

University of Florida College of Veterinary Medicine Syllabus

I. Course information

Number: VEM 5320
Course title: Shelter Animal Behavior and Welfare
Department: Small Animal Clinical Sciences
Course credit: 3 credit hours

II. General information

Course director: Brenda Griffin, DVM, MS, DACVIM
Office location & office hours: Off-site
Office phone number: Off-site
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Course Faculty: Sara Bennett, DVM, MS, DACVB
Office location & office hours: Off-site
Office phone number: Off-site
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Student Services Coordinator: Kim Richmond
Office location & office hours: VS-3
Office phone number: 352-294-4891
Email: kimrichmond@ufl.edu

Technology Help
Web: <http://helpdesk.ufl.edu/>
Walk-in: HUB 132
Phone: (352) 392-HELP (4357)
Email: helpdesk@ufl.edu

E-library/Course Reserves help: Paul McDonough, UF Library West
Email: paulmcd@uflib.ufl.edu

III. Course description

Course goals: Educational goals of the course
Learn and apply behavioral medicine concepts to address behavior and welfare problems and improve shelter animal behavioral health and wellness in a variety of shelter settings.

Course objectives

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

1. Apply the problem-oriented approach in veterinary medicine to shelter animal behavior and welfare
2. Compare and contrast different types of animal behaviorists and trainers
3. Accurately interpret canine and feline body language, behaviors, and motivations
4. Assess the impact of housing and environment on behavior and learning
5. Select strategies to optimize behavioral wellness and provide enrichment
6. Review available methods and tools for behavior assessment and know the advantages and limitations of each

7. Know how animals learn and compare training, behavioral management and modification techniques in order to determine whether they are humane and likely to be effective in the context of the animal's current environment
8. Use basic principles of psychopharmacology to design a medication protocol for a sheltered animal and monitor its effectiveness
9. Use available behavioral and welfare information to make appropriate outcome and placement decisions within various sheltering models
10. Design protocols to maximize behavioral health and minimize risk to physical health
11. Create plans for behavioral wellness and treatment for individual shelter animals, including specific enrichment, management, training, behavior modification, medication, rehoming, and education strategies.

Course Outline

This course is delivered online through UF e-Learning (Canvas) using an interactive digital "textbook" divided into eleven Modules. Each Module includes interactive activities, readings, recordings, group discussions, assignments, and peer reviews to deepen student understanding as well as assess achievement. Faculty, teaching assistants, and facilitators are available as resources throughout the course. Students are expected to participate in a professional manner throughout the semester, including completion of all required work and submission of assignments that are each individual's work without plagiarism or copying from another student or source without proper attribution. This course may also include hands on service-learning laboratories at Gainesville area shelters.

Module 1: Course Overview and Introductions

Students will practice using e-learning tools, introduce themselves to their classmates, learn about the structure and flow of the course, be introduced to the problem-oriented approach, and complete a pre-course quiz that reviews the structure and expectations for this course.

Module 2: Shelters and Behaviorists

Students will learn about various credentials for trainers and behaviorists and consider the role of the shelter veterinarian in shelter animal behavior and welfare. Students will also explore the range and variety of available behavior resources and programs among organizations.

Module 3: Canine and Feline Communication

Students will learn to interpret body language and signaling to better understand what animals are experiencing and learning emotionally in the shelter. Students will also learn about the role of critical anthropomorphism as it relates to interpretation of animal behavior and emotions in the shelter context.

Module 4: Emotional Health and Welfare in the Shelter

Students will learn about shelter animal welfare including the impact of housing and environment on behavior. They will explore strategies to decrease stress and promote positive emotions and normal behaviors in shelter animals while considering practical methods for optimizing behavioral health care within the context of available resources.

Module 5: Assessing Behavior: Collecting a Behavioral Database

Students will learn what information is needed (should be considered) to evaluate behavioral health and welfare. They will become familiar with a variety of tools used to measure behavior, welfare, and quality of life and the strengths and weaknesses associated with them. How to utilize this information to create a problem list and then to apply it to the outcome decision-making process will also be introduced.

Module 6: Principles of Training and Behavior Modification

Students will explore concepts related to animal learning and compare training and behavioral modification techniques to determine whether the technique(s) are humane and likely to be effective.

Module 7: Psychopharmacology for Shelter Pets

Students will learn the indications and contraindications for various psychopharmaceuticals, select appropriate medical protocols for specific behavioral problems in sheltered pets, and describe how to monitor the effectiveness of such prescriptions.

Module 8: Behavior Problems in Sheltered Pets: Assessment, Diagnosis, and 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 use the problem-oriented approach to create a differential diagnosis list, diagnose behavior problems of sheltered pets and create an appropriate treatment plan to improve well-being and 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.

Module 9: Adoption Counseling and Follow-Up

Students will consider issues related to safely placing pets with problem behaviors in homes, focusing on adoption counseling and post-adoption follow-up to facilitate success.

Module 10: Creating a Behavioral Plan for Sheltered Dogs

Students will learn how to utilize the problem-oriented approach to create differential lists and determine behavioral diagnoses (or working diagnoses) for problems common to sheltered dogs. Students will learn how to improve the odds of live release by creating an appropriate treatment plan which may include specific recommendations for enrichment, management, training, behavior modification, medication, rehoming, and education.

