



VSA Dog Trainer Course Online Lessons

INTRODUCTION MODULE

Student Orientation – What you need to know to get started including how to navigate online lessons, requirements during each course module, resources for help and information, and tips for success throughout your program of study.

FIELD STUDY MODULE

Preparing for Shelter Activities – In preparation for volunteering at a shelter or rescue, this lesson provides information about how shelters and rescues are typically structured, and how to work with staff and volunteers to establish a relationship and complete your shelter related activities.

History of Dog Training – Learn about the origins of dog obedience training, notable contributors to the field of dog training, and how discoveries about how dogs learn occurred simultaneously both in scientific settings and in practical settings. Explore how training styles have changed as well as definitions of what we call modern-day dog training.

Group Classes – What you need to know to prepare for offering successful group classes, including different location/venue options, safety considerations and protocols, options for orientation class, and getting students registered.

Private Lessons – How to prepare for success private lessons, including lesson plans, scheduling, safety considerations, and tips for managing multiple family members and other pets during private lessons.

FIELD TRAINING MODULE

Career Paths for Dog Trainers – Learn about the variety of career paths available to professional dog trainers as well as related career opportunities within the pet industry field.

Canine Nutrition – Learn about the importance of good nutrition and different types of diets. Also, learn how food can impact dog behavior and what chews, treats, and toys are safe to recommend to clients and their dogs.

Starting Your Business – Everything you need to know to start a dog training business. From selecting a business name and corporate formation to accounting and taxes, plus everything in between. This lesson will help you get your business off the ground!

Canine Health – What you need to know about common canine health issues that may require veterinary care in order to help clients keep their dogs healthy.

Preparing for Final Assessments – How to prepare for your Dog Trainer Course final assessments.

VSA Dog Trainer Course Cyber Classes

INTRODUCTION MODULE

Introduction to Canine Ethology

Learn about the history of dog domestication and develop a deeper understanding of where dogs come. Discuss how different dog breed types came to be, and explore the specific ways in which dogs evolved from wolves including their similarities and differences. Begin to unravel many of the common myths and misunderstandings about popular dominance theories.

FIELD STUDY MODULE

The Right Tool for the Job

Quick and easy tips and tools to determine a goal behavior and create a training plan. Practice with examples you're likely to encounter working with clients to determine the best training method for the behavior, and whether management is needed while the behavior is being learned. Work together to determine the steps needed to reach the goal behavior, including how to make adjustments if things don't go as planned.

Dogs, Distractions & Stress

Put the knowledge you've gained about canine body language to work in group classes and private lessons. Determine through observation when dogs are showing signs of stress, and teach pet owners how to spot common signs of stress in their dogs. Explore possible sources of stress and learn how to implement plans to reduce stress to help dogs stay relaxed and learning.

What Do You Do When?

Learn how to be prepared for the variety of situations that might occur during training and teaching sessions. Be proactive, have a plan, and understand how to keep people and dogs safe and successfully learning!

Marketing Bootcamp

Build a foundation for business marketing success, including understanding why marketing isn't optional, but also why it doesn't have to be scary. Understand routes to more revenue and paths to more transactions, and discover the power of effective time management and balance. Learn where to begin and where to focus, and how to track, measure, and adapt as your business grows.

FIELD TRAINING MODULE

Sensory Education

Learn the importance of using dogs' senses to promote confidence and optimize learning. Understand the roles that each of the five senses play in how dogs perceive the world, and how we can incorporate sensory skills and games to keep our dogs engaged and to enhance their intrinsic problem solving abilities.

Keeping Clients Engaged

Learn strategies for effective teaching in both group classes and private lessons, including how to streamline your verbal instructions, break down skills into easy-to-achieve steps, and utilize positive reinforcement to keep clients engaged and learning.

Social Media Marketing

Everything you need to know to get started with social media marketing! Learn the technical side of creating a social media platform, learn the jargon and great tips such as scheduling posts in advance to minimize your efforts while maximizing your returns! Explore how to ask for and utilize reviews to promote growth, and how to increase your brand recognition.

