning of feline body signals (e.g. relaxed, fear, arousal).
7. Use common methods to measure stress in shelter cats.
8. Assess behavioral wellness of shelter cats.
9. Use shelter housing and enrichment techniques to prevent or remedy behavioral distress and to promote well-being of shelter cats.
10. Apply learning principles and elementary drug therapy to develop remedy programs for common shelter cat behavioral issues.

## ***Materials and Supplies Fees***

## ***Required Textbooks and Software***

1. **REQUIRED TEXTS:**
  - *ASV Guidelines for Standards of Care in Animal Shelters*. Association of Shelter Veterinarians. 2010. (available for free download at: <http://www.sheltervet.org/assets/docs/shelter-standards-oct2011-wforward.pdf>)
  - *Animal Behavior for Shelter Veterinarians and Staff*. Weiss, Mohan-Gibbons, and Zawistowski. John Wiley Blackwell, 2015. (available through online course reserves)
2. **RECOMMENDED TEXTS:**
  - *Pet Behavior Protocols: What to Say, What to Do, When to Refer*. Hetts. AAHA Press, 1999. (out-of-print, but available through online Course Reserves)
  - *Behavior Problems of the Dog and Cat, Third Edition*. Landsberg, Hunthausen, Ackerman. Saunders, 2012.
3. **Other required and recommended readings** will be posted in e-learning and Course Reserves to download and review without charge.

## ***Required Technology:***

Computer with reliable, high speed internet access; your preferred web browser; video player with ability to play MP4 videos; speakers and/or headphones and working sound; PDF reader. For more information on hardware and software necessary to run Canvas, visit <https://community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC-2059> (Links to an external site.). Canvas offers mobile applications for both [Apple](#) (Links to an external site.) and [Android](#) (Links to an external site.) products. These apps may be downloaded in the respective app stores. Depending on the device and your equipment, not all Canvas features may be available on the app at this time. For more information on Canvas apps, visit <https://community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC-1542> (Links to an external site.).

### ***Recommended Materials***

Recommended readings will be posted in e-learning and available in online Course Reserves.

### ***Course Schedule***

<b>Module/Weeks</b>	<b>Topics/Concepts</b>	<b>Activities/Assignments</b>
1.Introduction (1 week)	Course Overview and Introduction/Expectations Types of shelters/behaviorists Reasons for surrender	Readings Recorded Lecture Discussion Prompt(s)
2. What is a dog? (1week)	Distinctive behavioral characteristics of dogs Evolutionary history, Breeds, Physical appearance Canine ontogeny (socialization, neutering)	Readings Recorded Lecture Discussion Prompt(s) Quiz #1 Reflection #1
3. Dog Communication (1 week)	Objective observation vs subjective; Visual ,acoustic olfactory signals; Meaning	Readings Recorded Lecture Discussion Prompt(s) Practice Exercise #1 Reflection #2
4. Canine Behavior in Shelter (2 weeks)	Identification of stress/distress, Identification of behavioral wellness, Behavioral Wellness Rounds, “Calming signals” Gathering information about animals: Intake, Behavior eval, Behavioral observation	Readings Recorded Lecture Discussion Prompt(s) Practice Exercise #2 Reflection #3

	Prevention: Enrichment (include volunteers) Housing	
5. Behavior Problems of Shelter Dogs (2 weeks)	Learning principles Introduction to drug therapy Treatment of specific shelter dog issues (food aggression, jumpy mouthy, fear, house soiling) Aggression	Readings Recorded Lecture Discussion Prompt(s) Quiz #2 Reflection #4
6. Canine Behavior after Adoption (1 week)	Follow-up Special adoptions Dog bites	Readings Recorded Lecture Discussion Prompt(s) Reflection #5
7. Midterm (1 week)	Review	Open-book exam (short answer and essay) Discussion Prompt(s) Reflection #6
8. What is a cat? (1 week)	Distinctive behavioral characteristics of cats Evolutionary history, Breeds, physical appearance Feline ontogeny (socialization, neutering)	Readings Recorded Lecture Discussion Prompt(s) Quiz #3 Reflection #7
9. Feline Communication (1 week)	Objective observation vs subjective Visual Acoustic Olfactory Signals, Meaning	Readings Recorded Lecture Discussion Prompt(s) Practice Exercise #3 Reflection #8
10. Feline Behavior in Shelter (2 weeks)	Identification of stress/distress Identification of behavioral wellness Rounds “Calming signals” Gathering information about animals: Intake, Behavior eval, behavioral observation Prevention: Enrichment (include volunteers)	Readings Recorded Lecture Discussion Prompt(s) Practice Exercise #4 Reflection #9

