

# PSYC 4120, Sensation and Perception, # 71-390

Fall 2010 \* MWF, 1:25-2:15 P.M. \* Miller Learning Center, Room 250

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## Welcome to Sensation and Perception.

### /// Required Materials:

Foley, H.J., & Matlin, M.W. (2010). *Sensation and Perception*, 5<sup>th</sup> ed. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon,

### /// Recommended Materials:

Nist, S., & Holschuh, J.P. (2002). *College Rules! How to Study, Survive and Succeed in College*. Berkeley, CA: Ten Speed Press.

### /// Course Description (from UGA Bulletin)

How organisms sense and perceive the environment. Topics discussed are anatomy and physiology of the sensory systems, types of stimuli affecting sensory systems, and current knowledge and theories of our perceptual abilities.

### /// Prerequisites

PSYC 1101

PSYC 2990 or PSYC 3990

### /// Class Requirements:

- Complete all relevant assignments prior to assigned class times
- Attend each class session
- Participate in class discussions and activities

## /// Academic Honesty:

As a University of Georgia student, you have agreed to abide by the University's academic honesty policy, "A Culture of Honesty," and the Student Honor Code. All academic work must meet the standards described in "A Culture of Honesty" found at: [www.uga.edu/honesty](http://www.uga.edu/honesty). Lack of knowledge of the academic honesty policy is not a reasonable explanation for a violation. Questions related to course assignments and the academic honesty policy should be directed to the instructor.

## /// Grading:

▸ Four total examinations will be given in class. Only three of these examinations will be counted toward the final examination grade, which will constitute approximately 85% of the course grade. In other words, each student may drop the lowest examination grade for the semester.

▸ Attendance and participation will be worth approx. 15% of the final grade. Attendance will be gauged via unannounced in-class assignments. **You must be present in class to receive credit for these assignments.**

TOTAL: 100%

Grade breakdown:

**Note: a grade of C or better (73% or higher) is required to earn credit as a PSYC major.**

Letter Grade	Percentage Equivalent
A+	100%
A	93%-99%
A-	90%-92%
B+	87%-89%
B	83%-86%
B-	80%-82%
C+	77%-79%
<b>C</b>	<b>73%-76%</b>
C-	70%-72%
D+	67%-69%
D	63%-66%
D-	60%-62%
F	below 60%

## /// Assignments, Exams and Policies:

### **Description of Assignments and Exams**

For the duration of this course, I hope to convey to you the importance of undertaking scientific exploration. Psychology is a rich subject that is full of intriguing questions and unexplained phenomena, and it is my wish that all of you find something that interests you this semester.

Therefore, I will attempt to let your interests and questions guide class discussion, as long as the discussion still pertains to the topic of the week. I encourage you to let your questions guide your assignment responses throughout this course.

As stated previously, there will be both in-class assignments and four examinations during this semester. Assignments will be designed to make you think critically about material that will be presented on the upcoming exam or about material that pertains to current class discussions. Exams may be mixed in format, including, but not limited to, multiple choice, true/false and short answer questions, depending on the material included in the examination.

### **Policies**

- Assignments are worth a significant percentage of your final grade and will be due *during* the specified class period. **You must be present to receive credit. No make-up assignments will be given under any circumstances.** A sufficient number of these assignments will be given during the semester to ensure that missing one assignment for an unexpected absence will not dramatically harm the grade. Multiple absences may, however, result in lowered attendance and participation points.
- Make-up exams will not be given under any circumstances. One examination from the four will be dropped at the end of the semester, so it is advisable not to “plan” a drop examination. Save the drop examination in case of emergency. If no examinations need to be dropped by the final examination session, the final can be exempted.
- I maintain an open-door policy towards students whenever possible, and I wish to be present for you as you make decisions regarding graduate school and disciplines within psychology. Please feel free to visit my office and ask questions!
- Additional policies will be announced in class.

### **Course Model**

It is my opinion that students should have some ability to select the manner in which they are evaluated. Consequently, students will be polled on their preferences throughout the semester, and assignments and examinations may be altered depending on student preferences. As a cautionary note, please be aware that although I am willing to provide *flexibility* in evaluation methods and lecture techniques, *I expect all students to understand that assignments and examinations will be challenging and should be taken seriously.*

### **/// Tentative Schedule:**

The course syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations announced to the class by the instructor may be necessary.

