

TIBI Online Syllabus for BEHG 120: Non-Coercive Companion Animal Behavior Training

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[This is another installment in the series of syllabi for TIBI's online courses. Each syllabus appears in *Behaviorology Today* basically in the same form as it appears online. The series continues whenever there are syllabi that have yet to be printed, or that require reprinting due to substantial revisions. Locate additional syllabi through the *Syllabus Directory* at the back of the most recent issue.—Ed.]

Note #1: This syllabus contains some notes that supplement the more traditional syllabus parts. Each note is numbered for convenient reference. Some notes, like this one, have multiple paragraphs.

This syllabus is a long document. It is longer than a syllabus for a face-to-face course as it contains material that the professor would otherwise cover in person. *Hence it was designed to be printed out for reading!* Furthermore, it was designed to be used *as a task check-off list.* Please print it out and use it these ways.

The only activity in this course for which you might need access to a computer is to print this syllabus as a reference for how this course works so you can follow the directions to complete this course. This is a matter of access, student access to education, so that everyone who wants this course can take it regardless of whether they own several computers or only have access to one in their local library or in a friend's home.

Students can, if they wish, study the topics of this course free of charge, perhaps to fulfill their own interests. They would do so simply by completing the activities described in this syllabus.

Students can also study the topics of this course for TIBI (The International Behaviorology Institute) credit, perhaps toward a TIBI certificate. They would do so by paying the necessary fee to be assigned a professor to provide feedback on, and assessment of, their efforts. (This course can be part of several TIBI certificates. Contact TIBI or visit www.behaviorology.org for details.)

Also, students can study the topics of this course for regular academic credit; they would do so by contacting any accredited institution of higher education that offers

behaviorology courses accepted by TIBI, such as the State University of New York at Canton (SUNY-Canton) at www.canton.edu which is SUNY-Canton's web site. TIBI automatically accepts A or B grades from the academic-credit version of this course as equivalent to its own course toward its certificates (and C and D academic-credit grades can be remediated through TIBI for TIBI credit; contact TIBI for details). Alternatively, the work done completing this course, for free or through TIBI, may make taking the course for academic credit easier.

The parts of this syllabus cover many topics. While the headings may be different, these include (a) the course content and objectives, (b) the text, study, and assessment materials, (c) the grading policy, (d) the necessary work-submission methods and professor feedback, and (e) the study-activity sequence and completion timelines.

Note #2: You may take this course without a prerequisite even though it is listed as having both BEHG 101 and BEHG 102 (the introduction to behaviorology sequence) as prerequisites. That listing was designed to show the *preferred* course sequence based on the relation among these three courses: the *basic* science principles (BEHG 101), followed by the applications of the principles to *general* concerns (BEHG 102), and then the application of the principles to the *specific* area of companion animal behavior training (BEHG 120), an area of interest to many in society.

Course Description

BEHG 120: Non-Coercive Companion Animal Behavior Training. This course introduces the contributions of the natural science of behavior to the area of behavior training for companion animals. After reviewing basic principles and the significance of species differences, relevant practices are differentially applied to the pro-active, non-coercive, positive, and effective behavior training of four representative companion animal species: (a) cats, (b) dogs, (c) birds, and (d) horses. The generic application of these non-coercive practices to training other species also receives attention.

Note #3: To check out other behaviorology courses offered by TIBI, visit their locations on the TIBI web site (www.behaviorology.org). To check out other behaviorology courses offered by SUNY-Canton, see the list and descriptions—and in some cases, the syllabi for the asynchronous versions—on the faculty web page of the professor who teaches them (which currently is Dr. Stephen F. Ledoux; click Ledoux in the faculty directory at www.canton.edu).

Course Objectives

The main objective of this course is *to expand the student's behavior repertoire* measurably in relevant areas of behaviorological course content. The student will:

✦ Analyze the basic, natural-science principles of behavior for how they can be non-coercively applied to companion animal behavior training;

✦ Describe the general, non-coercive behavior training practices as they differentially apply to *each* of these representative companion animal species: (a) cats, (b) dogs, (c) birds, and (d) horses;

✦ Explain the significance and list the benefits of the *non-coercive* nature of the covered behavioral practices for training members of other species.

