

# **DRCTI 2017-2018 Catalog Addendum**

## **Professional Animal Trainer Program**

### **Offering the Welfare, Relationship, & Training Certificate**

The DRC Training Institute offers a Professional Animal Trainer Certificate Program to individuals currently in the marine mammal training profession and those with a minimum of 1 year training and/or handling experience with terrestrial animals. While the program's focus is marine mammals, the courses offered can be applied for trainers who work with both marine and terrestrial animals.

- ❖ **Objective:** To further the knowledge and understanding for individuals in the field of animal training with emphasis on building and maintaining cooperative relationships based on mutual respect while utilizing operant conditioning techniques.
- ❖ **Outcome:** Students who complete the PAT program will have expanded their knowledge and skills to successfully assess animal behavior, adeptly provide appropriate husbandry care and apply positive training techniques for the well-being and enrichment of the animals in their care. Students will also gain skills that further their abilities in applying critical thinking and creative techniques to build stronger relationships.
- ❖ **Student Requirements for enrollment:**
  - Must be currently working in the marine mammal field and/or have one year of animal handling experience within the last five years
  - Must submit a current resume
  - 18 years of age or older
  - Must be fluent in English, however if necessary, students may utilize a translator at their own expense
  - Complete DRCTI PATC program application and submit required application fee (you may download the application from our website)
  - Submit two sealed letters of recommendation from people who work in the animal training field
  - High School Diploma/Transcripts
  - College Transcripts (if applicable)
  - Must have access to the internet and Google Drive/Google Classroom Installed
  - For the Lab portion of the course students be able to video sessions with their animals (if currently working in the field), with permission from facility if applicable, and have the ability to upload the video to instructor; and/or come to Dolphin Research Center onsite to complete hands-on portion of the program.
- ❖ **Program Description:**
  - Length: 8-12 weeks allowed for completion
  - This is a hybrid learning program and consists of both online and onsite learning
  - Student chooses 6 courses from 11 offered courses
    - PD001 (Furthering Relationships) is a required course. The student will then choose 5 other courses from the course list.
    - PD002 is a prerequisite for PD003, PD004 and PD008.

- If the student is currently working as a trainer with dolphins, they have the option of testing out of PD002 instead of taking the entire course. If student tests out of PD002, they will still choose 5 additional courses from the course list.
- This program will accommodate up to 20 individual students each time it is offered twice a year
  - 2018 Dates
    - January 8th - March 31st - up to 12 weeks for online work . Onsite week of 4/15 or 4/22 depending on class size.
    - July 9th - September 29th - up to 12 weeks for online work. Onsite week TBA
- The Professional Animal Trainer will be trained to function as an experienced member of a team of animal care and training specialists caring for and actively training animals in a professional care setting. Students who complete this program will have expanded the skills that further their abilities in applying critical thinking and creative techniques to building stronger relationships with animals in their care.

#### ❖ Application

- The application period will open 2 months prior to the start of each program and remain open until two weeks prior to the start of the program. No applications, or required paperwork, will be accepted outside of this time frame.
- Applications are available online at [www.dolphins.org/drcti](http://www.dolphins.org/drcti)
- There is a \$25 non refundable application fee.

#### ❖ Enrollment and Admissions

- Once the application period ends, the DRCTI registration and enrollment coordinator will review the applications to ensure all prerequisites are met.
- Qualified applications will then be forwarded to the selection committee for final review and selection
- 20 qualified students will be chosen each time the program is offered, with special exceptions made for trainers who are taking the program as part of a group class scheduled through their marine mammal facility or zoo.
  - Enrollment is on a first come, first served basis dependent upon meeting the qualifications. If there are more than 20 qualified applicants for any given program dates, enrollment will be deferred for up to one year.
  - If you are a team member of a facility that would like to schedule a group class please contact [drcti@dolphins.org](mailto:drcti@dolphins.org) prior to completing any paperwork.

