

CERTIFIED GROUP TRAINING INSTRUCTOR COURSE GUIDE

Total Program Length: 23 Weeks

TORONTO
HUMANE
SOCIETY

like no
other.



Phase 1: Classroom and Hands-On Learning
Total 32 Hours over 8 Weeks
Weeks 1-8: October 28, 2025 to December 18, 2025
Tuesday and Thursdays, 7pm-9pm, each week



WEEK 1	TOPIC	LEARNING OUTCOMES
Class 1: 2 hours Lecture	Module 1a: Learning Theory Foundations – What is Behaviour and Introduction to Operant and Classical Conditioning	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Understand the difference between observable behaviour and constructs• Understand the ABCs of behaviour• Understand the Hierarchy for Behaviour Change Procedures• Understand the 4 quadrants of operant conditioning• Understand the principles of classical conditioning• Understand the difference between classical and operant conditioning and how both work concurrently
Class 2: 2 hours Lecture and hands-on activity	Module 1b: Learning Theory Foundations – Factors Affecting Learning and Reinforcement Schedules Module 2a: Practical Animal Training Exercises and Mechanical Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Understand factors that affect learning• Understand the 4 stages of learning and how to assess what stage a dog is in• Understand how to use different reinforcement schedules• Learn proper clicker mechanics• Understand the structure of each group class• Learn how to teach others about positive reinforcement
WEEK 2	TOPIC	LEARNING OUTCOMES
Class 3: 2 hours Live animal interaction	Module 2b: Practical Animal Training Exercises and Mechanical Skills for Puppy Manners <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Puppy manners and socialization curriculum part 1 (classes 1 +2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Learn how to teach socialization and basic puppy friendly exercises common in evidence based puppy socialization classes.
Class 4: 2 hours Live animal interaction	Module 2b: Practical Animal Training Exercises and Mechanical Skills for Puppy Manners <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Puppy manners and socialization curriculum part 2 (classes 3 + 4)	

WEEK 3	TOPIC	LEARNING OUTCOMES
Class 5: 2 hours Live animal interaction	Module 2b: Practical Animal Training Exercises and Mechanical Skills for Puppy Manners <ul style="list-style-type: none">Puppy manners and socialization curriculum part 3 (classes 5 + 6)	
Class 6: 2 hours Live animal interaction	Module 2c: Practical Animal Training Exercises and Mechanical Skills for Foundation Skills <ul style="list-style-type: none">Foundation skills curriculum part 1 (classes 1 + 2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Conditioning a secondary reinforcer (loading a reinforcement marker)How to teach cued eye contact using reverse luring, and how to fade lure and add verbal cueHow to teach name game and add an auto sit behaviourHow to teach sit and down using luring and fading the lureHow to teach hand touchLearn proper leash handler mechanics and how to begin teaching choose to heelUnderstand mechanics for ‘it’s yer choice game’Understand the difference between reinforcement and rewardUnderstand how to transfer from a hand signal to a verbal cueUnderstand and assess stages of learning
WEEK 4	TOPIC	LEARNING OUTCOMES
Class 7: 2 hours Live animal interaction	Module 2c: Practical Animal Training Exercises and Mechanical Skills for Foundation Skills <ul style="list-style-type: none">Foundation skills curriculum part 2 (classes 3 + 4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">How to add distance and turns to eye contact exercise and fully transition to verbal cueHow to use hand touch to practice loose leash walkingHow to teach progression from name game to recall cueHow to practice restrained recallHow to build duration sit and down behaviours and how to add distance to begin teaching a stayUnderstand mechanics for ‘it’s yer choice’ progression to food on the floorHow to teach go to place using luring and fading lure to get automatic down from dog upon reaching matHow to setup polite greetings exercises
Class 8: 2 hours Live animal interaction	Module 2c: Practical Animal Training Exercises and Mechanical Skills for Foundation Skills <ul style="list-style-type: none">Foundation skills curriculum part 3 (classes 5 + 6)Individual coaching (5 slides, 20 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">How to practice loose leash walking setups (incorporating cued eye contact, using hand touch, figure 8, round robin, passed other dogs/distractions, etc.)How to teach verbal cue “leave it” using ‘it’s yer choice’ gameHow to add verbal cue and add distance to go to matHow to practice sit/down stay to recall