✦ Compare species differences for their significance in requiring adjustments to effective, non-coercive application of various behavior training practices;

✦ Design particular, non-coercive behavior training practices to teach a different selected response pattern to each of these representative companion animal species: (a) cats, (b) dogs, (c) birds, and (d) horses;

✦ Demonstrate the successful, non-coercive training of at least one new double response chain for at least one companion animal (One's own pet will suffice.);

✦ Summarize the generic application of these non-coercive practices to the training of other species.

Additional Objectives

✦ Successful, A earning students will use (at an accuracy level of 90% or better) appropriate disciplinary terminology both when discussing behavioral concepts, and when applying behavioral skills, relevant to companion animal behavior training.

✦ Such successful students will also ask questions, seek answers, converse about, and act on the uses and benefits of this discipline for humanity.

✦ Such successful students will also behave more effectively in other ways with respect to themselves and others.

Required Materials (in their order of use)

✦ Pryor, K. (1999). *Don't Shoot the Dog: The New Art of Teaching and Training—Revised Edition*. New York: Bantam Books.

✦ Ledoux, S.F. (in progress). *Study Questions for Karen Pryor's Don't Shoot the Dog*. Canton, NY: ABCs.

✦ Pryor, K. (1999). *Clicker Training for Dogs*. Waltham, MA: Sunshine Books.

✦ Ledoux, S.F. (in progress). *Study Questions for Clicker Training for Cats/Dogs/Birds/Horses*. Canton, NY: ABCs.

✦ (A/V) Pryor, K. (video program). *Clicker Magic!* Waltham, MA: Sunshine Books.

✦ Clicker and target stick (from Sunshine Books).

✦ Pryor, K. (2001). *Clicker Training for Cats*. Waltham, MA: Sunshine Books.

✦ Johnson, M. (2004). *Clicker Training for Birds*. Waltham, MA: Sunshine Books.

✦ Kurland, A. (2000). *Clicker Training for Horses*. Waltham, MA: Sunshine Books.

Recommended Materials

These are references to materials that, while *not* required for the course, may also be of interest to those who wish to go deeper into the course topics and extensions:

✦ (A/V) Pryor, K. (video program). *Puppy Love*. Waltham, MA: Sunshine Books.

✦ Ledoux, S.F. (2002). *Origins and Components of Behaviorology—Second Edition*. Canton, NY: ABCs.

✦ Pryor, K. (1991). *Lads Before the Wind: Diary of a Dolphin Trainer*. Waltham, MA: Sunshine Books.

✦ Sidman, M. (2001). *Coercion and its Fallout—Revised Edition*. Boston, MA: Authors Cooperative.

✦ Skinner, B.F. (1953). *Science and Human Behavior*. New York: The Free Press.

Note #4: You can order many of the required and recommended books, videos, and materials through these publishers: Sunshine Books (at www.clickertraining.com or 1-800-472-5425 [1-800-47CLICK]) and ABCs (at 315-386-2684). You can order the rest through your local bookseller or perhaps the online bookstore at www.behavior.org which is the web site of the Cambridge Center for Behavioral Studies.

Also, this course is grounded in the Shaping Model of Education which is informed by behavioral science (rather than the Presentation Model of Education which is informed by psychology). In the shaping model, teaching is not seen as mostly talking (nor is learning seen as mostly listening). Instead, teaching is the scientifically grounded design, arrangement, and application of educational materials, methods, and contingencies in ways that generate and maintain small but continuously accumulating behaviors the short and long range consequences of which are successful in producing an ever wider range of effective responding (i.e., learning) on the part of the student.

