

Dog Emotion and Cognition

Earlier in December a friend and I completed a class about dog behaviour offered by [Duke University](#). This was done without leaving our homes, and by attending the lessons (and getting graded!) online, through Coursera.org

What is [Coursera.org](https://www.coursera.org)? Coursera is a platform which offers online classes, it basically connects institutions and student. I attended my first Coursera class in 2013, it was [Drugs and the Human Brain](#) (by [CalTech](#)), a tough course with plenty of biochemistry, neuro transmitters, neuronal pathways and so on. I picked this class as I wanted to know more on the effects of drugs described for dog behavioural problems in dogs. I ended up learning a lot of useful things for my anesthesiology exam. I later took a few more veterinary medicine related classes and I then paused, until I decided to enroll in [Dog Emotion and Cognition](#). How does Coursera work? You can enroll all the classes for free, if you want to get a certificate, however, you must pay a small fee (usually around 50 USD). Students attending the class for free will not get graded and will not get a certificate but will be able to access **all** the course materials. Classes usually last a couple of weeks, Dog Emotion and Cognition lasted 8 weeks for example, but you can often attend a class at your own pace.



This class is still available and is taught by Brian Hare,

Professor of Anthropology at Duke University, North Carolina, USA. He also wrote the book [The Genius of Dogs: How Dogs Are Smarter Than You Think](#). Dog Emotion and Cognition is a course designed to introduce the exciting new science of dog psychology to any level of dog enthusiast. In learning about dogs you will be introduced to evolutionary and cognitive theory, learn about experimental methodology, see how dogs compare to other species, and even have the chance to try some of the cognitive games you learn about with your own dog. The course is a great introduction to the field of animal cognition and animal behavior but is also relevant to anyone interested in human evolution or even dog training. When you finish you will think about your dog in a new way, will be ready to apply your new knowledge, and will be prepared to take higher level classes in the evolutionary or cognitive sciences. “

How was my experience with this course? The first lessons did not enthusiasm me, but it got much, much better after week three. I especially enjoyed learning about cognitive games, intelligent disobedience and more... I do not want to spoil the class! So is the course worth your time? I can't tell this for sure but if you enjoy learning new things I would suggest you to take a look. Would I suggest attending it for free or getting a certificate? This is very personal, if you want to take the class “just for you”, opt for the free version. If you work with dogs and/or need more motivation to study opt for the certificate. This is a university (undergraduate level) course, materials are good quality and the fee Coursera asks is extremely reasonable. I am not sure whether the same thing happens abroad or not but, here in Italy, is not uncommon to see some dog behaviour/training workshop costing several hundreds of euros a day! So...