

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

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Week 1

Introduction – What ethology is and is not
 Anthropomorphism and Zoomorphism
 Guilt, jealousy, spite and revenge as causes of dog behavior
Domestication – How dogs got to be the way they are
 The farm fox experiments
 How domestication influences behavior
 The behavior of stray and feral dogs
 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
 Attachment and social bonding in dogs
 Effects of aging on behavior
 Puppy tests

Week 2

Social Dominance
 Definitions
 Why is it important
 How it is used and misused in dog behavior
 Dealing with dominant dogs
 Leadership, an alternative to dominance?

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”

Week 3

Genetics and the Behavior of Dogs

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
Personality/Temperament traits in dogs – What is fixed and what isn't?

Cognition and Social Learning in Dogs

How smart can dogs be?

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
 Vocal and olfactory communication
Personal Space & Flight Distance
Territory
Social Facilitation
Affiliation
Play
Greeting Behavior

Week 5

Catch-up Lecture Time

Questions and Answers