Positive Solutions

Learn how to solve common undesirable behaviors using the ABC approach. Help your clients understand and empathize with their dog's behavior rather than placing labels and blame, and inspire ideas for "solutions" through alternative behaviors and/or management – ways to make the right behaviors easy and rewarding!

Presenting Yourself Professionally

Your professional image is so much more than physical appearance. Think of the way you dress, how you speak to clients, how you promote your business online and in print, even how your employees and dogs represent your business – all of these things and more make up your professional image. Learn how to put it all together and present yourself and your business in a polished, professional way.

VSA Dog Trainer Course Intensives Lessons

PRIMER INTENSIVE LESSONS:

The 'Positively' Philosophy

Canine Ethology

Canine Cognition

Learning Theory

Building Trust and Positive Relationships with Dogs

Positive Training Tools & Methods

Hands-On Dog Training Skills

Demonstrations & Hands-on Practice of Tools (live dogs)

Canine Communication & Body Language

Behavior Observation and Discussion (live dogs observation)

Canine Emotion and Behavior

Living with Dogs

Self-Care & Burnout Prevention

CORE ESSENTIALS INTENSIVE LESSONS:

Hands-On Dog Training Skills

Teaching Group Classes

Teaching Private lessons

Dog Communication & Body Language Video Observation

Preventing and Addressing Canine Fear and Stress

Dog Communication & Body Language (Field Trip and Discussion)

Dog Trainer as Agent for Humane Behavior Change

Canine Aggression

Dog Bite Prevention

High-Drive Working Dogs

Positive Training with Other Species

Veterinarian Relationships

Medical Handling & Reading Body Language

When to Refer

Marketing for Dog Trainers

PRIMER INTENSIVE LESSONS DESCRIPTIONS:

The 'Positively' Philosophy

- The benefits of the positive reinforcement-based training philosophy
- The importance of building a bond through positive reinforcement and working in a way that is compatible with a dog's cognitive style and strengths
- The habits of effective positive trainers
- Positive training techniques and equipment compared and contrasted with punishment, aversive, and force-based techniques and equipment
- The potential danger and fallout of punishment-based training
- Common myths and misunderstandings about dog training

Canine Ethology

- The developmental and socialization periods of the domesticated dog
- Understanding the importance of positive socialization for proper behavioral development and learning
- How canine sensory organs develop and influence dogs' perception of their environment

Canine Cognition

- Canine cognition and understanding how dogs view the world
- Different cognitive styles and types of intelligence and the potential impacts on learning
- How cognitive scientists and their research is providing a deeper understanding of dogs' minds and how we can make learning easier for them
- How to discover dogs' cognitive learning style through activities and games

Learning Theory

- Classical conditioning and its applications for behavior modification
- Operant conditioning and the four quadrants, and how to determine the function of behaviors
- Different reinforcement schedules and why they matter
- How these theories work in the real world

Building Trust and Positive Relationships with Dogs

- About the human-animal bond and how it impacts relationships
- How to interact with dogs and develop relationships built on trust and collaboration
- The value of natural learning and how giving a learner choice is empowering
- About reinforcement and reinforcers

Positive Training Tools & Methods

- Pros and cons of different types of equipment commonly used in dog training
- A variety of positive techniques for training new behaviors including how to use and combine these techniques
- How to create training plans for new behaviors
- How to make a behavior “fluent” including building duration of behaviors
- How and when to add cues to behaviors

Demonstrations & Hands-on Practice of Tools (live dogs)

- Putting into action what was learned during the Positive Training Methods and Tools Lesson
- More about training tools and techniques and learn to how to apply them through hands-on experience with a live dog
- How to handle dogs, put on collars and harnesses, and attach leashes
- How to get dogs in and out of kennels and crates

Canine Communication & Body Language

- How dogs use body language to communicate with humans and other species
- To consider the “whole picture” of what you’re seeing as you observe a dog
- To hone your observation skills so that you accurately read dogs’ stress signals and understand what dogs are saying and feeling
- How to determine if a dog is experiencing stress
- How to “listen with your eyes”
- When to intervene or change the environment to lessen stress

