

## Companion Animal End-of-life Doula Certificate Program: Syllabus

The University of Vermont

SAMPLE 2023

### **LEAD INSTRUCTOR, PROGRAM LEAD, AND SUBJECT MATTER EXPERT**

**Lead Instructor:** [name of instructor]

[instructor bio].

**Contact Email:** [instructor email]

Before you reach out, please review the announcements on the Home page and the material on the Getting Started and FAQs & Tips pages to see if we have possibly addressed your question already. This may get you an answer more quickly.

If at any time you need immediate help, please click the **Help** button at the top of your Blackboard page, and you'll be taken to a page that lists numerous avenues for getting assistance.

**Program Lead:** Frances Pope Hewitt, LPC/S, LAC, LCMHC

Frances Pope Hewitt, LPC/S, LAC, LCMHC, is a graduate of the University of Vermont's Professional and Continuing Education training in the End-of-Life Doula professional certificate and the Companion Animal End of Life Doula professional certificate. Frances is a Licensed Professional Counselor Supervisor (LPC/S) and a Licensed Addictions Counselor (LAC) in the state of South Carolina, as well as a Licensed Clinical Mental Health Counselor (LCMHC) in the state of North Carolina. She also is the owner and operator of Sailing Away End of Life Care Consulting and Counseling services in South Carolina.

With over 20 years of clinical experience in the behavioral health care field, she has spent her career advocating for those who could not advocate for themselves, ensuring they have access to quality behavioral health care. Frances has taken this same clinical passion to those who are facing end-of-life phases and decisions to ensure her clients die well. Frances is a graduate of Lander University and earned her Master of Education in Community Counseling from Clemson University, in South Carolina, in 2001. Frances also has a special interest in working with and practicing as an ally to the LGBTQI+ population.

When Frances is not working, she enjoys traveling and spending time with her husband, reading, and enjoying nature.

**Subject Matter Expert:** [name of subject matter expert]

[subject matter expert bio]

### **COURSE OVERVIEW**

#### **Course Description**

This course is designed to provide an in-depth overview of end-of-life care for companion animals. We will review medical options and procedures, quality of life assessments, comfort care, bereavement,

memorialization, and introduce many approaches to providing compassionate emotional support to those suffering the loss of their beloved pet.

Throughout the course, learners will be exposed to a wide variety of published information, interviews with industry professionals, and chances to examine their own experiences, beliefs, fears, and conditioning about pet loss. We intend to create a supportive learning experience with lots of opportunities to build collegiality, as the subject is intense, challenging, and affecting.

**Please note:** *This program is for educational purposes only, and is not intended to provide medical, legal, or financial advice. This program focuses on preparing learners to offer emotional support during terminal illness, the dying process, and bereavement. The professional doula role is unlicensed and unregulated. Upon fulfilling the requirements of this course, graduates will receive a digital badge and be able to download a certificate of completion.*

## Course Objectives

High-level goals of the program intend that students will learn how to:

- Develop and apply the core skills of providing unconditional positive regard and nonjudgmental support while calmly holding space, companioning, and engaging in open, accepting dialog with clients.
- Become prepared to work in harmony with a pet owner's chosen care team (potentially including community members, family, friends, and medical practitioners, while supporting each client's feelings of empowerment and self-efficacy.
- Respect appropriate professional/personal boundaries while keeping the client's best interest in mind at all times.
- Understand common end-of-life trajectories in companion animals, pain management assessment and practices, the dying process, and helpful interventions to ease physical and emotional suffering.
- Recognize and support anticipatory grief, mourning, and bereavement, including the unique developmental needs of children.
- Support clients in developing end-of-life wishes and plans for disposition.
- Nurture a compassionate, calm presence and environment during euthanasia or natural pet death, if requested.
- Describe meaningful modes of memorializing the enduring bond between caretakers and pets.
- Effectively refer patients and families to other local professionals, organizations, support groups, and businesses that provide relevant, supportive offerings.

## Course Flow

Each module will open on Wednesday at 12:00 AM and end on Tuesday at 11:59 PM.

## Course Work

We estimate that the student will be engaged in 8-10 hours per week of course instruction.

## About Our Approach

This course offers a deep journey into end-of-life care and working with the dying and their loved ones and caregivers. As part of your training, you will be exploring your own thoughts, feelings, and experiences about and around death and dying.