Grades

Grading policy does not involve curves, for you are not in competition with anyone (except perhaps yourself). That is, all students are expected to produce the academic products demonstrating that they have, individually, achieved at least mastery of the subject matter, if not fluency. Therefore, all students are expected to earn an A or a B (although inadequate products will produce a lower result that requires remediation before it can become a passing grade). Also, all students will receive the grades they earn. This holds even if the expectation for which the course is designed—that *all* students earn *As*—is met: If all earn *As*, then all receive *As*.

Passing grades are limited to A and B, and are earned according to the amount of assigned work that is successfully completed:

✻ Earning an A consists mainly of satisfactorily completing 90% or more of the work on all assignments.

✻ Earning a B consists mainly of satisfactorily completing more than 80% of the work on all assignments (but not more than 90% on them).

For convenience a point-accumulation system is invoked to keep track of progress through the course. The seven short assignments on the *Don't Shoot the Dog* book are worth an average of ten points each, for a total of 70 points (with this breakdown: Foreword: five points; Chapters One, Two, and Three: ten points each; Chapter Four: ten points for each half; and Chapters Five and Six combined: 15 points). Each of the two assignments on each of the four *Clicker Training for...* books (...*Cats*, ...*Dogs*, ...*Birds*, ...*Horses*), eight assignments in all, is worth ten points for a total of 80 points. The video summary assignment is worth 15 points, while the performance-design assignment is worth 40 points, and the double-response-chain demonstration video assignment is worth 45 points. This provides a grand total of 250 possible points. The percentage used to consider what grade you are earning is the percentage of these possible points that you actually earn.

However, point accumulation is not the grade determiner but is merely used as a convenient way to track progress *on the presumption that all course tasks are in progress*. This is because doing work on *all* of the tasks for the course is the more relevant determiner of grades than is the accumulation of points. (For example, a student who tries to accumulate just enough points, on some easier tasks, to get a B—while ignoring other course tasks—would not that way actually meet the criteria for a B and so would have to continue and complete all the required work satisfactorily to earn one of the passing grades.)

Also, students should expect to be asked occasionally to complete various test-like assessments. The level of success on these assessments helps gauge the extent to which the work on the course assignments is actually producing the learning implied by the completion of that work.

These practices are in place because the scientific research-data based Shaping Model of Education recognizes the student/professor relationship as a professional relationship in which coercive practices (i.e., aversive educational practices) are seen as inappropriate (so long as extreme conditions do not exist making such practices unavoidable). Instead, the more effective, efficient, and productive non-coercive practices of carefully designed and sequenced assignments emphasizing added reinforcement for timely work well done is generally seen as more appropriate. So, your effort and cooperation are expected and presumed; please do not disappoint either your professor or yourself.

About Using the Texts & Study Questions Books

Unless specified otherwise, you need to write out your answers in longhand. The reason you are to write out your answers by hand is that this type of verbal response brings about more learning than merely saying—or even typing—the answer. This is because—as taught in a more advanced behaviorology class (i.e., BEHG 355: Verbal Behavior I)—writing the answer in longhand involves both point-to-point correspondence and formal similarity between the stimuli and the response products of the answer.

The “Don't Shoot the Dog” Book

The *Don't Shoot the Dog* textbook reviews some basic natural science principles of behaviorology. As an expert in non-coercive animal training, rather than as a professional behaviorologist, the author then applies these principles as a general approach, particularly the use of hand clickers, to the non-coercive practices appropriate for companion animal behavior training.

The “Clicker Training” Books and Video

The *Clicker Training* books more explicitly apply the basic principles of non-coercive companion animal behavior training to four common companion animal species. Each book provides step-by-step instructions and examples tailored for the species it covers. The video, by providing similar material in a format more revealing of the actual application process, should make your applications of the training practices more quickly effective.

The Study Question Books

The *Study Question* books were prepared to help you master, and even become fluent in, the material from each of the books that they cover. You are to complete each section of each *Study Question* book in the sequence assigned. Learning occurs when responses are made (like writing question answers) and reinforced, especially responses that automatically provide their own reinforcing consequences (like being right) as does writing out question answers correctly. You complete the assigned sections, *after reading the material through*, by *writing out* your responses when you come to the relevant part as you *reread* the material. You *write out* the responses right in the *Study Question* books. Write out your responses in full sentences that incorporate any questions (and preferably in your own words).

