Shelter Animal Behavior and Welfare

I. Course information

Course Number: VEM 5320/VME 6812
Course Title: Shelter Animal Behavior and Welfare
Course credit: 3 Graduate Credit Hours

II. General information

Online Course Coordinator: Terry Spencer, DVM, MEd (lead for Chapter 1)

Office hours:
- Online by email within e-learning. Please allow 48 hours for reply.
- Contact on-campus Student Support Services in VS-3.
- 24 hour support line: 352-273-8691
- 24 hour support email: de-support@ahc.ufl.edu

Lead Instructor:
Sheila D’Arpino, DVM, DACVB (lead for Chapters 10 and 11)

Co-Instructors:
Sara Bennett, DVM, MS, DACVB; (lead for Chapters 4, 6, and 9)
Jeannine Berger, DVM, DACVB, DACAW, CAWA; (lead for Chapters 7 & 8)
Brenda Griffin, DVM, MS, DACVIM (lead for Chapters 2, 3, and 5)

- Contact instructors by email within the e-learning.
- Please allow 48 hours for a response.

Online Teaching Assistants:
Lead TA: Dr. Lisa Shriver
Group 1: Drs. Corriher and Delgado
Group 2: Drs. Contreras and Boyd-Kyle
Group 3: Drs. Bader and Junaid
Group 4: Dr. Sieranski
Group 5: Drs. Barton and Dalrymple
Group 6: Drs. Ellard and Tobin
Group 7: Drs. Wright and Hekman

Non-Grading TAs: Dr. Horton, Dionne Banks, Jenny Applebaum
Course Delivery:
This course is taught entirely online within the UF academic calendar for the spring semester. The course is delivered using the UF centrally supported learning management system, CANVAS. Students must have a Gator Link ID to access this e-learning site at the following link:

- https://lss.at.ufl.edu/

III. Course Description

Course goals/Educational goals of the course:

This course will help you evaluate the quality of a shelter’s behavioral health programs as well as implement changes to promote welfare and placement of sheltered dogs and cats. The course explores important concepts related to shelter animal behavior and welfare such as: behavioral assessments, behavioral modification protocols, diagnosis and management/treatment of common behavioral problems.

Course objectives:
By the end of this course, you will be able to:

1. Compare differences in intake/outcome policies among various sheltering models.
2. Classify the advantages and disadvantages of using various behavioral resources available to shelters.
3. Lead daily behavioral rounds and make population decisions to maximize both behavioral health and life saving efforts.
4. Assess welfare of individual animals as well as the general population within the shelter.
5. Evaluate housing conditions of sheltered animals.
6. Design protocols that maximize behavioral health and minimize risk to physical health.
7. Compare the reliability, validity, and standardization of available behavioral assessments and understand the advantages and limitations of such assessments.
8. Know how to use available behavioral information to make appropriate placement decisions within various sheltering models.
9. Compare several behavioral modification techniques and determine whether the technique(s) are humane and whether the techniques are likely to be effective.
10. Use basic principles of psychopharmacology to design a medication protocol for a sheltered animal and monitor its effectiveness.
11. Diagnose common behavior problems, create an appropriate treatment plan and/or outcome assessment, and prescribe/monitor appropriate medications for problems such as: jumpy or mouthy dogs, separation anxiety, fearfulness, interspecies aggression, aggression toward people or other species, inappropriate elimination, urine marking, kennel stress and furniture scratching.

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V. Course Materials

**Required Texts and Resources:**
3. *ASV Guidelines for Standards of Care in Animal Shelters*
   Download a copy from the following website: [http://www.sheltervet.org/about/shelter-standards/](http://www.sheltervet.org/about/shelter-standards/)
4. Rent two recorded television broadcasts from an internet provider (also available to view within Chapter 5):
   a. *Dog Whisperer season 9, episode 12: Cesar’s Worst Bite* (available from iTunes)
   b. *My Cat from Hell Season 2, Episode 1: Terrorizing my Clients*
5. Various readings available on UF’s Electronic Reserves, accessible at [https://ares.uflib.ufl.edu](https://ares.uflib.ufl.edu) and within e-learning Course Reserves area.
6. A desktop or laptop with high-speed internet access and at least one browser other than Internet Explorer (Firefox, Chrome, or Safari). Apple iOS and tablets are not compatible with e-learning.
7. A working headset with microphone to participate in Adobe Connect live chats within e-learning.
8. Students must have Microsoft Office Software installed and have basic skills for using Word and Excel. Students with a Gator Link ID have free access to Lynda.com for training and are able to download discounted software from the UF Computing Help Desk ([UF Software Services](https://ares.uflib.ufl.edu)).

