

People and Pups: Dog Behavior and Human-Canine Relationships

Winter 2020

Meeting Time and Place	<i>This is an asynchronous, online course. See details below.</i>
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Undergraduate TA	TBD Email: TBD Office hours: TBD
Course Attributes	STAS
Prerequisites	One ANT/ANP/EBH/BIO course at the 100-level or higher <i>or</i> instructor permission

Course Description

An introduction to the growing literature on dog evolution, behavior, and cognition to understand why dogs are so well adapted to socializing with humans and what role they play in our societies. This course provides students with a foundation in animal behavior, specifically dog behavior and human-canine relationships. Key questions will include: *How do dogs communicate with each other and with us? Are dogs smarter than you think? And what is unique about the bond between people and their pups?*

Course Learning Objectives

1. **Describe** the natural history, morphology, and cognitive abilities of different canid species.
2. **Demonstrate** an introductory understanding of animal behavior, specifically dog behavior and human-canine relationships.
3. **Gain intellectual independence** by debating mysteries and misconceptions about dogs with reference to scientific studies.
4. **Apply** concepts learned throughout the course to improve the relationship between humans and canines.

Learning Objectives Specific to STAS:

1. Use critical thinking skills to **apply and integrate** concepts relevant to dog behavior and human-canine relationships from a broad reach of disciplines, drawing most heavily upon the fields of animal behavior, psychology, evolutionary biology, and archeology (*STAS Learning Outcome 1*).
2. **Synthesize** quantitative and qualitative information to make informed judgements about the reciprocal relationship between science and humanities and social sciences pertaining to canine behavior and human societies (*STAS Learning Outcome 2*).

Course Delivery Mode and Structure

This is an asynchronous, online course delivered in the Blackboard Learning Management System. That means that there will be no required real-time peer interactions or student-professor interactions.

Rather, you will progress through the course by completing a total of 6 learning modules, each accessible for 3 days. *Each module will include the following:* a pre-recorded video lecture (1 hour); assigned readings; online discussion with guiding questions based on the lecture and readings; a quiz; and an assignment (note that assignments require additional readings). Some modules also have assigned videos and/or podcasts.

All assignments and course interactions will use internet technologies. See the “Technical Requirements” section below for more information. If you should encounter any technical issues, send an email (with a screen-shot of the issue, if possible) to blackboard@stonybrook.edu. You should also copy me on this email so that I am aware of the situation.

How We Will Communicate

Keep in mind that we will not have the non-verbal cues that occur in a face-to-face classroom. I cannot see the confused, frustrated, or unhappy expressions on your face if you encounter problems, so you must communicate with me so that I can help! To make the experience go smoothly, remember that you’re responsible for initiating contact and being direct, persistent, and vocal when you don’t understand something.

For personal/private issues, my preferred method of contact is via email at catherine.markham@stonybrook.edu. If you would like to talk on the phone or meet virtually, email me so that we can set up a mutually agreeable time. I will reply to your emails as soon as possible, but please allow between 24-48 hours for a response. Also, please use your Stony Brook University email when getting in touch with me as that is the preferred method of contact from the institution.

Our Online Community

The classroom is a professional environment where academic debate and learning take place. I will make every effort to make this environment safe for you to share your opinions, ideas, and beliefs. In return, you are expected to respect the opinions, ideas, and beliefs of other students and adhere to the standards set in the Student Code of Conduct. Students who violate these standards are subject to disciplinary action. Furthermore, if your behavior does not follow the course etiquette standards stated below in the section on “Discussion Board Participation”, the grade you receive for a posting may suffer. I reserve the right to remove any discussion messages that display inappropriate language or content.

Blackboard and Technical Assistance

This course uses Blackboard to facilitate communication between the instructor and students, taking quizzes, assignment submission, and grade posting. The Blackboard course site can be accessed at <https://blackboard.stonybrook.edu>. If you are unsure of your NetID, visit <https://it.stonybrook.edu/help/kb/finding-your-netid-and-password> for more information.

It is your responsibility to secure use of a reliable computer and internet connection throughout the term. Note that you will be at a disadvantage if you attempt to complete all coursework on a smart phone or tablet and it may in fact be impossible to submit the files required for your assignments. The following list details a minimum recommended computer set-up and the software packages you will need: PC with Windows 8 or Macintosh with OS 10.11; Intel Core i5; 250 GB hard drive; 8 GB RAM; high speed internet connection; word processing software; speakers (either internal or external) or headphones; and Adobe Flash player with the latest update.

If you need technical assistance at any time during the course or to report a problem with Blackboard you can call Stony Brook University Client Support at (631) 632-9800. You can also submit a help request ticket online at <https://it.stonybrook.edu/services/itsm>. For students taking this course while on or near Stony Brook University’s campus, you can visit Stony Brook University’s Walk-Up Tech Support Station in the Educational Communications Center Building.

Required Readings, Videos, and Podcasts

You are expected to keep up with the assigned reading, videos, and podcasts as they serve the basis for my introductory lecture to each module and the module quiz, launch discussion questions, and provide the foundation needed to complete each module's assignment. Many of your readings will come from the book below. Links to additional readings – as well as links to podcasts and videos – will be provided on Blackboard.

