

## **PSYCH 83: PERSON PERCEPTION**

Winter 2014

Tue/Thu 4:00– 5:50 (X-HOUR: M 5:00 – 5:50)

Moore 302

Instructor: Jonathan Freeman  
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### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Whether it be a first date, a job interview, or simply walking down the street, the brain is constantly extracting information from other people's sensory cues. This course will provide an introduction to the psychology and neuroscience of person perception. As such it will explore a basic contradiction. At first blush, seeing and understanding people can seem so intuitive that it does not require any scientific description. In fact, however, the kind of computations the brain must make to accomplish it is astounding and complex. We will consider person perception processes through a multidisciplinary approach, one that incorporates research, methods, and theories across social psychology and the cognitive, vision, and neural sciences. We will also look at social, cultural, and contextual influences on processing others' facial, vocal, and bodily cues. We will pay particular attention to how we use this information to sort others into categories (e.g., gender, race, age), and infer their emotions, intentions, and personalities.

### **ASSIGNMENTS**

#### **Readings and Participation**

The goal of this sort of course is to have lively and interesting discussion with potentially divergent perspectives. It is therefore critical that everyone do all the main readings for each class. Discussion leaders will also discuss secondary readings. You should expect to be actively participating in every class.

#### **Reaction Papers**

Given how important a lively discussion is in this seminar, short reaction papers will be due each class (1-2 pages, double-spaced, 1" margin, 12 point font). These are due 8pm the day before class. The goal is for these reaction papers to engage with the central issues from the main readings. For example, you might challenge researchers' interpretation of the findings, you might pose a question, compare/contrast two sets of authors, among other options. You have a great deal of latitude—be creative—*except* for a basic summarization of the readings. Reaction papers should be emailed to the discussion leaders and myself by 8pm the day before class. You do not need to write reaction papers for your discussion days, and your two lowest reaction paper grades will be dropped.

#### **Discussion Leaders**

You will be the discussion leader for 2 class days (sometimes with a partner). Discussion leaders will read the secondary readings and in discussion integrate them with the primary readings. Discussion leaders should feel free to comment on the reaction papers. These discussions should unpack the assigned readings and relate them to relevant material from the class (previous readings, class discussion and

material I've presented) in a novel, interesting, and meaningful fashion. Discussion leaders have a great deal of latitude in form of presentation (e.g., standard PowerPoint presentations, breaking into small groups, debate, in-class experiment)—whatever the discussion leaders feel would best convey the critical ideas most effectively and interestingly. You should contact me 1-2 weeks before your discussion day with the tentative articles you'd like to assign.

### **Final Research Paper**

As a culminating experience, you will write a final research paper on a topic of your choosing. Ideally, it is a topic that you have found personally interesting. It is typically a research proposal, but other forms may be considered as well, e.g., original research report and in some cases a literature review. The topic must intersect with topics covered in this class, and you should discuss your topic idea with me as early as possible. The final research paper should be about 10–12 pages (double-spaced, 1" margins, 12-point font), should draw from outside high-quality readings, and should use APA style. You will also give a 20-30 minute presentation on this paper (in most cases, a research proposal) in one of the final classes.

### **GRADING**

|                                       |     |
|---------------------------------------|-----|
| Participation                         | 20% |
| Reaction Papers                       | 25% |
| Discussion Leading                    | 25% |
| Final Research Paper and Presentation | 30% |

### **POLICIES**

#### **Attendance**

As class discussion is critical, you should plan on attending all class sessions. Please let me know in advance if you will be missing a class.

#### **Disabilities**

Those with disabilities who may need accommodations should make an appointment with me early in the term. Once SAS has authorized accommodations, the College expects students to show the originally signed SAS Accommodations/Consent Form and/or a letter on SAS letterhead to their professor. As a first step, if you have questions about whether you qualify to receive accommodations, you should contact the SAS office.

#### **Late Work**

Without an official documented College excuse (health or family emergency), assignments may be accepted after their deadline, but they will be penalized one letter grade per day late.

#### **Academic Dishonesty**

The College has specific guidelines regarding cheating, plagiarism, and academic dishonesty. If caught, students will fail the course, will be reported to the College, and the College will impose a set of penalties. This course adheres to the guidelines of Academic Honor published in the Dartmouth College Bulletin: Organization, Regulations and Courses, 2011-2012. Also see: <http://www.dartmouth.edu/~deancoll>.

## **COURSE SCHEDULE**

Readings may change to adapt to the progression of the class.

|                             |  |
|-----------------------------|--|
| <b>Tue, Jan 7</b>           | Welcome and Class Organization               |
| <b>Thu, Jan 9</b>           | Historical Perspectives                      |
| <b>Tue, Jan 14</b>          | Mechanisms of Face Perception                |
| <b>Thu, Jan 16</b>          | Social Categorization and Groups             |
| <b>Tue, Jan 21</b>          | Social Categorization and Groups (continued) |
| <b>Thu, Jan 23</b>          | Snap Judgments and First Impressions         |
| <b>Tue, Jan 28</b>          | Emotion                                      |
| <b>Thu, Jan 30</b>          | Ambiguity                                    |
| <b>Tue, Feb 4</b>           | Consequences and Behavior                    |
| <b>Mon, Feb 10 (X-HOUR)</b> | Interpersonal Accuracy                       |
| <b>Tue, Feb 11</b>          | Theory of Mind                               |
| <b>Mon, Feb 17 (X-HOUR)</b> | Empathy                                      |
| <b>Tue, Feb 18</b>          | The Voice                                    |
| <b>Thu, Feb 20</b>          | Biological Motion                            |
| <b>Tue, Feb 25</b>          | Culture                                      |
| <b>Thu, Feb 27</b>          | Controversy and New Trends                   |
| <b>Tue, Mar 4</b>           | Final Presentations                          |
| <b>Thu, Mar 6</b>           | Final Presentations (continued) & Wrap-up    |
| <b>Fri, Mar 14 @ 5PM</b>    | <b>Final Research Paper Due</b>              |