**Recommended Additional Resources (Optional):**


**VI. Course Overview**

This course is delivered totally online through UF e-learning using an interactive digital “textbook” divided into 11 chapters. Each chapter includes interactive activities, reading, recordings, webinars, group discussion, and assignments to deepen student
understanding as well as assess achievement. Assignments are due throughout the semester and most assignments allow a three-day window to submit. Faculty, teaching assistants, and guest specialists are available as resources throughout the course.

**Reading Assignments:**

The list of required readings by chapter can be found here and on the website here. Most of the readings come from the required textbooks or as files/e-books made available to students within the pages of the chapters, in the UF Distance Learning Library Course Reserves, and on reserve on-campus at the College of Veterinary Medicine Education Center.

**Assignments and Grading:**

Details about each assignment are included within the online chapters. A list of assignments and their respective point values can be found here and on the website here. Some additional face-to-face activities may be required for UF on-campus students in order to “blend” the online courses with on-site events.

**Due Dates:**

Due dates are provided on the Course Calendar within e-learning. Students are encouraged to add this Google Calendar to their personal Google Calendar after creating a free Google account.

**Extra-Credit: Minute Papers, Live Chat Sessions, and/or On-campus meetings/field-trips**

All students are required to submit three Minute Papers during the semester and on-campus students are also required to participate in any scheduled face-to-face activities (such as field trips, labs, or case-discussions).

Ample opportunities exist to earn extra-credit each semester by submitting additional Minute Papers or by participating in scheduled online Live Chats with your instructors and guests via the Adobe Connect webinar tool built into the course. Anyone who cannot attend an online live chat at the scheduled hour can still get participation credit by posting questions for the speaker PRIOR to the session. All Live Chat sessions are recorded for later viewing by students who cannot attend.

See the Course Calendar for scheduled dates and times.
Chapter 1: Course Overview and Introductions

Students will also practice using e-learning tools, introduce themselves to their classmates, and complete a pre-course quiz that reviews the structure and expectations for this course.

**Assignments for Chapter 1:**
- Assignment 1A: Required Orientation Session (multiple sessions to choose from; some on-campus and some online)
- Assignment 1B: Say Hello in a VoiceThread (students prepare their personal introduction using a presentation tool they will use again for presenting Final Projects and are assigned one classmate’s introduction to review)
- Assignment 1C: Quiz Completion Code
- Assignment 1D: Minute Paper (optional)

Chapter 2: Shelters and Behaviorists

Students will learn about various credentials for trainers and behaviorists. Students will also learn about various sheltering models.

**Required Readings for Chapter 2:** [See Reading List]

**Assignments for Chapter 2:**
- Assignment 2A: Review a shelter and identify regional behavior resources for this shelter
- Assignment 2B: Discussion
- Assignment 2C: Minute Paper (optional)

Chapter 3: Daily Rounds and Welfare Assessments

Students will learn how to implement a daily behavior rounds and use the information to improve the welfare of both individual animals and the shelter population.

**Required Readings for Chapter 3:** [See Reading List]

**Assignments for Chapter 3:**
- Assignment 3A: Virtual Rounds
- Assignment 3B: Population Rounds
- Assignment 3C: Discussion
Course Syllabus

Chapter 4: Behavior Evaluations

Students will learn why reliability, validity, and standardization are important concepts to consider when using behavior evaluations to make placement decisions for sheltered animals. Students will learn how to use behavior assessment information to make outcome decisions.

Required Readings for Chapter 4: (See Reading List)

Assignments for Chapter 4:
- Assignment 4A: Compare Behavior Assessment Tools
- Assignment 4B: Make Outcome Decisions-Case Review Pathway Planning
- Assignment 4C: Discussion
- Assignment 4D: Minute Paper (optional)

Chapter 5: Behavior Modification

Students will learn about behavioral modification techniques such as: positive and negative punishment, positive and negative reinforcement, classical and operant conditioning, and desensitization. Students will explore the advantages, disadvantages, and welfare considerations for such techniques.