Each *Study Question* book starts with a section titled To the Student and Teacher. *Read this section first!* It explains more on how to use the *Study Question* book successfully. *Study Question* book assignments are provided in the *Assignment Sequence* section of this syllabus. Sub-

mit your work according to the method specified in the *Submitting Your Work* section.

The Audio/Visual (A/V) Assignment

The audio-visual (A/V) assignment on the *Clicker Magic* video extends your homework-based book-learning toward the area of skill development. While viewing and studying the video, *you need to write out a continuous outline/summary of the material* on regular 8.5 x 11 binder paper (as if you were taking sophisticated notes at a lecture). This A/V assignment is scheduled in the *Assignment Sequence* section. Submit your work according to the method specified in the *Submitting Your Work* section.

The Performance-Design Assignment

After completing each of the *Clicker Training for... books (...Cats, ...Dogs, ...Birds, ...Horses)* in turn, apply the techniques therein to design the steps appropriate to training the performance of at least a novel double-response-chain that you have specified (i.e., that you have also designed) for a member of the species of companion animal covered by each book. The chain may be either functional (i.e., pertinent to the animal's daily life) or entertaining (or both). *Use as much detail as needed to assure that a classmate could successfully do that training using only your description.* For each species, write or type your specified novel double-response-chain, and your design of the steps appropriate to training its performance, on regular 8.5 x 11 (binder) paper. You may submit this assignment in four parts as you complete each one, or you may submit all four parts together after completing them all. However, the benefit of completing and submitting each part after completing its relevant species-specific *Clicker Training for...* book—and before beginning the next species-specific *Clicker Training for...* book—is that the feedback you then receive on the early parts can make your efforts on the later parts both easier and more successful. Submit your work according to the method specified in the *Submitting Your Work* section.

The Double-Response-Chain Demonstration Video Assignment

Select one of the double-response-chain performance designs that you prepared for the performance-design assignment, and use it for this assignment (or use a new chain, also of your own design, particularly if the pet that you wish to train for this assignment is of a different species from those covered in the *Clicker Training for...* books). Then, apply your clicker-training knowledge and skills to train that double-response-chain. When the chain is established, make a video-photographic record of the complete performance. The chain may be either entertaining or functional (or both) at your

discretion. Submit your work according to the method specified in the *Submitting Your Work* section.

Note #5: Since you are to write out your responses directly in the *Study Question* books, you need to have your own *Study Question* books. To assure that this is followed by everyone equally, you need to fill out and send in to your professor (by regular postal mail) the original ownership forms in the rear of your *Study Question* books.

Submitting Your Work

Different assignments have different work submission methods. These only apply if you are taking the course for TIBI credit. (Any addresses and phone/fax numbers that you may need will be clarified upon enrollment.)

To submit your *Study Question* book responses, which generally must be hand-written, you can scan and fax to your professor the pages that have your responses for each assignment. However, your professor would prefer that you photocopy those pages and send them to your professor by regular postal mail.

To submit the video summary assignment, you can scan and fax to your professor the pages that have your summary. However, your professor would prefer that you photocopy those pages and send them to your professor by regular postal mail.

To submit the performance-design assignment, you can scan and fax to your professor the pages that have (a) the description of your specified novel double-response-chain, and (b) the description of your performance-design steps for training the chain, for each of the four species covered by the *Clicker Training for...* books. However, your professor would prefer that you photocopy those pages and send them to your professor by regular postal mail.

To submit the video record of the double-response-chain you trained, send a VHS tape or DVD *copy* of your video to your professor by regular postal mail.

For every assignment you are to keep the original of your work. This insures against loss and enables you and your professor to communicate about your work (as you will then both have an identical copy). Note, however, that for the *Study Question* book responses, email and email attachments are neither reliable enough, nor identical enough, for this purpose, so they are not to be used for this purpose. Also, note that for the *video summary* assignment, and the *performance-design* assignment, email attachments are neither reliable enough, nor identical enough, for this purpose, so they are not to be used for this purpose.