Ha JC, Campion TL. 2018. Dog Behavior: Modern Science and Our Canine Companions. Academic Press: London, UK.

Assessment and Evaluation

Discussion Board Participation: There are a total of 6 Discussion Boards, one for each module. Each discussion board will include specific prompts that challenge you not only to demonstrate comprehension of module materials but also debate ideas and apply the concepts presented in lecture and readings. *You must participate in each discussion board on Blackboard by 11:59pm EST on the last date of each module.* Your participation will be evaluated based on how well you demonstrate understanding and application through higher-order thinking and uniqueness of your contribution. Furthermore, in order to foster discussion with your peers, your participation will be evaluated based both on the quality of your posts as well as your response to the posts made by others. A detailed rubric for how your participation will be evaluated is posted under the "Rubrics" menu item in Blackboard.

I expect all students to respect the following guidelines for postings:

- Offensive language or rudeness will not be tolerated. Discuss ideas, not the person.
- Avoid cluttering your messages with excessive emphasis (stars, arrows, exclamations).
- Be specific and clear, especially when asking questions.
- Be forgiving of other people's mistakes.
- Use standard punctuation and capitalization. Using all uppercase characters can give the appearance of shouting and makes the message less legible.
- Remember that not all readers are native English speakers, so make allowances for possible misunderstandings and unintended discourtesies.

Within our online community, I will serve as a "guide" to our online discussions. While I will not respond to every post, I will read what is posted and reply when necessary. Expect instructor posts in the following situations:

- To assist each of you when it comes to making connections between discussion, lectures, and textbook material.
- To fill in important things that may have been missed.
- To re-direct discussion if discussions get "out of hand".
- To identify key points or especially valuable posts.

Quizzes: There are a total of 6 quizzes, one for each module. The quizzes will be comprised primarily of multiple-choice questions, but may also include definition, fill-in-the-blank, and short-answer questions. *Quizzes must be completed on Blackboard by 11:59pm EST on the last date of each module.* Any questions concerning your quiz grade must be brought to my attention within one week of the grade posting. After one week, we can discuss your quiz but re-grades will not be considered.

Assignments: There are a total of 6 assignments, one for each module. These assignments will require students to develop their own hypothesis or argument in response to a specific prompt; hypotheses will be tested and arguments defended using resources available online (e.g. peer-reviewed journal articles,

publicly-shared datasets). Most assignments will culminate in a 1-2 page write-up, but some assignments will culminate in submission of a narrated video or an animated presentation. Details on each assignment will be made available on Blackboard once a module begins and a rubric for how assignments will be evaluated is posted under the “Rubrics” menu item in Blackboard. *Assignments must be submitted via Blackboard by 11:59pm EST on the last date of each module.* Note that completing each assignment will require considerable time and independent work. The assignments are designed to be fun and engaging, but they are challenging! Be sure that you allot enough time (typically 3 hours) to complete each assignment before the opportunity to submit your work closes.

Make-up Work: Extensions will be granted only under *extreme* circumstances and only if the student can provide written evidence justifying why the deadline was not met.

Grading: This course is a 3-credit course. Students will receive a grade between A and F based on their discussion board participation and performance on assignments and quizzes according to the following calculations:

<i>Discussion boards</i> (6 total)	20%
<i>Quizzes</i> (6 total)	30%
<i>Assignments</i> (6 total)	50%

Your final letter grade for the semester will be assigned based on the following ranges. Note that there is no “extra credit” offered for this course and that grades are not curved.

A	93 to 100	B+	87 to <90	C+	77 to <80	D+	67 to <70
A-	90 to <93	B	83 to <87	C	73 to <77	D	63 to <67
		B-	80 to <83	C-	70 to <73	F	0 to <63

A note for struggling students: If you are struggling in class, please contact me *immediately*. Do not wait until the course ends to ask for help! By then it is too late for me to help you. If your performance during the course is adversely affected by personal problems (death of a family member, mental health issues, etc.), contact your dean’s office as soon as possible to discuss your options. Other available resources for academic help include Student Success Resources (<http://www.stonybrook.edu/for-students/> and <http://www.stonybrook.edu/duel>) as well as the Academic Success and Tutoring Center (http://www.stonybrook.edu/commcms/academic_success/).

Student Accessibility Support Center Statement

If you have a physical, psychological, medical or learning disability that may impact your course work, please contact Student Accessibility Support Center, ECC (Educational Communications Center) Building, Room 128, (631) 632-6748. They will determine with you what accommodations, if any, are necessary and appropriate. All information and documentation is confidential.