WEEK 5	TOPIC	LEARNING OUTCOMES
Class 9: 2 hours Lecture and video analysis activity	Module 3a: Body Language Deep Dive	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Understand what different eye positions/gazes may indicate• Understand what different ear positions may indicate• Understand what mouth positions may indicate• Understand what different tail positions and different tail wags may indicate• Understand what different overall body postures may indicate• Understand how and practice analyzing full body language in real time• Learn how to determine if a dog is displaying affiliative or agnostic behaviours• Understand when and how to interact with dogs
Class 10: 2 hours Lecture, demonstration and practice	Module 3b: Equipment, Defensive Handling, and Bite Prevention	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Know common equipment function and fitting including flat collars, martingale collars, harnesses, and head halters• Learn how and when to implement defensive handling strategies• Understand important factors in preventing dog bites• Understand early signs of escalation up the ladder of aggression• Understand when and how to intervene and de-escalate an escalating dog Understand protocol in the event of a bite
WEEK 6	TOPIC	LEARNING OUTCOMES
Class 11: 2 hours Lecture and video analysis activity	Module 3c: Body Language Review and Leading Puppy Playgroups	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review body language analysis• Understand appropriate vs. inappropriate play body language• Analyze play body language in real time• Understand when and how to intervene in play and how to separate dogs• Understand how to prevent conflict/altercations during dog-dog play
Class 12: 2 hours Lecture and discussion activity	Module 4: Client Relations and Group Class Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Understand how to build relationships with clients in a group class setting• How to safely manage dogs and humans in a group class• Class setup considerations• Understand importance of biosecurity and animal health guidelines for a group class• How to prevent dog-dog aggression in a group class• How to prevent dog-human aggression in a group class• How to de-escalate emergency situations

WEEK 7	TOPIC	LEARNING OUTCOMES
Class 13: 2 hours Lecture and Activity	Module 5: Group Class Teaching Skills – Group Class Structure and Teaching Methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the structure to run an effective group class • Understand and practice applying different teaching methods
Class 14: 2 hours Lecture and Activity	Module 5: Group Class Teaching Skills – Individual Coaching and Managing Client Relations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand and practice individual coaching within a group class • Understand and practice modifying exercises for clients requiring accommodations • Practice managing difficult client relations
WEEK 8	TOPIC	LEARNING OUTCOMES
Class 15: 2 hours Lecture, demonstration and practice	Module 6a: Managing Reactivity, Fear and Arousal in Group Classes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practice implementing group class rules • Practice client interaction scenarios • Understand and practice class safety considerations for reactive/aggressive and fearful/nervous dogs • Understand behavioural signs of dogs who are unsuitable for group classes and how to manage in the moment • Preventing dog-dog aggression • How to respond in emergency situations
Class 16: 2 hours Lecture, demonstration and practice	Module 6b: Managing Reactivity, Fear and Arousal in Group Classes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practice client interactions • Managing difficult clients or clients acting inappropriately • Understand customer service standards, disabilities, and accommodations

Phase 2: Group Class Shadowing
Total 40 hours over 10 Weeks
Weeks 9 - 18



STRUCTURE

- Students to shadow a total of 40 hours of group classes taught by a certified instructor.
- Students must commit to one 4 hour shift per week for 10 consecutive weeks

SCHEDULES
MAX 2 STUDENTS PER SCHEDULE

Schedule 1	Mondays 5-9pm
Schedule 2	Tuesdays 5-9pm
Schedule 3	Wednesdays 5-9pm
Schedule 4	Thursdays 5-9pm
Schedule 5	Fridays 5-9pm
Schedule 6	Saturdays 10am-2pm or 12pm to 4pm
Schedule 7	Sundays 10am-2pm or 12pm to 4pm

Phase 3: Written Exam and Assistant Teaching
Total 8-10 Hours over 3 Weeks
Weeks 19 - 21



STRUCTURE

- Students will complete a minimum of 6 and a maximum of 8 hours of assistant teaching with a certified instructor, and write the written exam.
- Students must commit to one 4 hour shift per week for two consecutive weeks.
- Students must take the lead to teach a minimum of 2 exercises per class to demonstrate their ability to explain, demonstrate and assist pet parents in practicing each exercise.
- The written exam consists of 100 multiple choice questions. Students have 2 hours to complete the exam. A passing grade is 80% or above. Two attempts will be permitted.

SCHEDULES FOR ASSISTANT TEACHING
MAX 1 STUDENT PER SCHEDULE

Schedule 1	Mondays 5-9pm for 2 consecutive weeks
Schedule 2	Tuesdays 5-9pm for 2 consecutive weeks
Schedule 3	Wednesdays 5-9pm for 2 consecutive weeks
Schedule 4	Thursdays 5-9pm for 2 consecutive weeks
Schedule 5	Fridays 5-9pm for 2 consecutive weeks
Schedule 6	Saturday 10am-4pm week 1
Schedule 7	Sunday 10am-4pm week 1
Schedule 8	Saturday 10am-4pm week 2
Schedule 9	Sunday 10am-4pm week 2
Schedule 10	Saturday 10am-4pm week 3
Schedule 11	Sunday 10am-4pm week 3

EXAM SCHEDULE

Schedule 1	Monday Week 2 5-7pm
Schedule 2	Monday Week 3 5-7pm

Phase 4: Practical Teaching Exam
Total 2 Hours to be Scheduled within Weeks 22-24



STRUCTURE

- Participants who have completed all requirements in phases 1, 2, and 3, will complete a practical teaching exam, supervised by the lead certified trainer. This practical exam will take roughly 2 hours and consist of demonstrating practical teaching abilities during a group class. Practical exams will be scheduled on an individual basis.
- Exam Attempts: 2 attempts will be permitted.

Instructors:

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