

Psychology 710 (11462; 4 credits): Visual Perception

John Sparrow, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Psychology

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Office: Pandora Rm. 529

Phone: 641-4151 (E-mail: john.sparrow@unh.edu)

Office hours:

Tuesday	--	4:00 – 5:00
Thursday	--	3:00 – 5:00
Friday	--	1:00 – 2:00

If you are not available at these times, please see me after class to schedule an appointment. Also, I regularly check my email most days, so feel free to contact me that way, if needed.

TEXTBOOKS

Snowden, R., Thompson, P., & Troscianko, T. (2012). *Basic vision: An introduction to visual perception (revised edition)*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press
(ISBN: 9780199572021; “STT” on calendar)

Sacks, O. (1996). *The island of the colorblind*. New York: Vintage Books.
(ISBN: 0679451145; “OS” on calendar; Note: while we’re reading “Book I” for this class, you might find “Book II” to be interesting, too!)

Barry, S. R. (2009). *Fixing my gaze: A scientist’s journey into seeing in three dimensions*. New York: Perseus Books Group.
(ISBN: 9780465020737; “SB” on calendar)

These books are available at the UNHM Bookstore.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The purpose of this course is to examine the physiological and psychological processes involved in vision. How do we see color? What allows us to drive a fast car with a great deal of accuracy? Do you need two eyes to accurately perceive depth? Can we predict what a person will see when exposed to certain visual stimuli? These questions, and many more, will be investigated throughout the semester.

In addition, a major portion of the course will deal with the techniques used in vision research. Neurological/physiological techniques, as well as psychophysical techniques, will be systematically examined. Students should come away from the course with a thorough foundation in visual functioning along with the knowledge of how these phenomena are studied.

PREREQUISITE KNOWLEDGE

PSYC 401, 402, 502, and 531/511 are all prerequisites for this class. Given that the material to be covered in PSYC 710 is heavily dependent on research techniques, it is essential that you have a good background in experimental methodology. Secondly, please be aware that

some of the material in this course is rather technical, and often, mathematical; topics include a brief overview of the physics of light, plotting psychometric functions on log-log coordinates, basic algebraic manipulations, graphing distributions, etc. I don't want to scare you away; however, I do want you to be aware of the technical and detailed nature of the course. If you have questions concerning these matters, please see me early in the semester!

Note that this syllabus reflects the federal definition of a credit hour, which entails a minimum 3 hours of engaged time per week per credit over a 15-week semester. Examples of engaged time include class time, assignments, examinations, laboratories, participation in course-related experiences (attending a talk or performance, speakers and events, fieldwork, etc.), conferences, and office hours. Student work reflects intended learning outcomes and is verified through evidence of student achievement. For more information, please see: [NECHE policy on Credits and Degrees](#).

CALCULATORS

Occasionally, you will need to have access to a hand calculator. On some of the labs, in addition to the exams, a calculator will be necessary. You do not need one of the ultra-fancy models - just a regular, scientific, affordable model that will do all of the basics (i.e., logarithms, square-roots, etc.).

WRITING-INTENSIVE COURSE DESIGNATION

PSYC 710 has been designated as a *Writing-Intensive Course* by the Department of Psychology in Durham. In accordance with the Academic Senate legislation (*Guidelines for Writing-Intensive Courses*), students enrolled in this course will be involved extensively in the *process* of writing. Hence, substantial writing (including "prewriting, drafting, revision, editing") will form the foundation for much of the learning taking place in this course.

EXAMINATIONS

There will be four in-class examinations in this course. The exams will not be cumulative, *per se*, but students will need to know some concepts presented earlier in the semester. The exams will be a mixture of problems, fill-in-the-blank, short answer, and essay questions covering material presented in the book as well as the information presented in class. The format of the exams will vary depending on the material covered (e.g., some of the exams will be more computational, while others will involve an essay format, etc.). Examination dates appear on the course calendar. Please note that as a general rule, **THERE WILL BE NO MAKE-UP EXAMS!** If missing an exam is unavoidable, please let me know **at least five days** in advance. Any exam that is missed may have to be approved by the Dean of the college.

