

**UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA  
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL POLICY & PRACTICE  
SOCIAL WORK PROGRAM**

**SWRK 798 SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE WITH ANIMALS  
Spring 2018**

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Non-human animals play a wide range of roles in social work settings. Clinicians involve animals in psychotherapy. Medical and school social workers coordinate visits from therapy animals. Forensic social workers encounter working dogs in courthouses and police stations. Animals are also important parts of clients' lives. Pets can provide comfort and social support to bereaved, isolated, or traumatized individuals. Understanding the importance of these animals can be an integral part of holistic treatment planning.

This course will expose students to the rich history of therapeutic involvement of animals in social work practice. Through readings, videos, and live observations, students will integrate prior clinical knowledge with relevant theoretical concepts. Students will engage with material introducing current debates in animal welfare as they apply to social work. Throughout the semester, students will research and present on specialized topics within animal assisted therapy. Guest speakers and field trips will further illustrate core class concepts.

*Instructor's Note: at several points in the semester, animals may visit class, or the class may visit animals. There is one field trip that involves contact with dogs and horses. Please consider this when registering for this course. There are steps to be taken to reduce exposure to allergens or other discomfort (including participating in sessions remotely). Please contact the instructor to discuss potential accommodations.*

**EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES**

- To learn the historical and theoretical underpinnings of involving therapy animals in social work practice
- To gain a working knowledge of the wide range of roles that animals play in clinical social work practice
- To consider the ethical and practical implications of involving animals in clinical social work practice

## STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Students are expected to conduct themselves consistent with the University of Pennsylvania's Code of Academic Integrity, which presents standards regarding plagiarism, multiple submissions, and other actions. Students are expected to be familiar with the Code, which can be found online at <http://www.upenn.edu/academicintegrity/>.

## REQUIRED TEXTS

Fine, A. H. (Ed.) (2015). *Handbook on animal-assisted therapy, fourth edition: Foundations and guidelines for animal-assisted interventions*. Pomona, CA: California State Polytechnic University.

Goodall, J. & Bekoff, M. (2003). *The ten trusts: What we must do to care for the animals we love*. New York, NY: Harper-Collins.

Loar, L. & Colman, L. (2004). *Teaching empathy: Animal-assisted therapy programs for children and families exposed to violence*. Alameda, CA: Latham Foundation.

## REQUIREMENTS

- **Journal Reflections (3 total)** **15%**
- **Research Paper** **25%**
- **Presentation** **15%**
- **Case Study Paper** **35%**
- **Class Participation** **10%**

### **Journal Reflections** (3 at 5 points each = 15 points)

Over the course of the semester, you will have the opportunity to observe several examples of AAI/AAT: live in class, on video (either in class or for homework), and in the optional field trips. For each journal reflection, you should choose one of the examples to reflect on for this assignment\* and complete the assignment within one week of the observation. You will complete a total of three reflections, so you will be choosing three observations.

These need not be formal pieces of writing; I am most interested in your thought process. You might consider the following questions. Is this an intervention you would refer a client to? Why or why not? Is this an intervention you would want to implement? Do you have questions about the intervention?

*\*Please note that in the last few weeks of the semester, you'll be turning in a paper and giving a presentation. There are opportunities to complete this assignment early in the semester – please plan accordingly!*

**Research Paper on Animal Assisted Intervention (AAI)/Animal Assisted Therapy (AAT) of Choice (25 points)**

In this assignment, students will select a specific AAI/AAT program or population served to research in greater depth. Several choices for approved topics are listed below. With instructor approval, you may select an alternate topic.