Required Readings for Chapter 5: (See Reading List)

Required TV Episodes to Rent and View:
Watch two previously recorded television broadcasts from an internet provider (also available to view within Chapter 5):
- Dog Whisperer season 9, episode 12: Cesar’s Worst Bite (available from iTunes)
- My Cat from Hell Season 2, Episode 1: Terrorizing my Clients

Assignments for Chapter 5:
- Assignment 5A: Analyze Training Techniques from Popular Media
- Assignment 5B: Discussion
- Assignment 5C: Minute Paper (optional)

Chapter 6: Psychopharmaceuticals
Students will learn the indications and contraindications for various psychopharmaceuticals, select appropriate medical protocols for specific behavioral problems, and describe how to monitor the effectiveness of such prescriptions.

**Required Readings for Chapter 6:** ([See Reading List](#))

**Assignments for Chapter 6:**
- Assignment 6A: Decide when to use psychopharmaceuticals
- Assignment 6B: Discussion
- Assignment 6C: Minute Paper (optional)

**Chapter 7: Behavior Problems in Sheltered Pets: Assessment, Management, Treatment**

Students will learn about assessing a shelter’s capacity to treat, manage, and re-home pets with problem behaviors. Students will learn how to diagnose behavior problems common to sheltered dogs and make an appropriate treatment plan to improve the chances for live-release of the animal from the shelter. Students will learn about specific behavior problems and currently recommended therapies to modify such behaviors and improve outcomes.

**Required Readings for Chapter 7:** ([See Reading List](#))

**Assignments for Chapter 7:**
- Assignment 7A: Minute Paper (REQUIRED)
- Assignment 7B: Final Project: Your Turn to be the Behaviorist (due later in semester)
- Assignment 7C: Discussion

**Chapter 8: Diagnosis & Treatment of Canine Problem Behaviors**

Students will learn how to diagnose behavior problems common to sheltered dogs and make an appropriate treatment plan to improve the chances for live-release of the animal from the shelter. Students will learn about specific behavior problems and currently recommended therapies to modify such behaviors and improve outcomes.

**Required Readings for Chapter 8:** ([See Reading List](#))

**Assignments for Chapter 8:**
- Assignment 8A: Discussion
- Assignment 8B: Minute Paper (REQUIRED)
Chapter 9: Diagnosis & Treatment of Feline Problem Behaviors

Required Readings for Chapter 9: [See Reading List]

Assignments for Chapter 9:
- Assignment 9A: Cat Behavior Discussion
- Assignment 9B: Discussion
- Assignment 9C: Minute Paper (optional)

Chapter 10: Placement of Pets with Problem Behaviors

Consider issues related to safely placing pets with problem behaviors in homes.

Required Readings for Chapter 10: None

Assignments for Chapter 10:
- Assignment 10A: Discussion
- Assignment 10B: Minute Paper (REQUIRED)

Chapter 11: Final Project and Peer-Reviews

Students will post their final projects that were assigned in Chapter 7, view their classmate’s recorded presentations, and participate in a virtual discussion of the presentations. Students will also complete a post-course survey.

Assignments for Chapter 11:
- Assignment 7B (Cont’d): Final Project Discussion
- Assignment 11: Minute Paper (optional)

VII. Grading:

Assignments are graded against a rubric presented with the description of the task and each assignment is worth a prescribed number of points toward the final course grade. Students who follow all directions and pay close attention to the grading rubric will likely receive full credit for their work. Errors will result in lost points. Failure to submit work by the due date will result in students only being able to earn up to 50% of the total available points. Requests for extensions of due dates will be considered on an individual basis as long as students request the extension in advance of the due date by emailing (within the course) to Teaching Assistants and
stating the reason they need an extension for a particular assignment and when they expect to submit the work. The grading scale use is:

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VIII. Administrative Policies:

For more information on UF Graduate School policies related to grades, attendance, student conduct, and academic honesty please visit the [Graduate School](#).