Dates	Topic(s)	Assignments
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## August

16	Syllabus overview, first day lists	N/A
18	Theoretical approaches to S&P, psychophysical methodology	Chapters 1-2
20	Psychophysical methodology, visual stimuli	Chapters 2-3
23	Visual stimuli, ocular anatomy	Chapter 3
25	Retinal processing	Chapter 3
27	Cortical processing	Chapter 3
30	Edge detection, perceptual constancy	Chapter 4

## September

01	Eye movements, acuity	Chapter 4
03	Object and pattern perception	Chapter 5
<b>06</b>	<b>Labor Day, No class</b>	<b>N/A</b>
08	Object and pattern perception,	Chapter 5
10	Exam 1 preparation day	N/A
<b>13</b>	<b>Exam 1</b>	<b>N/A</b>
15	Patterns and context, depth perception	Chapters 5-6
17	Depth perception, size perception	Chapter 6
20	Illusions, color vision	Chapters 6-7
22	Color vision, color mixing	Chapter 7
24	Anatomy and physiology of color, individual differences in color vision	Chapter 7
27	Individual differences in color vision,	Chapter 7

	color phenomena	
29	Detecting real and illusory movements, theory behind motion perception	Chapter 8

## October

01	Motor physiology, auditory stimuli, auditory physiology	Chapters 8-9
04	Motion perception wrap-up, auditory physiology	Chapter 9
06	Hearing loss, pitch perception, loudness perception	Chapter 9
08	Exam 2 preparation day	N/A
11	<b>Exam 2</b>	<b>N/A</b>
13	Loudness perception, auditory localization	Chapter 10
15	Simultaneous sounds, auditory patterns, music and speech	Chapters 10-11
18	Music and speech	Chapter 11
20	Skin anatomy, touch	Chapter 12
22	Touch, temperature	Chapter 12
25	Temperature, pain	Chapter 12
27	Pain, kinesthetics	Chapter 12
<b>29</b>	<b>Fall Break</b>	<b>N/A</b>

## November

01	Pain, kinesthetics	Chapter 12
03	Taste sensation	Chapter 13
05	Olfactory sensation	Chapter 13
08	Taste and smell combinations	Chapter 13

10	Perceptual development	Chapter 14
12	Perceptual development	Supplemental readings
15	Exam 3 preparation day	N/A
<b>17</b>	<b>Exam 3</b>	<b>N/A</b>
19	Special topics in vision	Supplemental readings
<b>22</b>	<b>Thanksgiving Break</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>24</b>	<b>Thanksgiving Break</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>26</b>	<b>Thanksgiving Break</b>	<b>N/A</b>
29	Special topics in audition	Supplemental readings

## December

01	Special topics in olfaction	Supplemental readings
03	Special topics in gestation	Supplemental readings
06	Special topics in mechanical senses	Supplemental readings
07	Final Exam review	N/A
<b>08</b>	<b>Reading Day</b>	<b>N/A</b>

## Reminders and Important Dates:

Drop-Add: August 16-19

Labor Day: September 06

Midpoint: October 07

Midpoint Withdrawal Deadline: October 21

Fall Break: October 29

Thanksgiving Break: November 22-26

Reading Day: December 08

Final Examination: December 10; 12:00-3:00 P.M.

## Tips for Success in Sensation and Perception

### 1. Learning at the College Level

In high school, many of you may have found that you did not have to actually “think” to succeed. Test preparation may have been reduced to the night before an exam, if at all. At the college level, you may find yourself facing classes in which the purpose of the class is *not* to achieve the best grade; rather, the instructors of those classes wish to impart a skill set (e.g., critical thinking skills) or an orientation to problem solving. You will also be exposed to problems that do not lend themselves to “cramming.” If studying and learning (in the “higher education” context) are entirely new to you, this information should be useful. In addition, college is faster-paced and consists of fewer chances to be evaluated. Consequently, each assignment carries more weight than earlier classes with which you may be familiar.