These explorations are designed to help you grow in your understanding of the end-of-life cycle. During your studies we strongly encourage you to engage in a manner that honors your needs and to practice self-care, which we have learned is a vital skill for a doula.

While here, you will be encouraged to remain open to the process of learning in community, where you will be learning from others, and from yourself, as you cultivate your doula heart.

### Support for Your Journey

If at any point during this course you feel uncomfortable diving into certain materials, please reach out to your instructor so they can support you in your doula journey by finding alternate exercises. If the course content triggers any past traumas or difficult emotions, please reach out to a professional counselor to process your feelings.

In the event of a mental health emergency, 988 is the United States National Hotline for crisis calls. The 988 line is free and confidential. It is readily available to assist you, or your future clients, if someone is experiencing a mental health crisis. If you are outside of the United States and are experiencing a mental health crisis, please visit [Call A Hotline - List of Worldwide Suicide Hotlines](#) for assistance in your area or country.

## PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

### Required Reading

We have two required reading books for this course:

- *Cultivating the Doula Heart: Essentials of Compassionate Care*, by Francesca Lynn Arnoldy. Copies are available for purchase by request at your local bookstore, online, or at the UVM Bookstore.
- *Saying Good-Bye to Your Beloved Pet* by Dana Durrance. Available for download within the course.

### Grading

This is a noncredit, certificate-based course. At the conclusion, you will not receive a letter grade, but instead will receive a certificate of completion. All students who earn a 70% or greater, based on the criteria below, will receive a certificate of completion.

Successful completion of this course will be determined by weekly participation in the online learning modules and discussions.

### Makeup Policy

On occasion, we encourage and allow students to revise assignments and/or discussion items. If you receive a request to do so, you have no more than **one** week from the original deadline to complete the work, if you choose to do so.

If you have extenuating circumstances that make it difficult for you to complete assigned work by its deadline, you must communicate with the instructor and course facilitator prior to that deadline. The design of this course relies upon students moving through it together, so our ability to be flexible with deadlines is limited.

If you do receive an extension, you have no more than **one** week from the original deadline to complete the work, unless otherwise notified. If you miss a deadline and have not been in touch with the instructor and course facilitator, you will receive a '0' for any missed items.

### Discussion Boards

The discussion forum will be an important part of our learning experience. Most students find that participating in discussions helps with understanding of the course content and deepening their learning and ability to think critically. The following instructions and grading rubrics are applied to all course discussion boards. If you are unable to meet this obligation, please let your course instructor know.

Please follow these guidelines when posting in the discussion area:

- Keep your post focused on the topic, relating any class readings and materials from the current module in your post (as applicable).
- Proofread and review your response before hitting the Submit button. You will not be able to edit your posts. You can ask your facilitator for assistance, if needed.
- Participate regularly. Improve your learning by being an active and engaged student. Successful students follow and participate in the assigned discussion throughout the module, logging on at least three times a week while reading and participating in forums as assigned in the module.
- Post your original thoughts early to help develop discussion before the end of the course week.

### Discussion Board Grading Rubrics

Discussions that require only an initial post are graded based on the content of that post (8 points):

<b>Reflective (No Response Posts Required) Criteria/Levels</b>	<b>Excellent</b>	<b>Proficient</b>	<b>Adequate</b>	<b>No Submissions</b>
<b>Content of Initial Post</b>	8 points Responds to the prompt(s) comprehensively, provides insight and application of the week's materials	6 points Responds to the prompt(s) and provides example(s) of insight	4 points Responds to the prompt(s) with little expansion, insight, or application	0 points No post

Discussions that require an initial post plus responses to classmates are allotted more points to account for the content of the responses and the number of posts (9 to 12 points):

<b>Collaborative 1 (1 response post required) Criteria/Levels</b>	<b>Excellent</b>	<b>Proficient</b>	<b>Adequate</b>	<b>No Submissions</b>
<b>Content of Initial Post</b>	6 points Responds to the prompt(s)	4 points Responds to the prompt(s) and	2 points Responds to the prompt(s) with	0 points No posts