	Housing	
11. Behavior Problems of Shelter Cats (2 weeks)	Learning principles Introduction to drug therapy for cats Treatment of specific shelter cat problems (Fear, aggression, elimination problems)	Readings Recorded Lecture Discussion Prompt(s) Quiz Reflection #10
12. Feline Behavior After Adoption (1 week)	Follow-up Special adoptions Introduction of cats to household	Readings Recorded Lecture Discussion Prompt(s) Reflection #11
13. Final (1 week)	Review	Open-book exam (short answer and essay) Discussion Prompt(s) Reflection #12 Instructor Evaluation Post-course Survey

### *Evaluation of Grades*

#### **EVALUATION FRAMEWORK**

<b>Assignment</b>	<b>Weight</b>	<b>Grading Criteria</b>
Discussions (13)	20%	Student posts a professional and well-written response to each discussion prompt and responds in a substantive way to a classmate's post by the stated due date.
Practice Exercises (4)	15%	Students use the lesson content to complete an online practice activity where they demonstrate application of the content. Most of the activities can be repeated as needed until student demonstrates mastery.

Quizzes (3)	20%	Automatically graded, objectively, 1 point per question
Reflections (12)	5%	Students complete personal reflections about the readings in each module following the KNOW format: something that they already Knew, something that was New for them, their Overall Observations about the content of the module, and What they still have questions about at the end of the module.
Midterm exam (open-book)	20%	Short answer and essay
Final exam (open-book)	20%	Short answer and essay

### ***Grading Policy***

Percent	Grade	Grade Points
90.0 - 100.0	A	4.00
87.0 -89.9	A-	3.67
84.0 - 86.9	B+	3.33
81.0 – 83.9	B	3.00
78.0 - 80.9	B-	2.67
75.0 - 77.9	C+	2.33
72.0 – 74.9	C	2.00
69.0 - 71.9	C-	1.67
66.0 - 68.9	D+	1.33
63.0 - 65.9	D	1.00

60.0 - 62.9	D-	0.67
0 - 59.9	E	0.00

More information on UF grading policy may be found at:

<http://gradcatalog.ufl.edu/content.php?catoid=10&navoid=2020#grades>

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>

## EXPECTATIONS AND POLICIES

Students are responsible for meeting all academic objectives as defined by the instructor.

Plagiarism ([as defined by the UF Student Honor Code](#)) will not be tolerated. Be sure to cite your sources and references and attribute any verbatim quotations included in your submissions and posts.

[UF Maples Center for Forensic Medicine Code of Conduct and Professionalism \(our Department\)](#)

### Instructional Policy:

This course is part of the distance education program at the University of Florida. Instead of traditional lecture format, the medium for communication between course instructors, teaching assistants and students will be via Canvas e-learning. (<http://elearning.ufl.edu> )

**Attendance:** Students must participate in the online discussions, and are required to visit the course e-learning daily for important updates and announcements.

Additional information regarding attendance/absences can be found at:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>

**Class Participation:** Students are expected to constructively join in online discussions with appropriate preparation, to post interesting and relevant information on the class bulletin board, and to interact professionally with their classmates.

**Performance Expectations:** Students are expected to produce quality work of a standard comparable to any graduate level didactic course. Bulletin postings and discussions must be legible, constructive and appropriate. Students are required to think for themselves and will be expected to complete assignments that require the application of logic and reasoning skills when the answer may not be found in a book or the course notes.

