

**SHINING THE LIGHT OF SCIENCE ON CANINE BEHAVIOR
COURSE OUTLINE**

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Week 1

Introduction – What ethology is and is not.

Domestication – How dogs got to be the way they are.

How domestication influences behavior

The relationship between wolf behavior and dog behavior

Development of Normal Behavior – The role of early experience

Behavioral development in dogs

Sensitive periods and socialization in dogs

Puppy tests

Questions and Answers

Week 2

Social Dominance

Definitions

Dominance hierarchies

Why is it important

How it is used and misused in dog behavior

Dealing with dominant dogs

Social Conflicts

Agonistic behavior

Threats

Submission

Avoidance

Aggression

Understanding Canine Communication – Part 1

Observation vs. interpretation

Observing body postures – What to watch for

Interpreting the body postures of dogs – What do they mean?

Threats, aggression, submissive and friendly behaviors

Greeting behaviors in dogs

Displacement behaviors and “calming signals”

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Questions and Answers

Week 3

Genetics and the Behavior of Dogs

- What genes do and don't do
- How behavior is inherited
- Breeding for specific behaviors
- Breed differences in dogs
- Developing realistic expectations

Motivation, Drives and Instincts

- Drives and instincts – Problems with the concepts
- Innate behaviors vs. Fixed action patterns
- Temperament traits in dogs – What is fixed and what isn't?

Questions and Answers

Week 4

Understanding Canine Communication – Part 2

- Observation vs. interpretation
- Observing body postures – What to watch for
- Interpreting the body postures of dogs – What do they mean?
- Threats, aggression, submissive and friendly behaviors
- Greeting behaviors in dogs
- Displacement behaviors and “calming signals”

Other Social Concepts Important to Understanding Dogs

- Communication
- Personal Space & Flight Distance
- Territory
- Social Facilitation
- Affiliation
- Play
- Greeting Behavior

Questions and Answers

Wrap-up

Week 5

Catch-up Lecture Time

Discussion

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