- Equine Facilitated Psychotherapy (EAGALA, PATH, etc.)
- AAT with Non-Traditional Animals (Dolphins, Cats, Bird, etc.)
- Hospital-Based AAT
- Prison Dog Programs
- Courthouse Dog Programs
- AAT with Juvenile Justice Populations
- AAT with Military Veterans and Families
- AAT with Survivors of Violence (Domestic Violence, Child Abuse, etc.)
- AAT with Older Adults
- AAT with Autism Spectrum Disorders
- AAT in Libraries
- School-based AAT
- AAT with LGBTQ Individuals

For the assignment, you are encouraged to use relevant readings from the syllabus, but must include at least eight other sources (five from peer-reviewed journals) identified through your own research. The research paper shall be 8-10 pages in length, double-spaced, with one inch margins on all sides. The final assignment shall be comprised of three parts.

**Part I: Description of Intervention.** Using knowledge gained from the literature search, provide the reader with a detailed overview of the intervention. Each of the following topics should be addressed (10 points).

- Outline the “nuts and bolts” of the intervention. Describe where, how, and with whom the intervention is implemented. Provide specific examples of activities or client interactions likely to occur.
- Identify and describe the role the social workers and animals play in this intervention. Reference any additional people (animal trainers, veterinarians, teachers, police officers, etc.) involved in the intervention.
- Provide any available information about the effectiveness of the intervention. If guidelines for best practices exist, include them here.

**Part II: Relevant Clinical Theory.** In this section, relate the tenets of the specific intervention to broader clinical theories. You may use sources from your social work practice course, but these will not count towards your eight outside sources (5 points).

- Identify one or more clinical theories that lend insight to how the intervention works (e.g. psychodynamic, relational, CBT, etc.)
- Explain why you chose this theory and discuss which aspect or aspects of the clinical theory come into play in this intervention.

- Discuss whether this theory is explicitly referred to in the literature on this intervention.

Part III: **Practice Ethics.** This section should combine your research with some personal reflection on the chosen intervention and the experience of the client, the involved animal, and the social worker. Any formal ethical or professional guidelines for the chosen intervention can be discussed here (10 points).

- Discuss what safety considerations the social worker should have for clients. How should allergies and fears be addressed? What should a social worker do if an animal poses a risk to the client?
- Discuss what safety considerations the social worker should have for the involved animal. What should a social worker do if a client poses a risk to the animal? What precautions can a social worker take to ensure that animal(s) is safe?
- Discuss any particular ethical, safety or, pragmatic issues that the social work setting (e.g. school, prison, therapy office) might have for implementing the intervention.

#### **Presentation on AAI/AAT of Choice** (15 points)

The last four classes of the semester will be devoted to learning about and discussing specific interventions. Students will present the class with an overview of their topic (Part I of the research paper) and briefly introduce the client or book/movie character that they are planning to write about for the Case Study Paper. The presentation will be graded on the following dimensions.

- Clarity and cohesiveness of information presented
- Integration of research material into the presentation
- Rationale for choosing the particular client or book/film character for this intervention (please note that client names and identifying information should be altered, and that all class members will be expected to respect case confidentiality)

While students are not required to create a PowerPoint, this is often a helpful way to organize one's thoughts. Other visual mediums (e.g. a poster) are acceptable, so long as the student meets the requirements of the assignment.

#### **Case Study Paper** (35 points)

This paper is designed to build off of the knowledge gained from the **Research Paper**. Students will bring practice knowledge to bear with theoretical knowledge from the literature. The focus of the paper is on one client (or family) from the student's field placement OR a character from a book or film. The final paper shall be 12-15 pages, and will include revised components of the research paper.

#### Part I: **Case Study** (15 points)

In this section, select either a case from field placement or a book/film character to analyze in depth. Consider each of the following dimensions. By the end of this section, the reader should have a clear picture of the individual.

