

Psychology 511 (14569; [4 credits](#)): Sensation & Perception

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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.

TEXTBOOK

Wolfe, J. M., Levi, D. M., Holt, L. L., Bartoshuk, L. M., Herz, R. S., Klatzky, R. L., & Merfeld, D. M. (2025). *Sensation and perception (7th ed.)*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press. (ISBN 9780197663813)

This book is available at the UNHM Bookstore.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The purpose of this course is to examine the physiological and psychological processes involved in sensory and perceptual processing. How do we see color? Why are we able to detect subtle differences in odor? How does the auditory system process incoming sound energy into a rhythmic pattern of musical notes? What is pain, and how does our sensory system encode this information? These questions, and many more, will be investigated throughout the semester.

In addition, we will also outline some of the techniques used in sensory and perceptual research. Neurological/physiological techniques, as well as psychophysical techniques will be systematically examined. Students should come away from this course with a thorough foundation in sensory functioning along with the knowledge of how these phenomena are studied.

PREREQUISITE KNOWLEDGE

Psychology 401 (Introduction to Psychology) is the only formal prerequisite for PSYC 511. Please be aware that some of the material in this course, by definition, is rather technical, detail-oriented, and, often, mathematical; advanced math skills are not necessary, but some of the concepts covered are of a quantitative nature. I don't want to scare you away; however, I do want you to be aware of the technical 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 may need to have access to a hand calculator. You do not need one of the ultra-fancy models - just a regular (i.e., scientific), affordable model that will do all of the basics.

ONLINE TEXTBOOK QUIZZES

Every week you will be expected to complete an online quiz for each chapter of the Wolfe *et al.* textbook. These quizzes will be multiple-choice in format and you will be given immediate feedback when each quiz is completed. Links to these quizzes will be provided in the "Modules" folder of the UNH Canvas site (<http://myCourses.unh.edu>). Click on that link, and you'll see the links for each quiz as the semester progresses. There's no time limit for each quiz, *per se*, but you must complete the assigned quiz each week before we start the next chapter in the textbook; hence, all of the quiz links will be available at the start of a new unit, but the links will be removed from the site, one at a time, as we finish covering the chapter material in a given unit (see quiz link expiration dates posted in the "Modules" folder of Canvas). Note that you may refer to your textbook and class notebook to help you complete each quiz -- hence, the online quizzes are all open-book!

EXAMINATIONS

There will be three 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 multiple-choice, short answer, and/or essay questions covering material presented in the book as well as the information presented in class. 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 one week** in advance. Any exam that is missed may have to be approved by the Dean.

EXPERIMENTS/DEMONSTRATIONS

Over the course of the semester, we will conduct several small "experiments" that relate to the course material. Most of the assignments will be done in class, but some may require that you complete the assignment outside of class (e.g., by carrying out some calculations, graphing data, summarizing results in writing, etc.). Please note that **FOR EVERY WEEKDAY THAT THE LAB ASSIGNMENTS 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.).** Because most of these exercises will be done during class time, please note that there will be no opportunity to make-up exercises that are missed. I will let you know more about the assignments as the course progresses.

ATTENDANCE/PARTICIPATION

To do well in this class, you need to be here on a consistent basis – ideally, you should be in class for every meeting. Please be aware that I will be taking attendance every day at the beginning of every class meeting. 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 three examinations and the various experiments/demonstrations. Overall, then, grades will be broken down as follows:

Exam 1	-	22%
Exam 2	-	22%
Exam 3	-	22%
Online Quizzes	-	10%
Experiments/Demonstrations (combined)	-	20%
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 = 0 - 59

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY & CHEATING

Cheating will not be tolerated in this class. Students caught cheating on exams or experiment/demonstration assignments will automatically receive a course grade of "F" and his/her name will be forwarded to the Dean's office in accordance with University policy. Hopefully, this information goes without saying. 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 details).

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.”

STUDENT/PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Demonstrate fundamental knowledge and comprehension of the major concepts, theoretical perspectives, historical trends, and empirical findings in psychology.
- Understand basic research methods in psychology including design, data analysis, and interpretation; and utilize this knowledge to conduct their own psychological research, with an appreciation of the ethical issues involved in human and non-human research.

- Engage in scientific reasoning and problem solving so that they can evaluate the quality and implications of scientific research.
- Write empirical research reports and literature reviews in American Psychological Association style and present findings from scientific research.

ADA STATEMENT

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 "Sensation & Perception"!

TENTATIVE COURSE CALENDAR

<u>DATE</u>	<u>TOPIC</u>	<u>CHAPTER</u>
Aug. 26	Introduction	Ch. 1
28	Studying Sensation & Perception	
Sep. 2	Basic Neurophysiological Principles	
4	Research Strategies	
9	Psychophysics	
11	Psychophysics (contin.)	
16	Early Stages of Vision	Ch. 2
18	Early Stages of Vision (contin.)	
23	Spatial Vision	Ch. 3
25	Spatial Vision (contin.)	
30	EXAM #1 *****	
Oct. 2	Color Vision	Ch. 5
7	Color Vision (contin.)	
9	Form Perception	Ch. 4
14	Form Perception (contin.)	
16	The Auditory System	Ch. 9
21	The Auditory System (contin.)	
23	Auditory Perception	Ch. 10 (pp. 305-322)
28	Auditory Perception (contin.)	
30	EXAM #2 *****	
Nov. 4	The Cutaneous Senses	Ch. 13
6	The Cutaneous Senses (contin.)	
13	The Cutaneous Senses (contin.)	
18	Olfaction	Ch. 14
20	Olfaction (contin.)	
25	Gustation	Ch. 15
Dec. 2	Gustation (contin.)	
4	Role of Attention in Perception	Ch. 7
11	EXAM #3 *****	

Within a few days, a copy of this syllabus will be posted in Canvas:
<http://myCourses.unh.edu>