LABORATORY ASSIGNMENTS/APA LABORATORY REPORT

We will conduct a number of small experiments that relate to the course material. Some of the assignments will be done in class, some outside of class, and some may be a mixture of both. You are expected to complete the assignments and hand in the finished product to me on time. In addition, for one of the laboratories (I'll let you know which one), you will be expected to write a full-length APA laboratory report so that you can refresh your memory about the

details of APA format. The paper will include all of the components of an APA-format paper, including a brief literature review. If this assignment is unclear, please see me as soon as possible. I will let you know more about the assignments as the course progresses.

INDEPENDENT RESEARCH PROJECT

As a culminating experience, students are expected to complete a semester-long independent research project that consists of an assessment of some aspect of visual functioning. The idea is for you to familiarize yourself with the professional literature in relation to some “visual phenomenon” (e.g., a visual illusion, aftereffect, anomaly, etc.). The final project will consist of an APA-format literature review that summarizes the phenomenon and puts the phenomenon in the context of the professional literature. I will ask you to complete this project in stages, so that you can receive feedback along the way. As we near the end of the semester, I you will present your work at the annual “Winter Research Symposium,” where you will be sharing the results of your research in the form of a poster presentation. I will provide more details of this assignment in a future class meeting.

PENALTY FOR LATE ASSIGNMENTS

Please note that for every day that lab assignments/reports/final project reports are handed in late, grades will be lowered by one level (e.g., a grade of "B-" will be dropped to a "C+" on the first day, a "C" on the second day, a "D" on the fourth day, etc.).

ATTENDANCE/PARTICIPATION

To do well in this class, you need to be engaged on a consistent basis – ideally, you should be in class for every meeting. A poor attendance record will impact your final grade in a negative fashion. Note, then, that if you come in late to class, your attendance for that day will not count. Furthermore, if you leave early from class or if I see that you're using an electronic device during class time (more on this later in the syllabus), I will subtract that day's attendance from the record. A poor attendance record will impact your final grade in a negative fashion.

If you are dealing with an unexpected, extenuating circumstance that will keep you out of class or affect your performance for more than a day or two, reach out to Lisa Enright, Assistant Dean of Student Success, at lisa.enright@unh.edu to request a letter be sent to all your faculty.

SUMMARY OF STUDENT EVALUATION

Course grades will be calculated based on four examinations, the laboratory report, and several laboratory projects. Overall, then, grades will be broken down as follows:

Exam 1	17%
Exam 2	17%
Exam 3	17%
Exam 4	17%
Laboratory projects/APA Report (combined)	14%

Independent Research Project/APA Review	14%
Attendance/Participation	4%

Total = 100%

Final grades will be based on the following percentage cutoff points:

	A = 93 - 100%	A- = 90 - 92%
B+ = 87 - 89%	B = 83 - 86%	B- = 80 - 82%
C+ = 77 - 79%	C = 73 - 76%	C- = 70 - 72%
D+ = 67 - 69%	D = 63 - 66%	D- = 60 - 62%
	F = 00 - 59%	

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

Students caught cheating on examinations, group projects, or the paper assignment will be subject to the penalties outlined by the University. Penalties include the assignment of a failing grade on the specific assignment and/or final course grade. Academic dismissal is also possible. Please be aware that plagiarism in writing is a serious problem -- be careful! Make sure that you give credit where credit is due. The paper guidelines will specify additional details regarding plagiarism.

Please keep in mind that "cheating" takes on many different meanings including the explicit copying of another person's work on exams and assignments as well as plagiarism (see <https://catalog.unh.edu/srrr/student-policies-regulations/academic-integrity/> and <https://cola.unh.edu/academics/plagiarism-tutorial> for further detail).