- **Demographics:** Introduce the client's age, gender, race/ethnicity, and presenting problem. Discuss any important family connections including children, romantic relationships, or important social supports.
- **Current Status:** Explain the client's reason for seeking social work intervention. This could be the reason for seeking psychotherapy, being admitted to a hospital, etc. Include any health or mental health diagnoses, recent stressors, or other presenting problems here.
- **Background:** Discuss the client's case history. Explain any childhood or early life experiences that might influence the client's current presentation. Discuss the history of the client's presenting problem including past treatment and response to treatment.
- **Care Plan:** Share what services the client currently receives, if any. Later in the paper, there will be an opportunity to update the care plan to include the chosen animal assisted intervention (if you choose a book/film character, you can imagine what supports or services this individual has- be creative!)
- **Reason for Choosing this Case:** Explain why this particular case might be appropriate for an animal assisted intervention. The client might have a symptom that might be improved by contact with a therapy animal, or may have a positive past experience with animals.

#### Part II: **Description of the Intervention** (5 points)

This section should be a revised version of **Part I** in the **Research Paper**. Incorporate any additional information learned about the intervention, and any instructor feedback received on the original assignment. This section can be tied to the early case description; you might provide commentary about how a particular facet of the intervention is well suited to this client's care plan.

#### Part III: **Relevant Clinical Theory** (5 points)

This section should be a revised version of **Part II** in the **Research Paper**. Incorporate any additional insights about the intervention, and any instructor feedback received on the original assignment. Discuss how the client's current services pair well with the intervention.

#### Part IV: **Practice Ethics** (10 points)

This section should be a revised version of **Part III** in the **Research Paper**. Incorporate any additional insight about the intervention, and any instructor feedback received on the original assignment. Relate the ethical considerations to the client. For example, if the client is afraid of horses but wants to try equine facilitated psychotherapy, discuss that in this section.

#### **Class Participation** (10 points)

There are many ways to participate in this class- small and large group discussions, assistance with AAT demonstrations, attendance at the optional field trip, etc. To earn 10 points for participation, students should demonstrate active engagement with the course material. Because of the experiential nature of the course, class attendance and

participation facilitate the learning process. More than two absences may result in failure of the course.

### **OPTIONAL FIELD TRIP**

#### Philly Equine Partners: Sunday, April 22nd

*“Founded in 2012, Philly Equine Partners embodies social worker, Brigette Potgieter’s, vision for a just world with her passion for horses, nature, and psychotherapy. Philly Equine Partners is home at Manderley Farm, located in Blue Bell, Pennsylvania, 30minutes from downtown Philadelphia. Eliza Walbridge nurtures this farm, which has been in her family for generations. Manderley is a place of healing, kindness, and compassion. A small, vibrant herd of horses partner in our work.”*

(From <http://www.phillyequinepartners.com>)

### **COURSE READINGS & ASSIGNMENTS**

#### **Module I: History and Theory of AAI**

#### **Week 1 (January 17<sup>th</sup>) – History of AAI/AAT**

##### Readings and Assignments Due

- Video: “Animal Assisted Therapy”
- Video: “Green Chimneys –Animal Assisted Therapy”
- *Fine – Chapter 2: Animal-Assisted Interventions in Historical Perspective*
- Beck, M. (2010). Beside Freud’s couch, a Chow named Jofi. *Wall Street Journal Online*. Retrieved from <http://www.wsj.com/articles>
- Jacobs, E. (2010). Why ‘Pep’ the prison dog got such a bum rap. *National Public Radio Online*. Retrieved from [www.npr.org](http://www.npr.org)

**\*\*Bring a photo of an animal that has personal significance to you. We will use these for an activity in class\*\***

#### **Week 2 (January 24<sup>th</sup>) – Origins of the Human-Animal Bond**

Guest Speaker: Jeffrey Jin, LCSW

Lead Social Worker & Diversity Council Member, Kennedy Health System

*Jeff is a student in the DSW program, and he will be speaking about his dissertation research, which explores the experiences of LGBT+ youth and the supportive role that companion animals can play.*

##### Readings and Assignments Due

- Video: “Tedx OStateU: The Human-Animal Bond – Susan Little”

- *Fine – Chapter 1: Understanding Our Kinship with Animals: Input for Health Care Professionals Interested in the Human-Animal Bond*
- Udell, M., Dorey, N., & Wynne, C. (2010). What did domestication do to dogs? A new account of dogs' sensitivity to human actions. *Biological Reviews*, 85, 327-345.
- Range, F., & Viranyi, Z. (2015). Tracking the evolutionary origins of dog-human cooperation: the "Canine Cooperation Hypothesis." *Frontiers in Psychology*, 5, 1-10.
- Walsh, F. (2009). Human-animal bonds I: The relational significance of companion animals. *Family Process*, 48(4), 462-480.