Your work will be perused and points will be allocated according to the quality of your work. Should any inadequacies be apparent, you will be informed so that you can make improvements. While sometimes your pro-

fessor will provide a metaphorical pat on the back for a job well done, if you do not hear of any inadequacies, then pat yourself on the back for a job well done even as you continue on to the next assignment.

Assignment Sequence

Students should work their way through the course by reading and studying the texts and materials, and sending in their work for each assignment. The *slowest* reasonable self-pacing of the coursework (presuming a typical 15-week semester) is this sequence which can be used as a check-off list:

- Week 1: Acquire and examine all the materials while completing the study questions assignment for the *Foreword* to the *Don't Shoot the Dog* book.
- Week 2: The *Don't Shoot the Dog* book, Ch. 1.
- Week 3: The *Don't Shoot the Dog* book, Ch. 2.
- Week 4: The *Don't Shoot the Dog* book, Ch. 3.
- Week 5: The *Don't Shoot the Dog* book, Ch. 4 (through Method four of the eight Methods).
- Week 6: The *Don't Shoot the Dog* book, Ch. 4 (from Method five to the end of the chapter).
- Week 7: The *Don't Shoot the Dog* book, Chs. 5 & 6, and watch the *Clicker Magic* video while writing the assigned summary of it, and begin work on both your performance-design assignment and your pet training assignment (and continue these, while completing the study question assignments on all the *Clicker training for...* books, until everything is done and submitted).
- Week 8: First half of the *Clicker Training for Dogs* book.
- Week 9: Second half of the *Clicker Training for Dogs* book.
- Week 10: First half of the *Clicker Training for Cats* book.
- Week 11: Second half of the *Clicker Training for Cats* book.
- Week 12: First half of the *Clicker Training for Birds* book.
- Week 13: Second half of the *Clicker Training for Birds* book.
- Week 14: First half of the *Clicker Training for Horses* book.
- Week 15: Second half of the *Clicker Training for Horses* book.

Do the assignments in this sequence, even if you do them at a faster pace than the pace presented here. If you go slower than this schedule, assignments could easily back up on you to the point where insufficient time remains to complete them in a satisfactory manner.

Note #6: Be sure that everything you submit is readable and contains your name!

Note #7: The usual higher education workload expectation for a course is about 150 hours. (The typical face-to-face course features about 50 in-class contact hours with the university expecting about 100 more hours of additional study at the average rate of about two hours out of

class for each hour in class.) This can be accomplished at rates ranging from about 50 hours per week over three weeks to about ten hours per week over the typical 15 weeks of a semester. Of course, some students may take a little less than 150 hours, while others may take more than 150 hours, to do the work to the same acceptable and expected standard.

You can—and are encouraged to—go through the assignments as rapidly as your schedule allows. This could mean spending a typical 15 weeks on the course. Or it could mean doing the whole course in as little as—but not in less than—three weeks, as one would progress through the *single* allowed course in a three-week summer school term. That is, you could work on the course anywhere from minimum part-time (i.e., at the rate of about ten hours per week, as described in the *Assignment Sequence* section) to maximum full-time (i.e., at the rate of about 50 hours per week).

If you are to be successful, you need to exercise some self-management skills by starting immediately and keeping up a reasonable and steady pace on the course work. You need to do this because your professor will *not* be reminding you that the products of your work are due; all the course work is set forth in this syllabus and so is automatically assigned. You are expected to follow through on your own. You need to set an appropriate pace for yourself (or accept the pace in the *Assignment Sequence* section) and adhere to that pace, and thereby get the sequence of assignments done and submitted to your professor. This will assist your success.

At various points in the course, you will be provided with feedback about your work. Upon completing all the coursework, you will be provided with your earned grade. (The grade is provided solely for the person whose work earned the grade.) We at TIBI are sure that the outcomes of your efforts to study this aspect of behaviorological science will benefit both you and others, and we encourage you to study further aspects. ☺