#### ❖ Cost of program

- Tuition -
  - **Option 1: Online and Onsite:** \$1850 per student if choosing to come onsite for hands-on work with dolphins at DRC for 5 days, receiving feedback from instructors. Tuition covers all admissions, lab fees and lodging. Travel and food costs are the student's responsibility.
  - **Option 2: Online Only:** \$1250 per student if completing the program entirely online. Must be able to video sessions with their animals, with permission from facility, and have the ability to upload the video to instructor;
- Fees - \$25 application fee
- Books & Supplies - \$25.00 - \$50.00

- Travel Costs - will vary - travel and food costs for onsite, hands-on learning is the responsibility of the student (rooming and entrance to DRC are included in tuition costs).
- Cost to test out of PD002 - \$25.00 (must pass with 80% or better)
- Cost to take classes over and above the chosen 6 - \$75.00 each. Students who have completed the 6 class certificate program may take additional, single courses within 6 months of completing the certificate program
- Special Group Rates offered for facilities taking this course (minimum of 10 students required)

## ❖ Curriculum

- Course Listing:
  - PD001 Furthering Relationships and Enrichment
  - PD002 Basic Behavior Modification and Training (pre-req for PD003, PD004 and PD008)
  - PD003 Advanced Behavior Modification and Training
  - PD004 Training Interactive Programs
  - PD005 Marine Mammal Research
  - PD006 Nutrition for Marine Mammals
  - PD007 Maternity Care for Marine Mammals
  - PD008 Husbandry Care and Training
  - PD009 Public Speaking and Controversy of Animals in Professional Care
  - PD010 Facilitating Positive Social Groups to increase Welfare
  - PD011 Training and Managing California Sea Lions
- Students are required to take PD001 (Furthering Relationships) but then will choose 5 other courses from the list above. PD002 is a prerequisite for PD003, PD004 and PD008. If the student is currently working as a trainer with dolphins, they have the option of testing out (for cost) of PD002 instead of taking the entire course. If student tests out of PD002, they will still choose 5 additional courses from the course list.
- If currently working with animals at a facility, students will be required to videotape their training sessions and upload for the instructor. Feedback from instructor will be provided one-on-one. If student does not currently work with animals, they will be required to participate in the on-site portion of the course work at Dolphin Research Center.
- Students will have option of watching live training, from the dock, sessions given at DRC.
  - Live training sessions offered on a regular basis within the classes duration.
    - Schedule for live from the dock sessions TBA
- Students will be required to participate in an online discussion board as part of their courses

## ❖ Required Reading list

- Touching Animal Souls by Gabrielle Harris (student purchase)
- Journal Articles for Courses (access will be provided)

## ❖ Grading Scale

- 10 point scale:
  - 90-100 = A
  - 80-89 = B
  - 70-79 = C
  - 60-69 = D
  - 50-59 = F

## ❖ Course Descriptions

- PD001 Furthering Relationships and Enrichment (20 hours) (2 credit)
  - This course is required for all program participants
  - Discussion of the importance of developing and maintaining strong trust based relationships with animals in professional care to form the foundation of their health care, training and overall welfare. Guidelines on how to earn and keep an animal's trust will be introduced. Students learn to always value and prioritize relationship over behavior, resulting in little to no frustration which can lead to aggression
  - The purpose and necessity of animal enrichment is explored, including environmental, cognitive, tactile, natural, and artificial means of enrichment. Students learn how to work with different animals' personalities and preferences, strengthening their ability to develop effective, relationship-based connections between themselves and the animals they care for.
- PD002 Basic Behavior Modification and Training (10 hours) (1 credit)
  - Successful completion of PD001 required to take this course
  - Prerequisite for PD003, PD004 and PD008
  - Presentation, discussion, assigned literature and media on basic operant conditioning methodology and techniques in behavior modification of people and various species of animals with a solid emphasis on positive reinforcement. Students will explore basic operant conditioning as applied to the training of dolphins and sea lions. Discussion will include the development and implementation of basic training of simple behaviors. PD003 - Advanced Behavior Modification and Training will cover more complex operant conditioning methodology and techniques with a more detailed discussion.
- PD003 Advanced Behavior Modification and Training (10 hours) (1 credit)
  - Successful completion of PD001 and PD002 required to take this course
  - Presentation, discussion, assigned literature and media on the development and implementation of complex training of advanced behaviors, including multi-animal behaviors, behavior chaining, concept behaviors (match to sample, repeat, search, innovate, etc.). Students will also explore in detail introducing training to dolphin calves. Additionally, this course will discuss handling aggression in marine mammals with methods and techniques that can identify and mitigate underlying causes of aggression in particular animals with a firm emphasis on avoiding aggression from the beginning through solid relationships and positive training.
- PD004 Training Interactive Programs (10 hours) (1 credit)
  - Successful completion of PD001 and PD002 required to take this course
  - Discussion of the techniques and methods used to train marine mammals to participate in interactive programs with the public. Utilizing DRC's relationship-based training, fitting the program to the animal and giving the animal's choices are all discussed as foundations for a successful, enjoyable, safe experience for animals and humans alike. Students will learn how to utilize observation of natural behavior, and how having alternatives in any program between guests and animals sets them up for success. There will also be discussion of programs that include guests with special needs, and how to select and acclimate dolphins for these sessions.

