

Sensation and Perception

PSYC 4120 – Course number 26-985

Fall 2012

Class: 9:30 AM – 10:45 AM Tuesday/Thursday – Journalism Building – Room 501

Instructor: Kevin O'Brien, M.S. (just call me “Kevin”)

Office: Psychology Department 519A (My office is an interior office in the Vision Sciences Lab, so please do not enter 519 if the door is shut without being let in, as you may be disrupting an experiment. If you have an appointment with me and the door is shut, please knock and wait for someone to let you in.)

Contact info: E-mail me at obrien.psyc@gmail.com. Please plan for up to 24 hours before a response.

Do not expect a response from me if you attempt to contact me using ELC's internal mail client, as I rarely check it.

Office Hours: By appointment (please schedule appointments at least 36 hours in advance, especially before exams or after exams are returned)

Suggested Text: Textbooks are depressingly expensive, so I'm not requiring a textbook. We'll discuss your options for supplemental reading materials in class.

Prerequisites: PSYC 1101, PSYC 2980/3980, PSYC 2990/3990, and a familiarity with basic mathematics is assumed (especially considering pre-calculus is a Franklin College requirement).

Course Description: This course will focus on anatomy of the sensory apparatuses and relevant regions of the brain, signal transduction and processing, psychophysics (the study of the relationship between physical stimuli and the resultant perception), and the nature of sensory stimuli.

Grading Policy: Your grade will be comprised of four exams (including the final). Each exam will be worth 25% of your final grade.

I'm making the cutoff for an A a 92 instead of a 93, and scaling everything else accordingly because, at the end of the semester, **I will be truncating your grades instead of rounding them.** That means, for example, a 92.5 (which, under most instructors, would round to a 93 and be an A) will become a 92, but will still be an A, and the result will be no different than if you had gotten a 92.1 (which, under most instructors, would be rounded to an 92 and become an A-). Do not ask me to “round up” or “bump up” your grade, or I will glare at you with the fury of a thousand dying suns because you already got half a point of wiggle room. I will make any considerations about curving exams on an exam-by-exam basis, **so don't bother asking.**

A – 100-92

A- 91.whatever - 89

B+ - 88.whatever - 86

B – 85.whatever - 83

B- 82.whatever - 79

C+ - 78.whatever - 76

C – 75.whatever - 73

C- 72.whatever - 69

D – I don't give D's. Don't ask for one.

F - <69 (Bummer.)

Make-up Exam Policy: Stuff happens. Personally, since I came to UGA, I've had to postpone my academic duties for everything from illness to academic conferences to standardized testing to a family member passing away. If **you know in advance** that you're going to have to miss an exam, please contact me as early as possible (let's cap that at two weeks advance notice, since I don't want to have to keep track of that for any longer than that), and we'll work out the details. If you have to miss an exam and **you don't know in advance**:

- E-mail me ASAP. This will save me some hassle.
- Medical: Bring me a doctor's note saying you went to see the doctor, and over what range of dates you were unable to attend class. In the past, I have gotten way too much information from some students in the past, ranging from explanations of what the visit was about (...ew) to being handed a prescription from the health center along with the doctor's note ("confidential information below this line" means don't give this half of the paper to your instructor). In the absence of formal documentation, I will handle make-up exams for medically related absences on a case-by-case basis at my discretion.
- Other: If it's not medical, I reserve the right to request reasonable documentation at my discretion if I have any doubts whatsoever as to the legitimacy of your excuse.
- If I don't hear from you **by the end of the day one week after the scheduled exam date**, I **will require** medical documentation showing it would be unreasonable for you to be expected to contact me in that time frame (e.g. "Kevin, My patient was in a coma for two weeks and was unable to type anything. Sincerely, Coma Specialist, M.D.).

Withdrawal Policy: If you're considering a withdrawal, schedule an appointment to meet with me.

A grade of incomplete is only assigned in extremely unusual circumstances. Such situations require extensive documentation and approval of faculty supervisors. It is only an option if a student is passing the class and is typically only awarded when a student has completed the majority of the classwork and is only missing one or two exams or assignments. If a grade of incomplete is approved, a written plan for completion of the coursework must be developed by the instructor and student and approved by the faculty supervisor.

Rough/Tentative schedule:

Week of:	Tuesday	Thursday
Aug 14th/16th	Syllabus / Overview	Physics of Light
Aug 21st/23rd	Optics/Muscles of the Eye	Photopigments
Aug 28th/30th	Photoreceptors	Further Neurons of the Eye
Sep 4th/6th	Perceptual Consequences of Retinal Neuroanatomy	Early cortex (LGN) / Receptive Fields
Sep 11th/13th	Visual Streams/Pathways	High-level processing
Sep 18th/20th	Cont.	Exam 1
Sep 25th/27th	Object/Scene Figure/Ground	Visual Attention
Oct 2nd/4th	Motion Perception	Color Perception
Oct 9th/11th	Depth/Size Perception	Physics of Sound
Oct 16th/18th	Anatomy of the Ear	Early Auditory Processing (Last

		day of withdrawal)
Oct 23rd/25th	Speech Perception	Exam 2
Oct 30th/Nov 1st	Touch	Touch/Nociception
Nov 6th/Nov 8th	Election Day – Go vote	Proprioception/Vestibular System
Nov 13th / Nov 15th	Gustation / Olfaction	Exam 3
Nov 20th / Nov 22nd	Thanksgiving break	Thanksgiving Break
Nov 27th / Nov 29th	Catch Up/Exam Review	Catch Up/Exam Review
Dec 4th / 6th	Friday Schedule	Final Exam

Important Dates: (via UGA academic calendar):

- Tuesday, Aug 14th – First day of class
- Thursday, Aug 16th – Last day to drop
- Thursday, Oct 18th – Withdrawal Deadline
- Friday, Oct 26th – Fall Break
- Nov 19th - 23rd – Thanksgiving Break (No class)
- Tuesday, Dec 4th – Friday Schedule
- Wednesday, Dec 5th – Reading Day
- Thursday, Dec 6th – Final Exam 8:00 AM to 11:00 AM (this will probably change, as the only thing worse than an 8:00AM final is a three hour long final)
- Monday, Dec 17th – Grades are due 5:00 PM

Students with a disability or health-related issue who need a class accommodation should make an appointment to speak with me as soon as possible.

I will be taking attendance regularly for my own records, and in hopes of learning everyone's name. As attendance is not a part of your grade, I expect that if you attend my class, you will be paying attention and will remain on task. If I find you on your cell phone or otherwise off task, I will ask you to leave my classroom.

College can be a rough time for a variety of reasons. If you decide you need someone to talk to, whatever the reason may be, please don't hesitate to come to me. Please know that although, I have been through Safe Space training by the UGA LGBT resource center, my office cannot be officially listed as a Safe Space (because it is a shared office)

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. 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.

Caveat: This syllabus does not constitute a contract. This syllabus may change at any time during the course of the semester for any reason at the instructor's discretion. Changes will be announced in class.