



**Oregon State University**  
**Professional and  
Continuing Education**

**Course Title:** Victim to Verdict: The Veterinarian's Role in Animal Cruelty Investigations Online Course

**Term Offered:** Online

**CEUs:** TBD

**Instructor name:** Dr. Kris Otteman, Emily Lewis, Linda Fielder

**Instructor email:** [victim2verdict@gmail.com](mailto:victim2verdict@gmail.com)

### **Course Description**

This course provides formal academic training with an emphasis on practical application of learning objectives upon completion. Part one of the course provides foundational knowledge about the legal system specific to criminal animal cruelty offenses and underscores why responding to concerns about animal cruelty is vitally important. This part of the course also explains the essential and diverse role of the veterinarian when responding to animal cruelty. Introductory topics include terms and phrases related to criminal animal cruelty, responsibilities for recognizing and reporting animal cruelty, putting animal husbandry knowledge to work, fundamentals of all animal cruelty cases with a focus on the veterinary professional's vital role throughout the course.

Part two of the course delves into the specific processes that veterinarians can utilize to effectively contribute to animal cruelty investigations. Participants will learn how to conduct a veterinary forensic examination and form treatment plans for living victims as well as veterinary forensic necropsy on animal remains. The takeaways from part two are bolstered by modules that address both evidence collection and report writing. Case studies and report examples emphasize the learning objectives of this portion of the course. Upon completion of part two, participants will be able to confidently contribute to an animal cruelty investigation.

### **Prerequisites**

None

### **Communication**

This online course is non-interactive. Should you have any questions regarding course material, please contact us through the e-mail listed above.

### **Canvas**

This course will be delivered via Canvas where you will access the syllabus, learning materials, tutorials, discuss issues and/or display your projects. If you are having problems accessing Canvas [check your computer compatibility](#).

### **Technology Support**

If you experience difficulties, errors, or problems in Canvas, please click the Help button located at the bottom of the left sidebar within your Canvas course. Tier 1 technical support is available to you 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

If you have difficulties accessing your course in Canvas, please contact PACE at (541)737-4197 or email [pace@oregonstate.edu](mailto:pace@oregonstate.edu). We are available Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. until 5 p.m. Pacific time.

### Recommended Materials

- **Animal Cruelty Investigations, A Collaborative Approach from Victim to Verdict**
  - By Kris Otteman, Linda Fielder, and Emily Lewis
  - Wiley-Blackwell, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., Publication
  - ISBN: 978-1-1197-6488-5
- **Veterinary Forensics: Animal Cruelty Investigations 2nd edition**
  - By Melinda D. Merck, DVM
  - Wiley-Blackwell, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., Publication
  - ISBN: 978-0-4709-6162-9
- **Cruelty to Animals and Interpersonal Violence: Readings in Research and Application**
  - Edited By Frank R. Ascione and Randall Lockwood
  - Pursue University Press, Publication
  - ISBN: 978-1557531063
- **International Veterinary Forensic Sciences Association (IVFSA) Protocols for the Forensic Live Animal Examination and Veterinary Forensic Post-Mortem Examination**
  - Updated in 2020
  - Visit [www.ivfso.org](http://www.ivfso.org) to read the protocols located on the bottom right of the front webpage or click the links below
    - [Forensic Live Animal Examination IVFSA Protocols](#)
    - [Veterinary Forensic Post-Mortem Examination IVFSA Protocols](#)

### Measurable Learning Outcomes

After successful completion of this course, participants will be able to:

- **Educate** your peers about the connection between animal cruelty and interpersonal violence.
- **Identify** which part of the Veterinary Oath imparts a duty to respond to animal cruelty in your community.
- **Distinguish** between an animal's property status under the law and their status as sentient beings in need of your advocacy when they are victimized.
- **Locate** the relevant animal protection laws in your state.
- **Identify** and **initiate** partnerships with agencies and organizations that would improve the response to animal cruelty in your community through collaboration.
- **Explain** the foundations of criminal law and how they apply to animal cruelty investigations.
- **Create** and utilize a directory of agencies tasked with receiving and investigating reports of animal cruelty in your area.
- **Describe** the various outcomes of an animal cruelty investigation.
- **Assist** law enforcement in an education and compliance monitoring response to an animal cruelty concern in your community.
- **Identify** when a situation has resulted in a good faith belief that an animal has experienced maltreatment.
- Effectively **report** concerns by understanding important basic information to include and the role and responsibility of the veterinarian.
- **Alleviate concerns** voiced by others about reporting animal cruelty.
- **Articulate** the differences between forensic veterinary medicine and traditional veterinary medicine.
- **Identify** specific roles and tasks that a veterinarian is integral to throughout an animal cruelty investigation.