Likewise, the use of Automated Writing Tools, including *chatGPT* and similar artificial intelligence (AI) tools, is strictly prohibited in this course, even when properly attributed. The use of automated writing tools is considered plagiarism and will be handled in accordance with existing policy.

To be clear, unless otherwise specified, the use of Automated Writing Tools, including Grammarly, ChatGPT and similar artificial intelligence (AI) tools, is strictly prohibited in this course, even when properly attributed. The use of automated writing tools to complete assignments is considered plagiarism (as defined by UNH's [Academic Integrity Policy](#)) and will be handled in accordance with existing policy. Note that I reserve the right to use plagiarism-detection software as needed in investigating suspected cases of plagiarism and/or AI abuses.

To avoid concerns or misunderstandings, you're encouraged to:

- Complete all writing assignments using your own ideas and words.
- Turn on version history in Microsoft Word to demonstrate your iterative writing process.
- Ask if you're unsure whether a tool or method is acceptable for a given assignment.

In addition, other uses of AI are prohibited including:

- Using AI to transcribe course lectures
- Uploading course materials to an AI tool for the purposes of summary generation.

The UNH Department of Psychology's statement on plagiarism goes as follows:

“Plagiarism is a form of cheating, punishable (at the discretion of the instructor) by failure in the course in which it occurs and possibly (at the discretion of the dean) by suspension or dismissal from the University.

Plagiarism can take a number of forms, including the re-use of your own written work without appropriate modifications and/or without the permission of your instructor.

Plagiarism most commonly occurs when material is taken from a source without proper citation. Whenever material is directly quoted it must appear in quotation marks and be properly cited either in the text or in a footnote. A citation without quotation marks is not adequate since it implies that the material quoted is your wording. It is even less acceptable to simply put the source of material in a bibliography at the end of your paper, with neither quotation marks nor references made in the text or notes.

Indirect quotations – that is, points taken from some source but restated in your own words – should not appear in quotation marks, but the source from which they come should be cited in the text or in a footnote, depending on the reference style your instructor prefers.

If necessary, ask me for further clarification. Remember that a course grade or even your undergraduate career could be jeopardized by ignorance in this matter. Ignorance does not constitute an excuse for plagiarism. (From the UNH Department of Psychology's "Statement on Plagiarism," September 5, 2001)

ACCOMMODATIONS FOR DISABILITY

According to the Americans with Disabilities Act (as amended, 2008), each student with a disability has the right to request services from UNH to accommodate his/her/their disability. If you are a student with a documented disability or believe you may have a disability that requires accommodations, please contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) located on the Manchester campus in room 417.

Accommodation letters are created by SAS with the student. Please follow-up with your instructor as soon as possible to ensure timely implementation of the identified accommodations in the letter. Faculty have an obligation to respond once they receive official notice of accommodations from SAS but are under no obligation to provide retroactive accommodations.

For more information refer to www.unh.edu/sas or contact SAS at 603.862.2607, 711 (Relay NH) or sas.office@unh.edu.

TUTORING AND WRITING SUPPORT

Knack

Knack is a peer-to-peer tutoring platform that is available to all enrolled students for all undergraduate courses in Durham and Manchester at no cost to students. Students looking for additional assistance outside of the classroom are advised to consider working with a peer tutor through Knack. UNH has partnered with Knack to provide students with access to verified tutors who have successfully completed your course. To view available tutors, visit unh.joinknack.com and sign in with your student account. Questions about Knack Tutoring can be sent to Stephanie Kirylych, Director of Advising, at stephanie.kirylych@unh.edu.

Connors Writing Center (CWC)

The **Connors Writing Center** offers one-on-one writing conferences to current UNH students (undergraduate and graduate). We work with writers from all disciplines on many different kinds of writing. Our conferences are conducted by trained writing assistants who are UNH undergraduate and graduate students.