Self-Care & Burnout Prevention

- How stress affects us
- What burnout is and how to prevent it
- The pitfalls of compassion fatigue
- How to develop a personalized burnout prevention plan
- The importance of establishing intention, trust and empathy in the relationship with the human client
- The ways that humans learn and how to increase understanding through each learning style
- The key concepts for creating clear communication and trust using the Communication Triad
- How to develop and use effective observational and active listening skills
- Successful ways to motivate the client
- The connection of self-awareness and self-reflection and its application in dog training

Behavior Observation and Discussion (live dogs observation)

- Putting knowledge of dog body language into real-life practice by observing live dogs in a variety of situations
- Observing dog body language in a new context, watching dogs interact with other species

Canine Emotion and Behavior

- The role that emotions including fear, phobias, stress, reactivity and/or aggression can play in a dog's behavior
- How emotions can affect the dog's behavior, and the importance of ruling out medical causes for changes in canine behavior
- Whether and how dogs feel jealousy, guilt and other complex emotions

Living with Dogs

- Developing an understanding of what pet owners typically expect from their dog
- Identifying behaviors that pet owners often find undesirable
- Learning the value of teaching behaviors useful to daily life to bridge communication between dogs and humans
- Discovering how management and training work together when solving undesirable behaviors
- Practicing determining the ABCs, and thus the function, of behaviors
- Understanding how to be an advocate for dogs and to proactively prepare them for real-world situations

CORE ESSENTIALS INTENSIVE LESSONS DESCRIPTIONS:

Teaching Group Classes

- How and why we created the VSA Basic Manners Curriculum
- About weekly lesson plans and class flow
- How to teach the behaviors in the curriculum
- Ideas for ways to personalize the curriculum
- How to build upon the curriculum to increase client retention and gain new clients

Teaching Private Lessons

- How to assess client's needs from the point of initial contact
- About the information you need to gather from clients before private lessons
- Good practices to keep yourself safe
- Techniques for addressing minor in-home behavior issues
- How to deal with newly adopted dogs
- How to structure private sessions for the best results

Canine Aggression & Dog Bite Prevention

- What is aggression and why do dogs aggress
- How people exacerbate aggressive behavior in dogs
- How to modify aggressive behavior
- How to prevent dog bites

Dog Trainer as Agent of Human Behavior Change

- The concept of "Stages of Change"
- The value of employing the model of Motivational Interviewing (MI)
- How MI can be employed by dog trainers to encourage collaboration between the client and the dog trainer as they work toward positive training approaches and a happier life

High-Drive Working Dogs

- What are high-drive dogs and can they be trained positively
- About other working dog fields such as scent detection
- How law enforcement is moving toward positive training

Marketing for Dog Trainers

- The primary key to selling that will have clients lining up to work with you
- Your essential roadmap to create products that sell
- The 10 tools to creating marketing materials that work
- The 6 Stages of Marketing & how to breeze through them
- The 3 steps to converting fans into customers
- The secret to getting your clients to return & refer

Media Training for Dog Trainers

- The components of a successful media interview
- How to successfully pitch a media interview to local or national outlets
- What goes into preparing for on-camera appearances to ensure the best possible outcome
- How to deliver engaging and meaningful media interviews
- How to pivot and redirect to stay 'on message' while remaining appealing and light
- Specific dog-related tips for media appearances
- Public speaking tips and tricks

Positive Training with Other Species

- How positive training is being utilized to train husbandry behaviors and reduce stress in captive animals and pets
- How animals are helping humans learn and help others

Preventing Canine Fear & Stress

- To understand fear and the basic biology behind the emotion
- What you as a trainer can do to alleviate fear and stress in the dogs you work with, and to empower your clients to help their dogs
- About behavior modification techniques and how to proactively prevent fear and stress in dogs
- How to recognize when you should refer to a behavior specialist
- What behavior enrichment is and how it alleviates fear and stress in dogs
- The importance of physical stimulation
- The importance of viewing training as mental stimulation
- Complementary therapies that are available to progressive positive dog trainers