### **Week 3 (January 31<sup>st</sup>) – Clinical Theory Part I (Cognitive and Behavioral Approaches)**

Guest Speaker: Alexis Farrell, LSW

Outpatient Therapist at Youth Advocate Programs

*Alexis is currently an Outpatient Therapist with Youth Advocate Programs and the founder of the Canine Therapy program. She is Program Manager with the Hand2Paw foundation at the Brandywine Valley SPCA in West Chester, PA where she provides youth aging out of foster care with paid internships in the animal shelter. Alexis is also a DSW student at the University of Pennsylvania where she is furthering her studies of the human-animal bond.*

#### Readings and Assignments Due

- *Fine –Chapter 12: Application of Animal Assisted Interventions in Professional Settings: An Overview of Alternatives*
- Hunt, M.G., & Chizkov, R.R. (2014). Are therapy dogs like Xanax? Does animal-assisted therapy impact processes relevant to cognitive behavioral psychotherapy? *Anthrozoös*, 27(3), 457-469.
- Yount, R., Ritchie, E. C., Laurent, M. S. & Olmert, M. D. (2013). The role of service dog training in the treatment of combat-related PTSD. *Psychiatric Annals*, 43(6), 292-295.

### **Week 4 (February 7<sup>th</sup>) – Clinical Theory Part II (Relational and Psychodynamic Approaches)**

Guest Speaker: TBD

#### Readings and Assignments Due

- *Fine – Chapter 11: Incorporating Animal-Assisted Interventions into Psychotherapy: Guidelines and Suggestions for Therapists*

- Jalongo, M. R. (2015). An attachment perspective on the child-dog bond: Interdisciplinary and international research findings. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 43(5), 395-405.
- Parish-Plass, N. (2008). Animal-assisted therapy with children suffering from insecure attachment due to abuse and neglect: A method to lower the risk of intergenerational transmission of abuse? *Clinical Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 13(1), 7-30.

### **Week 5 (February 14<sup>th</sup>) – Animal Assisted Play Therapy Observation**

*A dog will be present at this class. If this poses an issue, there will be an opportunity to view this class remotely.*

#### Readings and Assignments Due

- Video: “Winston and Tallulah training”
- *Fine – Chapter 13: Animals in the Lives of Children*
- *Fine – Chapter 14: Animals in Educational Settings: Research and Practice*
- VanFleet, R., & Faa-Thompson, T. (2010). The case for using animal assisted play therapy. *British Journal of Play Therapy*, 6, 4-18.
- Zilcha- Mano, S., Mikulincer, M., & Shaver, P.R. (2011). Pet in the therapy room: An attachment perspective on animal-assisted therapy. *Attachment & Human Development*, 13(6), 541-561.

## **Module II: Ethical and Practical Considerations**

### **Week 6 (February 21<sup>st</sup>) – The Life of a Therapy Animal**

Guest Speaker: Lisa Serad, MS

*Lisa is the Program Coordinator of the Gerald B. Shreiber Pet Therapy Program at The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, She has worked as a pet therapy volunteer and a professional dog trainer for more than 20 years and was a therapy dog evaluator for 17 years.*

#### Readings and Assignments Due

- *Fine – Chapter 25: Loss of a Therapy Animal: Assessment and Healing*
- *Goodall & Bekoff – Chapters 1 (We are All Part of the Animal Kingdom), 2 (Respect All Life), 3 (Open Our Minds, In Humility, To Animals and Learn from Them), 4 (Teach Our Children to Respect and Love Nature)*