The CWC offers both in-person and virtual appointments, available to any current UNH student. The online sessions are synchronous (real-time) appointments designed to help students have one-on-one conversations about their writing at any stage of the process, mirroring what we do during in-person appointments. Students can schedule an appointment any time during the semester: <https://www.unh.edu/student-success/university-writing-programs/connors-writing-center>

Online Writing Lab (OWL)

The **Online Writing Lab (OWL)** assists students via asynchronous remote collaboration with qualified writing assistants. The OWL is not an editing or manuscript preparation service. Feedback may include reference to mechanics on the submitted paper, but it will be targeted to bring attention to patterns and issues in order to help the writer self-correct the paper and carry forward lessons to improve future writing.

Students in all fields of study can submit up to 20 double-spaced pages of any form of writing, including course papers, resumes, creative essays, or personal statements. Within 3 business days, writing assistants provide feedback that can be printed or viewed on screen. The OWL is accessible through any computer that has an Internet connection and Microsoft Word. To submit a paper, students can sign in at unh.mywconline.com and select the "Online Writing Lab" schedule.

A FEW FINAL WORDS . . .

If you have taken other classes with me in the past you know that I expect a great deal from my students. You should take your work very seriously and make a strong attempt at keeping up with the reading assignments, paper assignments, etc. Keep in mind that the general rule-of-thumb for attending college at UNHM is that for every hour of in-class meeting time, the student ought to be spending 2-3 hours outside of class time preparing for the class meetings. I do not mean to scare you off by stating this policy, but I do want my students to know this fact up front. Also, you should be aware that I keep all student examinations on file; hence, you will not be able to keep your examinations after I return them for your perusal. I will spend some time in class going over the exams after they have been graded. If you would like to go over your examination in more detail, you are welcome (and encouraged!) to come see me during office hours. This policy is a strict one and is non-negotiable.

As a final note, **please turn-off – and put away -- all cell phones and electronic devices during class time! I consider the use of a cell phone during class time to be unnecessary and downright rude (and that includes texting, checking messages, etc.). If you must leave the phone on for critical reasons, please discuss your reasons with me as to why the phone must be left on. Further, I'm not in favor of using laptops during class time given that it's counterproductive for the individual -- and distracting to others -- when students are surfing the web, checking email, Facebooking, etc. Tablets laying flat on a desk that make use of a writing stylus (rather than a keyboard) might be acceptable provided that students are not viewing online resources within class.**

To ensure a climate of learning for all, disruptive or inappropriate behavior may result in exclusion (removal) from this class. Cell phone/pda, etc. use, including text messaging, and videotaping and recording is not permitted in this class by Faculty Senate rule unless by instructor permission.

Please note that all of the information outlined in this syllabus is subject to slight modification throughout the course. If any substantive changes in the syllabus are warranted, I will let you know well ahead of time. Let's work on having both an educational and enjoyable semester of "Visual Perception"!

TENTATIVE COURSE CALENDAR

<u>DATE</u>	<u>TOPIC</u>	<u>CHAPTER</u>
Aug. 26	Introduction	STT: Ch. 0
Sept. 2	Psychophysical Principles	STT: Ch. 12
9	Nature of Light	
16	EXAM #1	

23	Neurophysiology Overview; The Human Eye	STT: Ch. 1
30	Physiology of Visual Behavior	STT: Ch. 2
Oct. 7	Central Visual Pathways	STT: Ch. 3
14	EXAM #2	

21	Form Perception	STT: Ch. 4
28	(continued)	
Nov. 4	Color Perception	STT: Ch. 5; OS I
18	EXAM #3	

25	Depth Perception	STT: Ch. 7; SB
Dec. 2	Motion Perception	STT: Ch. 6
4	*** Winter Research Symposium Poster Session, 4-6pm? ***	
9	NO CLASS (Reading day)	
16	EXAM #4	

Within a few days, a copy of this syllabus will be posted in Canvas:

<http://myCourses.unh.edu>