

Sensation and Perception (S&P)

PSYC 3040 (Spring 2012)

Syllabus and Course Outline

Instructor: Julia Olsheski
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Office Hours: After class and by appointment

Teaching Assistant: Sarah Farmer
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Tuesdays, 3-4p or by appointment

Class Schedule: MWF 10:05 am - 10:55 am, Weber Room 2

Required Textbook:

Schiffman, H. R. (2001). *Sensation and perception: An integrated approach* (5th ed.). New York: Wiley. (ISBN: 0-471-24930-0)

Note: Additional readings may be required. They will be made available for copying. It is the student's responsibility to obtain and read all required readings before the class in which they are discussed.

Course Description

We will examine how humans (and in some cases, other animals) sense and perceive the world around us. First we will consider the philosophical questions that humans have long posed about perception, and study the methods and techniques scientists use to try to answer them. We will study the sensory pathways, fundamental perceptual processing, and higher-level meaning making. We will start with the perception of time, followed by audition, vision, the orienting senses, skin senses, and chemical senses. We will consider sensation and perception from several perspectives: physiological, psychophysical, ecological, motivational, and computational. This diversity of viewpoints also allows us to look at multi-sensory perceptual processes. Part of the course will be in lecture format and part will be in seminar format. There will be two midterms and a final exam. Class participation will also be important to your success in the course.

Educational Philosophy for this Course

I believe that advanced undergraduate graduate level courses should focus on discussion and integration with other courses. However, in order to have a meaningful discussion in this topic area, there are a lot of facts to learn first: historical dates; the parts and functioning of the perceptual systems; neural pathways and brain regions; theories; processes; functions; etc. Students will be left to learn many of the more straightforward facts through the required reading, private study groups, or discussion outside of class. You may be tested on material that is not covered in class. Where necessary, more complex material will be taught, and examples worked, in class. As much time as possible will be reserved for discussion. However, there is a lot to learn, so in order to get the chance to discuss, we may move quickly through basic material. You are expected to have read the required material before class, and be prepared to contribute to an integrative and meaningful discussion.

Grading

Students are expected to do their own work at all times and to follow the university's codes of academic conduct and honor code. Cases of suspected inappropriate collaboration or cheating will be immediately forwarded to the Dean of Student Affairs, and will be pursued to resolution. This is an unpleasant process for all involved, so please do not put yourself in this situation.

Students are expected to conduct themselves in a professional manner--this entails handing assignments in on time and showing up for exams at the appointed time. Late assignments will not be accepted, and make-up exams will not be given. If some form of prior commitment prevents a student from taking an exam at the given time, PRIOR arrangements (including documentation where appropriate) should be made with the instructor.

Extra work, after the semester, is not allowed to "bring up" a grade. A student's grade shall be earned from their performance solely on the semester's work.

Grading is determined by a semester-long accumulation of points, weighed in percentage as summarized below.

Determinations of the individual category breakdowns will be determined by looking for gaps or clumps in the final averages.

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Participation, Assignments, & Reading Quizzes	25%
Midterm Exam I	25%
Midterm Exam II	25%
Final Exam	25%

Attendance, Preparation, and Participation

You are expected to attend and arrive on time for every meeting of this course. Class begins at 10:05am and you are expected to be seated and ready to start at that time. Likewise, lecture ends at 10:55p and you are expected to be present until dismissed. You are expected to participate actively by asking questions and making relevant contributions. Participation also includes completing all readings and in-class activities as assigned. In general, it is expected that you will earn full or nearly full participation credit for the lab grade in this course. You may ask the instructor for feedback about your participation grade at any time; likewise, I will consult with you as needed if there are problems.

Midterms and Final Exam

There will be two midterms and one final exam, intended to assess learning on mostly (but not exclusively) factual information. The midterms will be held during a class period (see the schedule), and the final exam will be in the regularly scheduled Final Exam time period, as determined by the registrar. Exams may not be rescheduled.

The material covered in the exams may include any of the assigned reading, in addition to anything presented or discussed in class. Note that just because it is not covered in class does not mean it will not be on a midterm or the final!

Respect and Consideration

Please, above all, be respectful and considerate of others in the class. It should go without saying, but this includes showing up on time for classes, meetings, exams, etc. Please turn your cell phone, pager, PDA, or any other alarms and ringers **off** while you are in class. If you disturb the class, including incoming phone calls and messages, you may be asked to leave.

Additional Required Reading

Additional readings, typically research articles and book chapters, will be required. Those readings will be made available for copying. Students will be responsible for obtaining and reading all materials before the class in which they are to be discussed.