



INTRODUCTION TO INSTRUMENTAL LEARNING

SPRING 2021

Thursdays at 6 pm EST – 4 weeks – May 20th – June 10th

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Required materials

Computer, high speed internet access, microphone and speakers. Web cam is also strongly recommended and encouraged.

Prerequisites

None

Course Objectives

Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:

- Define learning and explain how it influences behavior
- Explain how learning is influenced by biological factors such as genetics and natural selection
- Define, recognize, and apply instrumental conditioning concepts including:
 - Instrumental conditioning
 - Antecedent, behavior, consequence
 - Negative and positive punishment and reinforcement
 - Factors that influence instrumental learning
- Explain the different methods of producing behaviors in dogs (e.g. shaping, chaining, luring)
- Discuss the neurobiology of instrumental learning
- Make predictions about how an individual might learn under particular conditions and how that learning will affect behavior.
- Apply knowledge of learning to working with dogs
- Be able to analyze, integrate and apply new information to fit into current framework of knowledge. If it doesn't fit into current framework, be able to pursue novel paths of thinking.

Course Description and Organization

Content

From simple, everyday interactions (coming when called, cuddling on the couch, sniffing a new dog's posterior) to unhealthy or maladaptive behavior like aggression or anxiety, everything dogs do is affected by learning.



As professional dog trainers charged with effectively installing new behaviors and modifying unwanted ones, our best success depends on understanding the science of learning. Combining science with skill is what turns a hobbyist into a pro, and a good dog trainer into a great one. I want that for you!

You'll learn the biology of learning and the basics of instrumental conditioning, including the four quadrants, the side effects of and alternatives to punishment, Thorndike's Law of Effect, and the A-B-C sequence pro trainers rely on to get strong behaviors. And of course, we'll look at how to apply all these concepts to take your training results to the next level.

Approach

I believe that the most effective learning occurs when students are not only provided with the facts, but also provided ample opportunity to use that information in concrete ways, engage in challenging activities, interact with others and receive frequent feedback on their progress.

Therefore, this course will be taught using an approach that encourages collaboration and active learning. While there will be time spent lecturing, time in class will also be spent working on interactive activities and completing brief assignments.

I began my teaching career by teaching at a university and I hold students in my online courses to the same standards. I have high expectations for engagement and quality of work. However, I also strongly feel that if I am going to set a high bar, that I need to step up and make sure my students can reach it. This means that I hold myself to a very high standard as well and I love it when students reach out if they are struggling with the material in any way. I am happy to help! If you haven't taken a college course before but are willing to put in the work and reach out for help if needed, then you should do well in this course.

CEUs

Auditors:

- IAABC - 4 CEUs
- CCPDT – 3 CEUs for trainers, 1 CEU for behavior consultants CEUs will require watching the lectures and submitting the secret words.

Full students:

- IAABC – 9.5 CEUs
- CCPDT - 6 CEUs for trainers, 2 CEUs for behavior consultants
- CEUs will require watching the lectures and submitting the secret words, attending 75% or more of the discussion sections and completion of work in class as well as the completion of a comprehensive quiz. The quiz must be passed with a score of 80% or higher. If you receive less than 80% on the quiz you may retake the quiz once, after contacting the instructor for clarification on the missed questions.

Course Policies

Refunds, minus a \$10 processing fee, will be granted if requested up to 2 days before the start of class. After that, 50% refunds will be granted.



Refunds are not available after the start of class.

Refunds will not be granted if you are unable to attend class and therefore unable to complete the required work. Excused absences will be granted in case of emergencies and illness (with proper documentation).