

Course: Communication skills in veterinary medicine

UNIVERSITY OF ZAGREB
FACULTY OF VETERINARY MEDICINE
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Division:
Organizational unit:
E-mail of the course leader: danijel.labas@unicath.hr
Register No of the organisational unit:
Zagreb, 22/1/2026



214356	REPUBLIKA HRVATSKA	
Veterinarski fakultet u Zagrebu		
Primljeno:	26.01.2026	
Klasifikacijska oznaka	Org. jed.	
602-04/25-22/34	251-61-41;	
Uredžbeni broj	Prilozi	Vrijednost
251-61-30-26-128	0	-

COURSE SYLLABUS

Course name: Communication skills in veterinary medicine
Academic year 2025/2026

Course leader: Full Prof. (tenue) Danijel Labaš

Deputy course leader: (title, name and surname): -

Teachers: Full Prof. (tenue) Danijel Labaš

First day of classes: 24/3/2026

Last day of classes: 9/6/2026

Activities - Communication skills in veterinary medicine (1/2)

Start Date	Start T	End Ti	Course	Group	Note	Length	Instructor	Room
24/03/2026	10:45	12:15	p01 Introduction	6E-1, 6E-2, 6E-3		1:30	Labaš D.	P_amfiteatar
27/03/2026	14:00	15:30	v01 Veterinary consultation	6E-3		1:30	Labaš D.	P_amfiteatar
27/03/2026	15:45	17:15	v01 Veterinary consultation	6E-1, 6E-2		1:30	Labaš D.	P_amfiteatar
09/04/2026	13:15	14:45	v02 Compassionate communication	6E-1, 6E-2		1:30	Labaš D.	P_amfiteatar
09/04/2026	15:00	16:30	v02 Compassionate communication	6E-3		1:30	Labaš D.	P_amfiteatar
23/04/2026	15:00	16:30	p02 Basics of communication skills	6E-1, 6E-2, 6E-3		1:30	Labaš D.	P_sudska
28/04/2026	12:45	14:15	v03 Non verbal communication	6E-3		1:30	Labaš D.	P_fizika
28/04/2026	14:30	16:00	v03 Non verbal communication	6E-1, 6E-2		1:30	Labaš D.	P_fizika
14/05/2026	14:15	15:45	p03 Elements of communication	6E-1, 6E-2, 6E-3		1:30	Labaš D.	P_amfiteatar
18/05/2026	12:30	14:00	v04 Dealing with difficult situations	6E-1, 6E-2		1:30	Labaš D.	P_fizika
18/05/2026	14:15	15:45	v04 Dealing with difficult situations	6E-3		1:30	Labaš D.	P_fizika
22/05/2026	13:00	14:30	p04 Verbal and non-verbal communication	6E-1, 6E-2, 6E-3		1:30	Labaš D.	P_amfiteatar
28/05/2026	12:30	14:00	p05 Types of listening	6E-1, 6E-2, 6E-3		1:30	Labaš D.	P_amfiteatar
28/05/2026	14:15	15:45	v05 Public performance skills	6E-1, 6E-2		1:30	Labaš D.	P_fizika
03/06/2026	12:00	13:30	p06 Aspects of communication	6E-1, 6E-2, 6E-3		1:30	Labaš D.	P_amfiteatar
03/06/2026	13:45	15:15	v05 Public performance skills	6E-3		1:30	Labaš D.	P_fizika

Activities - Communication skills in veterinary medicine (2/2)

Start Date	Start T	End Ti	Course	Group	Note	Length	Instructor	Room
08/06/2026	12:00	13:30	p07 New media communication	6E-1, 6E-2, 6E-3		1:30	Labaš D.	P_amfiteatar
08/06/2026	14:00	15:30	v06 Public relations	6E-3		1:30	Labaš D.	P_fizika
09/06/2026	12:00	13:30	p08 Public relations	6E-1, 6E-2, 6E-3		1:30	Labaš D.	P_fizika
09/06/2026	14:00	15:30	v06 Public relations	6E-1, 6E-2		1:30	Labaš D.	P_fizika
Total: 20						30:00		

Timetable for LECTURES academic year 2025/2026

STUDENT OBLIGATIONS

Lecture attendance	The student must be present at 5 hours of lectures to achieve 3 minimum points. The maximum number of possible points from this element of the rating is 6 points.
Seminars attendance	-
Practicals attendance	The student must be present at least 7 hours of practicals to achieve 8 minimum points. The maximum number of possible points from this element of the rating is 12 points.
Active participation in seminars and practicals	The student must have a minimum of 5 points for activity during the practicals. The maximum number of 10 points is obtained by 5 positive oral answers during the practicals.
Final exam	The final exam will be written. The maximum number of points a student must achieve on the final exam is 40 points. In order to achieve 24 minimum points, the student must achieve 20 points on the final exam
Examination requirements	Student requirements are defined in the Regulations on the Integrated Undergraduate and Graduate Study of Veterinary Medicine (2022). Given the above, the student must acquire a minimum number of points from all assessment elements in order to take the final exam. Regulations On Intergraduate And Graduate Studies, Article 41: a student can justifiably be absent from up to 50% of the lectures; 30% of the seminars and 30% of the exercises.