- PD005 Marine Mammal Research (10 hours) (1 credit)
  - Successful completion of PD001 required to take this course
  - Presentation, discussion, assigned literature and media on research concerning marine mammal cognitive capacity, communication and culture; overview of on-site research projects as well as historical and current research in the field. Discussion will include monitoring processes on marine mammal behavior and implications for animal health and research. Students will be exposed to the importance of consistent procedures, protocols, and analysis.
- PD006 Nutrition for Marine Mammals (10 hours) (1 credit)
  - Successful completion of PD001 required to take this course
  - Presentation, discussion, assigned literature and media on determining and calculating diets for dolphins and sea lions with respect to physical parameters, life stage, and season, highlighting the importance of nutrition as a basis for overall health and well-being.
- PD007 Maternity Care for Marine Mammals (10 hours) (1 credit)
  - Successful completion of PD001 required to take this course
  - Presentation, discussion, and assigned literature and media on breeding marine mammals in professional care. Subjects to include prenatal care and monitoring; birthing situations and maternity care. Additional discussion and literature on the importance on maintaining genetic variability and demographic viability..
- PD008 Husbandry Care and Training (10 hours) (1 credit)
  - Successful completion of PD001 and PD002 required to take this course
  - Presentation, discussion, assigned literature and media with regards to advanced animal husbandry training that facilitates preventative medicine and care. Utilizing case studies of DRC dolphins and sea lion, students will explore how husbandry training is adapted to individual needs and personalities of each animal. Methods and techniques in both free and protected contact to overcome challenges in training will be discussed.
- PD009 Public Speaking and Controversy of Animals in Professional Care (10 hours) (1 credit)
  - Successful completion of PD001 required to take this course
  - Exploration of effective techniques for relaying educational information for public visitors to various animal facilities through narration of animal training sessions, interactive exhibit design, guest surveys, and PowerPoint presentation development. Discussion will include how to effectively engage various demographics in both large and small scale settings.
  - Presentation, discussion, assigned literature and media on the numerous contributions that marine mammals in professional care have made as well as the differing opinions on having marine mammals in professional care, including the laws governing marine mammals. Students will also gain insight into how to diplomatically deal with these differing opinions using facts based in peer reviewed, valid science journals.
- PD010 Facilitating Positive Social Groups to increase Welfare (10 hours) (1 credit)
  - Successful completion of PD001 required to take this course
  - Presentation, discussion, assigned literature and media on understanding how strong trainer/animal relationships, species specific behavior, and the utilization of operant conditioning techniques can positively affect social groups. The appropriate social group for marine mammals is critical for their welfare, yet these groupings may bring challenges for trainers. Students will explore how to work within the natural dominance

structure of a group to create good working relationships, reinforcing dominant animals appropriately while also strengthening the confidence of subdominant animals. Integrating animals into existing social groups, and changes when animals leave a social group will be discussed. The challenges of integrating rescued, non-releasable animals into social groups is included. Social groups at DRC and the students' facilities will provide real-life examples. Management of aggression and extreme dominance between animals, as well as displaced aggression towards others, will be addressed with training tools given to mitigate these challenges.

