1. COURSE DESCRIPTION

A growing body of research documents the importance of the relationship between humans and animals, ranging from significance of companion animals and the need for social support for bereaved pet owners to the relationship between animal abuse and child abuse, domestic violence, and elder abuse. In addition, the therapeutic benefits of animals are well-established, and pet-facilitated therapy is highly consistent with classic social work approaches to problem-solving and promoting optimal adjustment between the client and his/her environment. This two-day mini-course addresses the social work practice implications of the complex bond between humans and other animals. Topics covered will include 1) an overview of the relationship between humans and animals and why related knowledge, attitudes, and skills are important for social workers; 2) animals as pets and their health and mental health benefits over the life course; 3) pet-facilitated psychotherapy and the use of service animals; 4) animal abuse and its relationship to domestic violence; and 5) ethical issues and controversies, including animal rights, animals and research, vegetarianism, and social work and speciesism.

2. COURSE CONTENT

Please note that this is an overview course. It will focus on a variety of topics relevant to social work practice: animals as pets and their role in human well-being over the life course, including issues related to the loss of a companion animal; the use of service animals, animal-assisted therapy, and other animal-assisted interventions; ethical issues, and the assessment and treatment of animal abusers. Since it is only two days long, it is not possible to cover each topic in detail, but the course will provide suggested readings and resources for further study.

3. COURSE OBJECTIVES

Students who complete the course will be able to:

1) Identify the health and mental health benefits of companion animals over the life course, including their documented role in promoting physical and psychological health among children and the elderly;

2) Assess the attachment between clients and their pets and provide appropriate support to clients experiencing the loss of a pet;

3) Describe indications for, potential benefits of, and potential risks (for both human and animal) of animal-assisted interventions ranging from pet-facilitated therapy to service animals; and

4) Describe current approaches to the assessment and treatment of animal abusers.
4. RELATIONSHIP OF THE COURSE TO CURRICULAR THEMES

Theme Relation to Multiculturalism & Diversity:
Cross-cultural differences and findings from studies of ethnic diversity and the animal-human bond are presented. An important focus of the course is the role of animals in promoting inclusion and quality of life for people with physical or mental health challenges.

Theme Relation to Social Justice:
Protection and promotion of animal well-being and prevention of animal abuse and neglect are addressed, including assessment and treatment of animal abusers. The role of companion, therapy, and service animals in empowering people with disabilities is examined.

Theme Relation to Promotion, Prevention, Treatment & Rehabilitation:
The impact of the animal-human bond on health and mental over the lifetime course is examined and the role of companion animals in promoting health and mental health is discussed. Components of the animal-human relationship are examined and interventions to support clients facing pet loss are presented.

Theme Relation to Behavioral and Social Science Research:
Behavioral and social science research is presented throughout the course and includes findings from studies of the animal-human bond in social work, medicine, veterinary medicine, nursing, nutrition, pharmacy, and public health, as well as psychology, sociology, and anthropology.

Relationship to SW Ethics and Values:
Ethical aspects of animal-human relationships, animal rights, “speciesism,” and implications for social work are an important component of the course.

5. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A. Academic Conduct and Integrity

Please see the current Student Code of Academic and Professional Conduct in the Student Guide to the Master's in Social Work Degree Program for a discussion of student responsibilities for academic conduct and integrity. Students who are found responsible for academic misconduct are subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal from the School of Social Work, revocation of degree, or any other sanction deemed appropriate to address the violation.

B. Attendance and Participation

Attendance at all class sessions and active participation in class activities is required. In consideration of your classmates, please arrive on time and remember to turn off your cell phone. Please do not text, read your e-mail, surf the Internet, etc. during class. If you are on call, please set your phone to vibrate.
Accommodations for Students with Disabilities
If you need accommodation for a disability or any other special need, please let me know so that I can work out the necessary arrangements.

Religious Observances
Please notify me if religious observances conflict with any part of the class so that I can make appropriate arrangements.

C. Assignments

Course assignments include participation in class activities and discussions, completion of the required readings, and completion of a brief written assignment. Details will be provided in a separate handout. Required readings are available through the University Library's Electronic Journals (http://www.lib.umich.edu/ejournals/) and on the course website in CTools.

D. Grading

Grading for the course is satisfactory/unsatisfactory and is based on attendance, participation in class activities, and successful completion of the written assignment.

6. COURSE SCHEDULE

Please note that this is a preliminary schedule. Any changes will be posted on CTools.

June 11

9:00-9:30  Introduction and Overview

9:30-10:30  Animal Human Bond Over the Life Course: Findings from Recent Research

10:30-10:45  Break

10:45-11:15  Animal-Human Bond Over the Life Course: Findings from Recent Research

11:15-12:00  Lessons from a Disaster

12:00-1:00  Lunch

1:00-2:00  Helping Clients Cope with the Loss of a Companion Animal
Francesca Tocco, MSW, Grief Program Director, Together in Grief, Easing Recovery (TIGER) Program College of Veterinary Medicine, University of Missouri

2:00-3:30  Service Dogs: Improving Quality of Life and Access for All
Anna Ercoli Schnitzer
Disabilities Issues and Outreach Librarian
University of Michigan Taubman Health Sciences Libraries

Video, “Through a Dog’s Eyes”: Service Dogs and the People Whose Lives They’ve Changed"
3:30-3:45 Break

3:45-4:45 *Ethical Issues and Controversies*

4:45-5:00 Summary

**June 18**

9:00-9:15 Announcements

9:15-10:15 *Assessment and Treatment of Animal Abusers*
Lisa Lunghofer
Program Director, Anicare and Rapid Response
Animals and Society Institute, Inc., Gaithersburg, MD

10:15-10:30 Break

10:30-11:00 *Animal-Assisted Activities*

11:00-12:00 *Therapy Dog Presentation*
Jared Wadley, President, Therapaws of Michigan and Editor, *The Therapaws Woofer* and *Therapy Dogs, Inc. Newsmagazine*

Jordan Wadley, Junior Handler, Therapy Dogs, Inc.

Special Guest: Legend, Therapy Dog

12:00-1:00 Lunch

1:00-1:30 *Animal-Assisted Interventions*

1:30-2:15 Laura Sanders, MSW, ACSW
Creative Therapeutic Interventions, Ann Arbor
Lecturer, University of Michigan School of Social Work

Special Guest: Buddy, Therapy Dog

2:15-2:30 Break

2:30-4:30 *Animal-Assisted Interventions*

4:30-5:00 Summary

**7. BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Most of the journal articles below are available on our CTools website or through the University Library’s Electronic Journals. Those marked * can be accessed through UM’s Interlibrary Loan Service (http://www.lib.umich.edu/interlibrary-loan). The book *Handbook on Animal-Assisted Therapy:*
Theoretical Foundations and Guidelines for Practice, 3rd Edition, by A.H. Fine (Ed.), is available online through MIRLYN.

Social Work and The Animal-Human Bond: Introduction


Animal-Human Bond Over the Life Course: Overview


Animal Human Bond Over the Life Course: Special Issues for Children and Adolescents


**Animal-Human Bond Over the Life Course: Special Issues for Adults and Elders**


**Animal-Human Bond, Disasters, and Social Work**


**Loss of a Companion Animal**


**Service Animals**


**Ethical Issues**


Assessment and Treatment of Animal Abusers


Animal-Assisted Activities and Interventions