GRADING AND EVALUATING STUDENT WORK

Continuous knowledge-checking (mid-terms)	During the course, two colloquia will be organized with 10 questions each. In this way students can achieve a total maximum of 20 points. The student in the colloquia must have 13 points to achieve a minimum of 20 points. The maximum score obtained from this grading element is 32 points. The minimum requirements for passing on the first and second grading elements are 36 points. In order to qualify for the final exam, the student must achieve the aforementioned 36 points.
Final exams (dates)	29/4/2026; 25/6/2026; 8/7/2026; 2/9/2026; 18/9/2026
Form of final exam	Written exam.

LITERATURE

Obligatory literature	GRAY, C. – MOFFETT, J. (eds.), <i>Handbook of Veterinary Communication Skills</i> , Wiley-Blackwell, Oxford, 2010. LABAŠ, D., <i>Nonverbal communication: The Body as an Extension of the Soul</i> in: Djurdja Bartlett (ed.), <i>Body in Transition</i> , Faculty of Textile Technology, University of Zagreb, Department of Fashion Design, Zagreb 1999, 74-83. LITTLEJOHN, S. W. – FOSS A. K., <i>Theories of Human Communication</i> , Wadsworth Publishing Company, Wadsworth 2011 (10th or later edition), pp. 3-41; 79-122; 179-228.
Optional literature	ADAMS, C. L, FRANKELM R. M., It May Be a Dog's Life But the Relationship with Her Owners Is Also Key to Her Health and Well Being: Communication in Veterinary Medicine, <i>Vet Clin Small Anim</i> , 37 (2007) 1-17. HAMOOD, W. J., CHUR-HANSEN, A., McARTHUR, M. L., A qualitative study to explore communication skills in veterinary medical education, <i>International Journal of Medical Education</i> , 2014;5:193-198.

	<p>McDermott, M. P., Tischler, V. A., Cobb M. A, Robbé I. J., Dean, R. S., Veterinarian-Client Communication Skills: Current State, Relevance, and Opportunities for Improvement, <i>J Vet Med Educ.</i>, 42(2015)4:305-14.</p> <p>Shaw, J. R., Four Core Communication Skills of Highly Effective Practitioners, <i>Veterinary Clinics of North America: Small Animal Practice</i>, 36(2006)2: 385-396.</p> <p>Shaw J. R., Barley, G. E., Hill, A. E.,Larson, S., Roter, D. L., Communication skills education onsite in a veterinary practice, <i>Patient Education and Counseling</i>, 80(2010)3: 337-344.</p> <p>Shaw, J. R., Bonnett, B. N., Adams, C. L., Roter, D. L., Veterinarian-client-patient communication patterns used during clinical appointments in companion animal practice, <i>Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association</i>, 228(2006)5: 714-721.</p> <p>World Organisation for Animal Health, <i>Communication Handbook Veterinary Services</i>, World Organisation for Animal Health, 2015 (pdf).</p>
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OBJECTIVES AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

Course objectives	The main goal of the course is to familiarize students with communication science as an interdisciplinary and integrative knowledge of its postulates in order to solve and improve their own communication, while the specific aims of the course are the acquisition of communication skills at interpersonal, social and media level, with the acquisition of knowledge of the correct relationship and use of verbal and nonverbal communication. Communication and relationship between veterinarians and patient owners, as well as other public (especially media), are extremely important and have a number of effects on treatment outcomes as well as satisfaction with treatment, compatibility, clinical outcome and quality of life, patient safety, teamwork, cultural sensitivity and reduced the number of complaints about the veterinarians work, and equally affect the presentation of a real image of the profession in public.
Learning outcomes	<p>Students will be familiar with the anthropological, communicational and psychological approach to multiple levels of communication. In particular, they will be able to properly use verbal communication and learn to properly evaluate and interpret nonverbal communication in different social and cultural environments, with particular emphasis on the relationship between the veterinarian and the client's owner. One of the more sensitive areas of biomedicine in terms of the importance of quality communication is access to communication in severe and incurable diseases, and particularly challenging opportunities for the clients to convey bad news, to recognize his emotional reactions, to listen actively, to include him in communication, to discuss the prognosis and the risk , assist in making a decision or encouraging its acceptance. But no less important is the public reaction to complaints about the profession, mostly in the media. Students will therefore be able to use the acquired communicative knowledge and develop the skills of critical observation, presentation and analysis of contemporary communication dynamics and models, particularly in interpersonal communication, as well as communication in public and the media, and will acquire the knowledge and skills required for public relations.</p> <p>Students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">analyze and compare various types of communication;correctly interpret the underlying concepts - intrapersonal, interpersonal, verbal, nonverbal, social and media communication;argue the importance of knowing the communication dynamics and challenges of communication in veterinary;to describe the role of verbal and non-verbal communication in everyday and business life and prepare to talk about giving diagnosis and therapy;analyze and interpret the verbal and non-verbal communication of their interlocutors;use the acquired knowledge about the relationship of interpersonal communication and communication in the business environment;to evaluate the quality of interpersonal communication;analyze and compare communication relationships in dialogue and persuasion in discussing the prognosis of treatment and risk communication;critically analyze and adopt the process of active listening in interpersonal diagnostic communication;to argue the reasons why it is necessary to know the communication dynamics in the everyday and business environment and how to use them in relation between veterinarian and owner of the client;critical approach to establishing communication with the public and the media and analyzing crisis communication strategies.

GRADING SCHEME

<i>Points</i>	<i>Grade</i>
Up to 59	1 (F)
60-76	2 (D,E)
77-84	3 (C)
85-92	4 (B)
93-100	5 (A)

Course leader



Head of organizational unit:

OBVEZNO POTPISATI