Honesty Policy
All students registered at the University of Florida have agreed to comply with the following statement: “I understand that the University of Florida expects its students to be honest in all their academic work. I agree to adhere to this commitment to academic honesty and understand that my failure to comply with this commitment may result in disciplinary action up to and including expulsion from the University.” In addition, on all work submitted for credit the following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.” Review the [Student Conduct and Honor Code](#).

Plagiarism includes any attempt to take credit for another person’s work. This includes quoting directly from a paper, book, or website, without crediting the source. Sources should be noted, a link to the website added, or quotation marks placed around the material and attributed, even during online discussions. However, the instructor expects more than simply cutting and pasting in this graduate-level course. Students are expected to review, evaluate and comment on material they research, rather than simply copying relevant material. Work will be graded accordingly.

Student Evaluation of Instruction
Evaluations are performed electronically at the end of the course. To evaluate the instructor, visit the [GatorRater Online Faculty Evaluation](#) site.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities
Students requesting accommodations must first register with the Dean of Students Office, Disability Resource Center at 352-392-8565. Students may also apply on-line for accommodations. For more information, see the [Disability Resource Center](#).

The Disability Resource Center will provide a letter to the student who must then meet with the course instructor to discuss the required accommodations. Once notification is complete, the instructor can work with the Disability Resource Center to provide the requested accommodations. To ensure that necessary accommodations are provided in a timely manner, it would expedite this process if any student who might need an
accommodation would notify the course coordinator during registration.

**Software Use**
All faculty, staff and students of the University are required 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.

**UF Counseling and Wellness Center**
Many resources are available for students who need help with stress-related problems or emergencies. Assistance is available both by appointment and after hours by calling 352-392-1575 or visiting the [UF Counseling and Wellness Center](#).

**Grade Changes**
Grades will be changed only when a documented grading error has been made.

**Communication with Instructors**
The preferred method for communication between students and the course instructors and teaching assistants is by email within e-learning. Please allow 48 hours for a response. Do NOT use e-learning to communicate about personal matters.

**Attendance**
Lessons within this course can include a combination of asynchronous self-paced activities and synchronous activities that require attendance at specific times. Students are expected to visit the course website daily to check for important updates and announcements about due dates and scheduled times for synchronous activities. Instructors monitor participation in discussion boards and other activities within the CANVAS learning management system.

**Class Participation**
Students are expected to constructively and professionally participate in online discussions and while completing both individual and group projects. Students are also expected to contribute interesting and relevant information during the discussions, chats, and group projects. All interactions between classmates and/or faculty must be polite and professionally conducted. Shouting (using all capital letters), use of profanity or insulting language, or plagiarism will not be permitted. However, avoid clogging the discussion boards with short responses such as, “Good Job” or “Thanks” or “Me Too” as such postings contribute little to the discussion.

**Performance Expectations**
Successful students report they spend between 6 to 10 hours working on course activities each week. Students are expected to produce quality work of a standard comparable to any graduate-level didactic course. Postings, assignment submissions, 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. Factual information should be documented and referenced during discussions and within assignments.

Make-Up Work, Late Assignments, and Due Dates
Students are expected to complete assignments according to the due dates given within the course and posted on the course calendar within e-learning. In most cases, due dates include a flexible 72-hour window in which to submit work. On occasion, students might request an extension in ADVANCE of a due date. **However, once a due date is past, late work will be graded at 50% of point value.** If a student experiences a technical problem they should immediately contact de-support@ahc.ufl.edu or call 352-273-8691 for assistance. If such an issue prevents a student from submitting an assignment by the due date, the student will be expected to produce a HELP TICKET to document efforts made to correct the problem in a timely manner prior to the due date.

It is imperative that students plan for completion of the course within the term calendar and sign into the course daily to check for announcements and updates. Students might have other work and personal commitments. However, because online courses offer so much flexibility, students are expected to make every effort to meet course deadlines. Instructors monitor the discussion boards and track student participation. Because students have email access to both their classmates and instructors within e-learning, there is ample opportunity to clarify instructions and prevent misunderstandings about expectations and due dates.

Important Dates/Deadlines to Withdraw
Consult the [UF Academic Calendar](#) for details on paying tuition, dates for dropping or withdrawing from this course, and any tuition penalties that apply.

Consult the Course Calendar within e-learning for important dates and deadlines that pertain to this course, and/or this [Google Course Calendar](#) on our website.