<b>Collaborative 1 (1 response post required) Criteria/Levels</b>	<b>Excellent</b>	<b>Proficient</b>	<b>Adequate</b>	<b>No Submissions</b>
	comprehensively, provides insight and application of the week's materials	provides example(s) of insight	little expansion, insight, or application	
<b>Content of Responsive Post 1</b>	3 points Includes questions and/or offers ideas, and grows the conversation	2 points Offers constructive feedback, but may not grow the conversation	1 point Post is not substantive	0 points No posts

<b>Collaborative 2 (2 response posts required) Criteria/Levels</b>	<b>Excellent</b>	<b>Proficient</b>	<b>Adequate</b>	<b>No Submissions</b>
<b>Content of Initial Post</b>	6 points Responds to the prompt(s) comprehensively, provides insight and application of the week's materials	4 points Responds to the prompt(s) and provides example(s) of insight	2 points Responds to the prompt(s) with little expansion, insight, or application	0 points No posts
<b>Content of Responsive Post 1</b>	3 points Includes questions and/or offers ideas, and grows the conversation	2 points Offers constructive feedback, but may not grow the conversation	1 point Post is not substantive	0 points No posts
<b>Content of Responsive Post 2</b>	3 points Includes questions and/or offers ideas, and grows the conversation	2 points Offers constructive feedback, but may not grow the conversation	1 point Post is not substantive	0 points No posts

## COURSE SCHEDULE

MODULE	DATES	TOPICS
<b>Module 1: Doula Essentials</b>	Week 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Role and Scope of an End of Life Doula</li> <li>• Engaged Listening</li> <li>• Companionship and Serving</li> <li>• Holding Space</li> <li>• Non-judgmental Support</li> </ul>
<b>Module 2: Components of Compassionate Care</b>	Week 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unconditional Positive Regard</li> <li>• Ethics and Boundaries</li> <li>• Responding to Suffering</li> <li>• Caregiving Considerations</li> <li>• Self-Care</li> </ul>
<b>Module 3: Pet Hospice and Palliative Care</b>	Week 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cultural Trends and Paradigms</li> <li>• End-of-Life Pet Care</li> <li>• Quality of Life and Pet Pain</li> <li>• Euthanasia versus “Natural” Death</li> <li>• Components of a “Good” Death</li> <li>• Holistic and Integrative Support</li> <li>• Veterinarian Stress and Burnout</li> </ul>
<b>Module 4: After-Death Options and Support</b>	Week 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Special Considerations: Horses and Exotic Pets</li> <li>• After-Death Decisions</li> <li>• Mourning and Bereavement</li> <li>• Children’s Grief</li> <li>• Memorializing a Pet</li> </ul>
<b>Bonus Module</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Emerging EOL Doula Career               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Meetings</li> <li>○ Contracts</li> <li>○ Business Considerations</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Role and Scope Revisited</li> </ul>

## UVM POLICIES

### Student Learning Accommodations

In keeping with University policy, any student with a documented disability interested in utilizing accommodations should contact ACCESS, the office of Disability Services on campus. ACCESS works with

students and faculty in an interactive process to explore reasonable and appropriate accommodations via an accommodation letter to faculty with approved accommodations as early as possible each semester. All students are strongly encouraged to meet with their faculty to discuss the accommodations they plan to use in each course.

Contact ACCESS: A170 Living/Learning Center; 802-656-7753; [access@uvm.edu](mailto:access@uvm.edu); [www.uvm.edu/access](http://www.uvm.edu/access)

Please see UVM's policy on [disability certification, accommodation and student support \(.pdf\)](#).

### **Religious Holidays**

Students have the right to practice the religion of their choice. If you need to miss class to observe a religious holiday, please submit the dates of your absence to me in writing by the end of the second full week of classes. You will be permitted to make up work within a mutually agreed-upon time.

### **Academic Integrity**

The [Code of Academic Integrity \(.pdf\)](#) addresses plagiarism, fabrication, collusion, and cheating.

### **Grade Appeals**

If you would like to contest a grade, please follow the procedures outlined in the [Grade Appeals policy \(.pdf\)](#).

### **Grading**

For information on grading and GPA calculation, please see the [Grading Policies page](#) for Graduate students.

### **Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities**

The [Code of Student Conduct \(.pdf\)](#) outlines the student's responsibility for promoting the community's welfare.