Module 11: Creating a Behavioral Plan for Sheltered Cats

Students will learn how to utilize the problem-oriented approach to create differential lists and determine behavioral diagnoses (or working diagnoses) for problems common to sheltered cats. Students will learn how to improve the odds of live release by creating an appropriate treatment plan which may include specific recommendations for enrichment, management, training, behavior modification, medication, rehoming, and education.

IV. Course Materials

Required texts: (available in Course Reserves as E-books)

Animal Behavior for Shelter Veterinarians and Staff, First Edition, Weiss, Mohan-Gibbons, and Zawistowski, Wiley Blackwell Publishing, 2015.

Shelter Medicine for Veterinarians and Staff, Second Edition, Lila Miller and Stephen Zawistowski (editors), Blackwell Publishing, 2013.

Other required reading material is provided in Canvas.

Recommended texts (outstanding reference texts for veterinary behavior):

Behavior Problems of the Dog and Cat, Third Edition, Landsberg, Hunthausen, Ackerman, Saunders, 2012.

Low Stress Handling and Behavior Modification of Dogs & Cats. Sophia Yin, DVM, MS, Cattle Dog Publishing, 2009.

Additional Resources/Equipment

The Shelter Medicine Student Services office in VS-3 has an extensive library of textbooks available to students.

V. Evaluation/ Grading/ Testing:

Grading Scale

Each module has a series of graded assignments, generally consisting of one assignment in which students apply and/or further explore what they have learned reflecting on the respective module theme, a discussion, and a self-reflective statement. Some modules may contain additional or other types of activities. Specific assignment requirements can be found in Canvas.

Final course grades are determined by the default grading scale in Canvas.

Due dates

Due dates are provided on the course calendar in Canvas. Students may work ahead of schedule to complete assignments before the due date, but must meet assignment submission deadlines. Certain assignments, such as peer-reviews, must be completed in the first 7 days after the assignment deadline. Assignments submitted after the due dates will be awarded only half credit. Deadline extensions may be requested prior to assignment deadlines for specific unavoidable reasons such as travel, illness, or emergencies.

Student Evaluation of Instruction

Instructor evaluations should be completed at the end of each semester and are a vital part of the University! Evaluations take only a few minutes and can be completed online at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/evals/>

VI. Administrative Policies: see Student Handbook @

<http://education.vetmed.ufl.edu/dvm-curriculum/student-handbook/>

Remediation

The CVM Academic Advancement Committee reviews the academic performance of all students who receive a failing grade in a course, GPA falls below 2.0, receive “unsatisfactory” grade in criteria (including “readiness to practice”) or who is currently on probation. The committee will meet with the student and their advisor and decide on appropriate action for the student (including, but not limited to, probation or continuation of probation, repeat of semester or full year, dismissal). Full description of these policies can be in Student Services section of Student Handbook.

Attendance

Excused absences for religious holidays and family/personal emergencies must be reported to OSI/instructor as soon as possible.

Academic Honesty

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.” To review the student honor code please visit:

<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/judicial/honorcodes/honorcode.php>

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.

Professional Behavior

The College of Veterinary Medicine expects all students to be professional in their interactions with patients, colleagues, faculty, and staff and to exhibit caring and compassionate attitudes. These and other qualities will be evaluated during patient contacts and in other relevant settings by both faculty and peers. Behavior of a veterinary student reflects on a student's qualification and potential to become a competent veterinarian. Attitudes or behaviors inconsistent with compassionate care; refusal by, or inability of, the student to participate constructively in learning or patient care; derogatory attitudes or inappropriate behaviors directed at clients, patients, peers, faculty or staff; misuse of written or electronic patient records (e.g., accession of patient information without valid reason) substance abuse; failure to disclose pertinent information on a criminal background check; or other unprofessional conduct can be grounds for dismissal.

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 website at: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/>

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.

Student Safety

Contact information for Safety & Security Department: 352-294-4444 (immediate assistance 24/7)

For assistance with on-site counseling services, contact Dr. Ron Del Moro at 352-283-0028 (rondel@ufl.edu).

Staff members in OSI are also readily available for those who need immediate assistance.

VII. Other information:

Technology Requirements

1. A desktop or laptop computer with high-speed internet access and multiple browsers other than Internet Explorer (Firefox, Google Chrome, or Safari). Apple iOS and tablets might not be completely compatible with e-learning at this time. Mobile apps do exist for accessing distance learning technologies however, these mobile applications may have some limitations compared to the desktop versions.
2. Students must have Microsoft Office software installed and have basic skills for using Word, Excel, and PowerPoint. Students with a GatorLink ID have free access to Lynda.com for training and are able to download discounted/free software from the GatorCloud by visiting <http://www.it.ufl.edu/gatorcloud/>.
3. We use the Canvas email to communicate about course-related issues. This is more likely to result to better communication with your classmates, the TAs, instructors, and facilitators than emailing us personally. Using Canvas for course communications also helps us remain compliant with the student privacy FERPA regulations.