Academic Integrity Statement

Each student must pursue his or her academic goals honestly and be personally accountable for all submitted work. Representing another person’s work as your own is always wrong. Faculty is required to report any suspected instances of academic dishonesty to the Academic Judiciary. Faculty in the Health Sciences Center (School of Health Technology & Management, Nursing, Social Welfare, Dental Medicine) and School of Medicine are required to follow their school-specific procedures. For more comprehensive information on academic integrity, including categories of academic dishonesty please

refer to the academic judiciary website at

http://www.stonybrook.edu/commcms/academic_integrity/index.html

Critical Incident Management

Stony Brook University expects students to respect the rights, privileges, and property of other people. Faculty are required to report to the Office of University Community Standards any disruptive behavior that interrupts their ability to teach, compromises the safety of the learning environment, or inhibits students' ability to learn. Faculty in the HSC Schools and the School of Medicine are required to follow their school-specific procedures. Further information about most academic matters can be found in the Undergraduate Bulletin, the Undergraduate Class Schedule, and the Faculty-Employee Handbook.

Course Evaluations

Each semester, Stony Brook University asks students to provide feedback on their courses and instructors through an online course evaluation system. The course evaluation results are used by the individual faculty, department chairs and deans to help the faculty enhance their teaching skills and are used as part of the personnel decision for faculty promotion and tenure.

Stony Brook contracts with an outside vendor to administer the surveys and all results are completely anonymous. No individually identifiable data are ever reported back to the university or instructor. Students who have completed previous evaluations can view all faculty ratings at <https://www.stonybrook.edu/celt/services/assessment/course/course-evaluations>

Copyright Notice

Unless otherwise noted, all materials in this course are the intellectual property of the professor and you may not reuse and/or duplicate the material in printed or electronic form without prior written permission from the owner. The University requires all members of the University Community to familiarize themselves and to follow copyright and fair use requirements. **YOU ARE INDIVIDUALLY AND SOLELY RESPONSIBLE FOR VIOLATIONS OF COPYRIGHT AND FAIR USE LAWS. THE UNIVERSITY WILL NEITHER PROTECT NOR DEFEND YOU NOR ASSUME ANY RESPONSIBILITY FOR EMPLOYEE OR STUDENT VIOLATIONS OF COPYRIGHT AND FAIR USE LAWS.** Violations of copyright laws could subject you to federal and state civil penalties and criminal liability as well as disciplinary action under University policies.

Course Schedule

Listed below is the calendar for this course. **Note that you will have 3 days to complete the tasks required for each module, beginning at 12:01am EST on the first date listed and ending at 11:59pm EST on the last date listed. Late work, as stated above, will not be accepted so plan your time carefully and don't let yourself fall behind!**

For each module, you will watch an introductory video lecture; read the assigned chapter and read an additional article, watch a video, and/or listen to a podcast; participate in an online discussion board; take a quiz; and complete an assignment based on a structured activity.

MODULE 1: DAWN OF THE DOG – JAN 7-9

What are the most recent findings tracing the evolution of today's domestic dogs from their wolf ancestors? In this module, we examine the evolutionary origins of dogs and compare the behavior, physiology, morphology, and cognitive abilities of different canid species.

- Read Chapter 1
- Read the article "Early canid domestication: The farm-fox experiment"

- *Activity*: Assessing differences in canine skull morphology

MODULE 2: WHY TAILS WAG – JAN 10-12

In this module, we dive deeper into the study of dog genomics to understand in greater detail how genes influence behavior.

- Read Chapter 2
- Watch the video “Dog genomics and dogs as model organisms” (29 min)
- *Activity*: Mapping genes to traits in dogs using SNPs

MODULE 3: THE SCIENCE OF EMOTIONS – JAN 13-15

How – and why – do dogs and humans form such strong bonds with each other? In this module, we’ll learn about the physiology underlying the bond between us and our pups, how we can measure this bond, and what we can do to create an even stronger, more meaningful connection.

- Read Chapter 5
- Listen to the DogSmarts podcast on “Empathy” (12 min)
- Read the article “Oxytocin-gaze positive loop and coevolution of human-dog bonds”
- *Activity*: Understanding play

MODULE 4: DEBUNKING DOMINANCE – JAN 16-18

How do dogs communicate with each other and with us? Are all barks the same and is anyone the alpha? In this module, we learn about canine body language and vocal communication to better understand what our dogs – intentionally or not – are communicating to each other and us.

- Read Chapter 9
- Watch the video on “Canine body language in the shelter” (47 min)
- *Activity*: Decoding canine body language

MODULE 5: CANINE COGNITION – JAN 19-21

What are the cognitive abilities of dogs in general and the genius of your own dog specifically? In this module, we discuss the problems that dogs can and cannot solve by delving into the science of canine cognition.

- Read Chapter 3
- Read the article “Human-like social skills in dogs?”
- *Activity*: Measuring canine cognition

MODULE 6: PULLING IT ALL TOGETHER – JAN 22-24

How has the role dogs play in our societies changed from the earliest accounts of domestication to modern times? In this module, we return to this topic (first introduced in Module 1) and discuss in detail some of the jobs of the modern dog.

- Read Chapter 10
- Listen to the RadioLab podcast on “Dogs gone wild” (20 min)
- Read the article “Personality consistency in dogs: A meta-analysis”
- *Activity*: Connecting canines and careers