- PD011 Building Relationships and Training with California Sea Lions (10 hours) (1 credit)
  - Successful completion of PD001 required to take this course
  - Presentation, discussion, assigned literature and media on the successful training and relationship building with California sea lions. Instruction in signals and reinforcement techniques used to communicate with sea lions and maintain established behaviors. Understanding and working with the natural behavior of the species and implementing that knowledge to positively impact training sessions will be discussed. The DRC training methodology employed for training and caring for sea lions is founded on positive relationships, ensuring animals feel safe in their social group, location behaviors (i.e. seat, water, go home), and giving the sea lions' choices to avoid frustration and confusion. The goal is to avoid rehearsal of aggression from the beginning through solid relationships and positive training. Discussion and direction will be given on correcting existing frustration and/or aggression in sea lions..

#### ❖ Student Requirements for Classes

- Students will be required to purchase *Touching Animal Souls* by Gabrielle Harris for PD001 Building Relationships and Enrichment. All other required reading will be provided.
- Students will be expected to have computer, laptop, and/or tablet on which they can access Google Drive with the ability to use Google Classroom, Google Sheets, and Google Docs. This can be done by creating a Gmail account or modifying a currently existing Gmail account.
- Each course will have links to publications, YouTube videos, as well as document attachments for further course materials.
- DRCTI has a collection of over 1000 .pdf journal articles that are available online via Google Drive. Active students will receive access to these journal articles.

#### ❖ Examination and evaluation of student work:

- At the end of each course the student will be required to take an examination.
- Students must pass with a 70% or higher.
- Exams will consist of essay questions, true/false, multiple choice, and short answer questions.
- Students will be required to complete assignments for each course that will be uploaded directly to the instructor.
- Some courses will require students who are currently working with animals to share videos to receive instructor feedback.

#### ❖ Instructor Feedback:

- Students will have responses to questions and comments within the next business day after submission.

❖ **Attendance and record keeping:**

- Students may work at their own pace however it is strongly suggested that students complete at least 5 hours of coursework per week which will be monitored by instructors through course assignments and discussion boards.

❖ **Hands on video and onsite lab work**

- Hands-on work may be completed on site at Dolphin Research Center by any student enrolled in the program.
  - In-person lab work will be required for students who are not currently working with animals in a training capacity. These students will be required to attend lab courses, working hands-on with dolphins, on-site at Dolphin Research Center for 5 days (up to 8 hours a day) and receive feedback from instructors. Tuition covers all admissions, lab costs and lodging. Travel and food costs are the student's responsibility.
- OR
- Students who have access and the ability to work with their animals may video their sessions (with written approval from their facility) and upload to Google Classroom for instructor review and feedback.

❖ **Transcripts**

- DRCTI will maintain official transcripts electronically.
- Upon completion of the certificate program each student will receive one hard copy of their official transcripts along with their certificate/diploma.
- Additional hard copies of official transcripts can be requested by the student for a fee of \$10.00.

❖ **Group study:**

- There will be a group discussion board for each course. Within the discussion board students will be able to interact with each other as well as their instructors. On the discussion board students may ask questions about material or share experiences that are applicable to the material. Participation in the Discussion Board will be mandatory for portions of the program.

❖ **Student services (placement, academic, advising, etc.):**

- Jamie Stevens, Assistant Director and Student Services Advisor, is the student services coordinator.
- Students may submit questions using the online form in Google Classroom at any time with an expected response time within the next business day.
- Conference calls with instructors and staff must be scheduled in advance.
- As career coordinator, Jamie can assist students with job placements if they are not currently working in the field.

❖ **Technical Support**

- Please email [DRCTI@dolphins.org](mailto:DRCTI@dolphins.org) for technical support and someone will reply within one business day.

**Disclosure: The Professional Marine Mammal Training Certificate Program does not fall under the purview of the Florida Commission for Independent Education licensing and standards.**