College learning offers abundant rewards to the learner; however, some negative consequences can occur at the college level. Perhaps the greatest of these consequences is that previously high-performing students become frustrated by an inability to “get it” as easily as “it” came in high school or in earlier college classes. Should this situation apply to you, do not feel that you are destined to fail in college. **Remember: college really should be different from high school!**

### 2. Effective Communication

We are constantly on the lookout for students who exemplify the ideals of college learning (i.e., those who have self-discipline, motivation, a plan, focus, and *many* effective learning strategies). Of additional importance is the fact that the classroom demands flexibility, decorum and open-mindedness. Maintaining this classroom environment is the first step in assisting you with the learning process. In order to maintain the classroom standard and to become a good learner, you must develop effective communication habits. Professors can be quite informal; however, ineffective communication (i.e., overly informal communication and / or a total lack of communication) will hinder your academic performance. The general rule: **keep the instructor informed**. If you need to miss class, if an emergency occurs, or if the material covered in class simply does not make sense, you **MUST** tell the instructor so that you can receive assistance!

Perhaps the most important lesson regarding effective communication is this: *part of a successful education is finesse*. Abrupt e-mails and lack of proper grammar, punctuation, etc. can be taken as a disrespectful gesture by the instructor. Also, please note the following: instructors, particularly graduate instructors, are committed to teaching; however, we have *many* responsibilities, including but not limited to our own research, our full-time course loads, teaching, conferences and (in some rare cases), food and rest. **You are a priority, but we have additional responsibilities that prohibit you from being the ONLY priority**. Visit us, meet with us, communicate with us, but try not to ask repetitive questions, and use your classmates as a resource. We realize that you have classes other than ours. Please be respectful of our time as well.

### 3. Successful Habits

*A successful student is aware of the following:*

- Time flies
- Work takes longer than you originally plan
- Procrastination is normal

*As opposed to admitting defeat, a successful student does the following:*

•**Anticipates and plans**

*Get a planner! Know your body: are you a morning person? Block in your best study times. Bring your planner on the first day of class and make note of exam days ahead of time.*

•**Breaks down tasks**

*Studying for a midterm or completing a term paper is a big task. Divide it into manageable chunks and block it off on your planner.*

•**Crosses off items that have been previously planned**

*The true procrastinator knows that there is nothing more satisfying in work than to cross off an item on the to-do list. Take advantage of this fact in your planning stages, and give yourself rewards for work well-done.*

•**Does not procrastinate (or at least limits procrastination)**

*Procrastination is part of academic life. We all procrastinate, and many of us tend to couch procrastination as being helpful, given that we “thrive” off of stress and guilt as motivational tools. Good, if you’d like an ulcer. Bad if you want to actually learn something.*

#### 4. Study Strategies and Improving Concentration

One of the best ways to manage your time is by using appropriate study tools. The **least** effective tools are often the most commonly used tools by undergraduates.

Sound familiar?

Ineffective tools:

- highlighting
- re-reading
- re-writing notes

Use of these tools lead to statements such as: “I studied for 16 hours for this test and I don’t understand why I got a bad grade.”

It’s not the amount of time spent studying that gets you an “A”. It’s *how* you study. Effective study tools enable you, the studier, to be active in your studies. You end up spending less time studying with more benefit. Less study time with increased *concentration* is the best strategy.

*How to improve concentration:*

- Keep a worry list—jot down all the things that interrupt your thoughts while you’re studying (e.g., laundry, bills, rent, date night...)



- Set a specific purpose prior to studying (e.g., “to understand uses of between-subjects designs,” which is more effective than “to learn PSYC 2980.”)
- Be active. If you have no idea what you just read or keep going back to the same paragraph, you are wasting time.
- Study in the same place at the same time. Changes of scenery can be distracting.
- Have a set start and end time. This should help you avoid statements such as, “I studied for seven hours last night.” Without a set amount of time in which to accomplish your goals, you may find that much of that seven hours at the SLC wasn’t really spent studying.
- Create the best space for yourself.
- Annotate while reading.**
- Use your meta-cognitive skills.

NOTE: This information was adapted from Nist, S., and Holschuh, J.P. (2002). For complete citation information for this excellent work, see Materials section of this syllabus.