- **Communicate** why the veterinarian is critical to the success of an animal cruelty investigation and **activate** this learning into contributions to an investigation.
- **Identify** what is considered relevant evidence in animal cruelty cases.
- Successfully **document** living and non-living evidence and appropriately **package** non-living evidence.
- **Maintain** chain of custody for living and non-living evidence in your care.
- **Describe** the steps necessary to prepare for, complete, and document a live animal forensic exam.
- **Articulate** the differences in documenting a standard physical exam and a forensic physical exam.
- **Identify** the ongoing responsibilities of the veterinarian after a forensic exam is concluded.
- **Describe** the steps necessary to prepare for, complete, and document a forensic necropsy.
- **Articulate** the differences between documenting a standard postmortem exam vs. a forensic necropsy.
- **Create** appropriate documentation to support the findings of a forensic necropsy and maintain chain of custody.
- **Understand** how the veterinary report is used in animal cruelty investigations.
- **Create and use** a template to generate consistent and comprehensive forensic veterinary reports.
- **Employ** foundational writing principles to elevate the efficacy of your reports.

### Evaluation and Grading

Grading is based on a pass/no-pass scale. See below for more information.

#### Evaluation Scale

Your grade will be based on the following scale:

Pass	80-100%
No Pass	0-79%

#### Evaluation of Learner Performance

Learning outcomes will be measured through completion of assessment at the end of Part Two.

#### Course Outline

##### Part One

Module 1: Why is Responding to Animal Cruelty Important?

Module 2: Foundational Understanding of Criminal Law & Specific Animal Laws

Module 3: How Does an Animal Cruelty Investigation Happen?

Module 4: Recognizing and Reporting Animal Cruelty

Module 5: Why is the Veterinarian Important to Animal Cruelty Response?

##### Part Two

Module 6: Evidence Collection

Module 7: Live Animal Forensic Examination

Module 8: Forensic Necropsy

Module 9: Report Writing

Module 10: Case Study and Conclusion

#### Statement Regarding Students with Disabilities

PACE seeks to accommodate the diverse experiences and learning styles of the students. Accessibility, accommodations are collaborative efforts between learners and PACE. If you require accommodations please email [pace@oregonstate.edu](mailto:pace@oregonstate.edu).

#### Expectations for Student Conduct

Student conduct is governed by the university's policies, as explained in the [Student Conduct Code](#). In an academic community, students, faculty, and staff each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment, whether online or in the classroom. Students, faculty, and staff have the responsibility to treat each other with understanding, dignity and respect. Disruption of teaching, administration, research, and other institutional activities is prohibited by Oregon Administrative Rule 576-015-0015 (1) and (2) and is subject to sanctions under university policies, OSU Office of Student Conduct.

### **Academic Integrity**

Students are expected to comply with all regulations pertaining to academic honesty, defined as: An intentional act of deception in which a student seeks to claim credit for the work or effort of another person or uses unauthorized materials or fabricated information in any academic work.

### **Conduct in this Online Classroom**

Students are expected to conduct themselves in the course (e.g., on discussion boards, email postings) in a civil manner. Students will be expected to treat all others with the same respect, as they would want afforded themselves. Disrespectful behavior to others (such as harassing behavior, personal insults, inappropriate language) or disruptive behaviors in the course (such as persistent and unreasonable demands for time and attention both in and out of the classroom) is unacceptable.

### **Netiquette**

In an online classroom, your primary means of communication is written. The written language has many advantages: more opportunity for reasoned thought, more ability to go in-depth, and more time to think through an issue before posting a comment. However, written communication also has its disadvantages. This includes a lack of the face-to-face signaling that occurs through body language, intonation, pausing, facial expressions and gestures. As a result, please recognize the possibility of miscommunication and compose your comments in a clear, positive, supportive, and constructive manner. Please be sure to be professional by demonstrating tolerance for diverse points of view and give each other the benefit of the doubt about any unclear intended meanings.

### **Evaluation**

Course evaluation results are extremely important and are used to help improve this course and the learning experience of future students.

If you have feedback for improving the course, either during this session or for subsequent sessions, we would like to know. To provide direct feedback, please email [pace@oregonstate.edu](mailto:pace@oregonstate.edu).