### **Week 7 (February 28<sup>th</sup>) – Non-Human Body Language**

#### Readings and Assignments Due

- *Goodall & Bekoff - Chapters 5 (Be Wise Stewards of Life on Earth), 6 (Value and Help Preserve the Sounds of Nature), 7 (Refrain from Harming Life in Order to Learn about It)*



- Review Lili Chin graphics: <http://www.doggiedrawings.net> / Download and peruse “Dog Decoder” app
- American Veterinary Society of Animal Behavior (2008). Position statement on the use of dominance theory in behavior modification of animals. *American Veterinary Society of Animal Behavior*. Retrieved from [http://avsabonline.org/uploads/position\\_statements/dominance\\_statement.pdf](http://avsabonline.org/uploads/position_statements/dominance_statement.pdf)
- Bradshaw, J. W. S., Blackwell, E. J., & Casey, R.A. (2009). Dominance in domestic dogs: Useful construct or bad habit? *Journal of Veterinary Behavior: Clinical Applications and Research*, 4(3), 135-144.
- Yin, S. (2007). Dominance versus leadership in dog training. *Compendium of continuing education for the practicing veterinarian*, 29, 414-432.

**\*\*Spring Break March 7<sup>th</sup> (No Class)\*\***

### **Week 8 (March 14<sup>th</sup>) – Animal Welfare for Working Animals**

Guest Speaker: Meg Boscov, CPDT

Certified Pet Dog Trainer

*Meg is an experienced dog trainer who has a focus with AAI. She will share some of her experiences in AAI and discuss her business, Pup Up Social Learning.*

#### Readings and Assignments Due

- Video: “TEDx Talk Jaffa: What Every Person Can Learn from Dog Training”
- *Goodall & Bekoff - Chapters 8 (Have the Courage of our Convictions), 9 (Praise and Help those Who work for Animals and the Natural World), 10 (Act Knowing we are Not Alone and Live with Hope)*
- *Fine – Chapter 26: Our Ethical and Moral Responsibility: Ensuring the Welfare of Therapy Animals*

**\*\*Research Paper Due\*\***

### **Week 9 (March 21<sup>st</sup>)–“Link” Violence**

#### Readings and Assignments Due

- *Loar & Colman: Part 1 – The Connection Between Children and Animals in Good Times and Bad: Why Humane Education and Animal-Assisted Therapy Programs Work*
- Arluke, A. (2014). Animal abuse as a warning sign of school massacres: A critique and refinement. *Homicide Studies*, 18(1), 7-22.

- Faver, C. A (2003). Animal abuse and domestic violence: Untangling the web of abuse. *Journal of Social Work Education*, 7(3), 237-253.
- Haden, S. C., & Scarpa, A. (2005). Childhood animal cruelty: A review of research, assessment, and therapeutic issues. *The Forensic Examiner*, 14(2), 23-32.
- Hardesty, J.L., Khaw, L., Ridgeway, M. D., Weber, C., & Miles, T. (2013). Coercive control and abused women's decision's about pets when seeking shelter. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 28(13), 2617- 2639.
- Howe, T. R. (2014). Is there hope for children who harm animals? *PsyCritiques*, 59(21)

### **Week 10 (March 28<sup>th</sup>) – Animals and Social Work Ethics**

Guest Speaker: Rachael Cabral

*Rachael is a 2nd year MSW student interning at CHOP child and adolescent psychiatry and volunteer with her therapy dog (Raina) at hospitals and universities*

#### Readings and Assignments Due

- *Loar & Colman: Parts II (Creating Programs that Work) & III (Tools for Your Program)*
- Evans, N., & Gray, C. The practice and ethics of animal-assisted therapy with children and young people: Is it enough that we don't eat our co-workers? *The British Journal of Social Work*, 42 (4), 600-617.
- National Association of Social Workers. (2008). Code of ethics of the national association of social workers. Retrieved from: <https://www.socialworkers.org/pubs/code/code.asp>
- Risley-Curtiss, C., Holley, L. C., & Wolf, S. (2006). The Animal-human bond and ethnic diversity. *Social Work*, 51(3), 257-268.