**Due Dates and Late Submissions:** Pay close attention to the due dates posted in e-learning on your personal Dashboard and the Canvas Calendar for each assignment. Late submissions are eligible for up to 50% of the available points for each assignment.

This course is designed for working professionals like yourself. So we understand that sometimes life gets in the way of our best plans for juggling work, home, and school. If you anticipate you will likely miss a due date, request an extension in advance of the due date by sending an email through the Canvas Inbox to your instructors that explains the reason you need more time and when you expect to submit the work. Please title these posts clearly with "REQUEST EXTENSION FOR ASSIGNMENT 6A" (or whatever you need). Please avoid overuse of this option as it interferes with your classmate's ability to complete their own assignments.

NOTE: We honor most, but not all, requests for extensions.

**Grade Changes:** Grades will be changed only when a grading error has been made. If you think an error has been made, you should email the instructor as soon as possible. Your entire assignment will then be re-graded.

**Incomplete grades:** Under special circumstances, if a student is unable to finish a course before the end of the semester we may be able to assign an incomplete grade. An incomplete grade is a non-punitive grade assigned at the discretion of the course instructor. In this course an incomplete grade may be assigned if 1/3rd or more of the course assignments have been completed and if the student has remained in communication with TA's and instructors throughout the course, or has made an effort to request an incomplete grade. If an incomplete grade is assigned, outstanding assignments must be completed by the end of the next semester. If the assignments are not completed in this time you will be assigned a grade based on the completed assignments.

### ***Students Requiring Accommodations***

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, <https://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc>) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

### ***Course Evaluation***

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance On how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at [gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/](http://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/). Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via [ufl.bluera.com/ufl/](http://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/). Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at [gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/](http://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/).

### ***University Honesty Policy***



UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.” The Honor Code (<https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor or TAs in this class.

### ***Software Use***

All faculty, staff, and students of the University are required and expected to obey the laws and legal agreements governing software use. Failure to do so can lead to monetary damages and/or criminal penalties for the individual violator. Because such violations are also against University policies and rules, disciplinary action will be taken as appropriate. We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to uphold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity.

### ***Student Privacy***

There are federal laws protecting your privacy with regards to grades earned in courses and on individual assignments. For more information, please see:

<http://registrar.ufl.edu/catalog0910/policies/regulationferpa.html>

### ***Campus Resources:***

#### ***Health and Wellness***

##### **U Matter, We Care:**

If you or a friend is in distress, please contact [umatter@ufl.edu](mailto:umatter@ufl.edu) or 352 392-1575 so that a team member can reach out to the student.

**Counseling and Wellness Center:** <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc>, and 392-1575; and the University Police Department: 392-1111 or 9-1-1 for emergencies.

##### **Sexual Assault Recovery Services (SARS)**

Student Health Care Center, 392-1161.

**University Police Department** at 392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies), or

<http://www.police.ufl.edu/>.

#### ***Academic Resources***

**E-learning technical support**, 352-392-4357 (select option 2) or e-mail to [Learning-support@ufl.edu](mailto:Learning-support@ufl.edu). <https://lss.at.ufl.edu/help.shtml>.

**Career Resource Center**, Reitz Union, 392-1601. Career assistance and counseling.

<https://www.crc.ufl.edu/>.

**Library Support**, <http://cms.uflib.ufl.edu/ask>. Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources.

**Teaching Center**, Broward Hall, 392-2010 or 392-6420. General study skills and tutoring. <https://teachingcenter.ufl.edu/>.

**Writing Studio, 302 Tigert Hall**, 846-1138. Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers. <https://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/>.

**Student Complaints Campus:**

[https://www.dso.ufl.edu/documents/UF\\_Complaints\\_policy.pdf](https://www.dso.ufl.edu/documents/UF_Complaints_policy.pdf).

**On-Line Students Complaints:** <http://www.distance.ufl.edu/student-complaint-process>