### **Module III: Overview of Specific AAI Practices and Programs**

#### **Week 11 (April 4<sup>th</sup>) – AAT with Non-Canine Animals**

Guest Speaker: Phil Arkow

*Phil is the coordinator of the National Link Coalition - the National Resource Center on the Link between Animal Abuse and human Violence, and chairs the Latham Foundation's Animal Abuse and Family Violence prevention project. A leader in the fields of animal welfare and violence prevention, Phil serves on numerous boards and working groups related to The Link, and teaches courses in AAT at Harcum and Camden County Colleges.*

### Readings and Assignments Due

- Video: “Unexpected Miracles: Horses Healing Humans”
- *Fine: Chapter 10: The Role of the Equine in Animal-Assisted Interactions*
- Berget, B., Ekeberg, O., & Braastad, B. O. (2007). Animal-assisted therapy with farm animals for persons with psychiatric disorders: Effects on self-efficacy, coping ability and quality of life, a randomized controlled trial. *Clinical Practice and Epidemiology in Mental Health*, 4(9).
- Stumpf, E. & Breitenback, E. (2015). Dolphin-assisted therapy with parental involvement for children with severe disabilities: Further evidence for a family-centered theory for effectiveness. *Anthrozöos*, 27(1), 95-109.

### Student Presentations

- Equine Facilitated Psychotherapy (EAGALA, PATH, etc.)
- AAT with Non-Traditional Animals (Dolphins, Cats, Bird, etc.)
- AAT with LGBTQ Individuals

## **Week 12 (April 11<sup>th</sup>) - AAT in Institutional Settings**

### Readings and Assignments Due

- Video: “Prison Dogs of Gwinnett County”
- *Fine – Chapter 19: Increasing the Effectiveness of Palliative Care through Integrative Modalities: Conceptualizing the Roles of Animal Companions and Animal-Assisted Interventions*
- *Fine – Chapter 21: The Human-Animal Relationship in Context of the Juvenile and Criminal Justice Systems*
- *Fine – Chapter 23: On-Call 24/7 – The Emerging Roles of Service and Support Animals*

### Student Presentations

- Hospital-Based AAT
- Prison Dog Programs
- AAT with Juvenile Justice Populations

## **Week 13 (April 18<sup>th</sup>) – AAT and Trauma**

### Readings and Assignments Due

- Video: “Therapy Dogs Helping Those in Recovery (Sandy Hook)”
- *Fine – Chapter 22: Treating Human Trauma with the Help of Animals: Trauma Informed Intervention for Child Maltreatment and Adult Post-Traumatic Stress*

- O'haire ME, Guérin NA and Kirkham AC (2015). Animal-Assisted Intervention for trauma: a systematic literature review. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 6 doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2015.01121

#### Student Presentations

- AAT with Military Veterans and Families
- AAT with Survivors of Domestic Violence
- AAT with Survivors of Child Trauma
- Courthouse Dog Programs

#### **Week 14 (April 25<sup>th</sup>) – AAT and Socialization**

##### Readings and Assignments Due

- Video: “Pet Therapy in Nursing Home”
- *Fine – Chapter 16: The Roles of Animals for Individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder*
- *Fine – Chapter 17: Understanding the Role of Human-Animal Interaction in the Family Context*
- *Fine – Chapter 24: Animal Visitation Programs in Colleges and Universities: An Efficient Model for Reducing Student Stress*

#### **\*\*Case Study Paper Due\*\***

#### Student Presentations

- AAT with Autism Spectrum Disorders
- AAT with Older Adults
- AAT in Libraries
- School-Based AAT