

ILLUSION: WHEN APPEARANCES DECEIVE

HUMS 132 | Fall 2018

Instructor

Robert Howton
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Office Hours

Th 14:30–16:30 and by appt.
SOS 156

Teaching Assistant

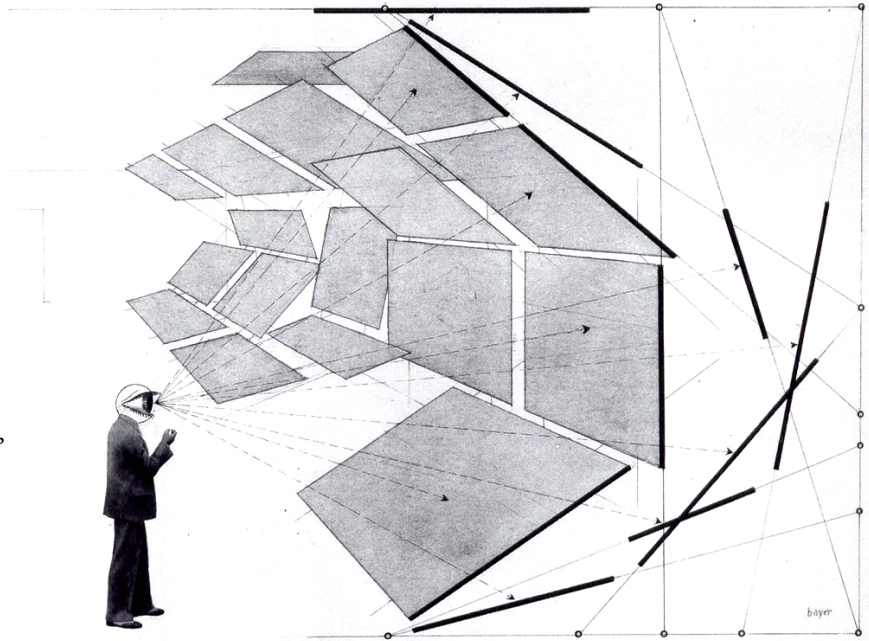
Elis Şimşon
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Office Hours

MoWe 11:30–12:30, Tu 11:00–12:00,
and by appt.
SOS 307

Lectures

TuTh 13:00–14:15
SOS B11



COURSE DESCRIPTION

We think we see the world around us as it is. Sometimes, however, things are not as they appear. We see a straight stick in the water as bent, or are taken in by a vivid dream or hallucination, or treat as reliable a source that turns out to peddle fake news. How do these various illusions impact our efforts to learn from experience? What strategies can we adopt—as individuals, as researchers, and as citizens—to combat these sorts of error? And what happens when things go right, when our senses teach us how the world really is? This course will explore these and similar questions concerning illusions in their many forms, drawing on resources past and present from philosophy, psychology, neuroscience, and the sociology of science.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

This course aims to help students (1) gain an appreciation for the various forms perceptual error and their significance for our cognitive lives; (2) come to understand the cultural and historical influences shaping our notions of illusion, perception, and reality; and (3) think freely and critically about how these issues affect them as individuals, researchers, and citizens. By the end of the course, the successful student will have demonstrated the ability to:

- express philosophical ideas clearly, both verbally and in writing;
- read and critically assess philosophical and other academic literature;
- identify the elements of an argument and assess it for soundness and validity; and
- apply these skills to novel cases.

The key to success in this course is to keep up with the assigned readings and to attend and participate regularly in class activities. *If you keep up with the course you will not be assigned anything for which you are unprepared.*

EVALUATION

Each student's success in meeting these objectives will be assessed on the following bases:

1. Students will be expected to write **two term tests** covering the major ideas presented in class, as well as **two term papers** responding in-depth to questions prompted by course readings.
2. Additionally, student attendance and class participation will be assessed on the basis of **reading response questions**. Questions will be posted to Blackboard at the start of each Unit and will be due by midnight before the third and final meeting of the Unit, which will be devoted to in-depth discussion of course readings. (Students may opt out of reading responses with no penalty only *once*; with the exception of University excused absences, which must be supported by official documentation, students must complete all other reading responses and attend all other class meetings.)
3. Finally, on discussion days students will alternate as **lead discussants** for the reading(s) assigned for that Unit. The role of the lead discussant is to *present* and *act as primary advocate* for the position (or one of the positions) articulated in the assigned reading, presenting the position in class and answering questions about it from her peers and from me. Lead discussants are highly encouraged to meet with me prior to presenting in class.

Final grades will be determined according to the following rubric:

Term Paper 1	15%
Term Paper 2	25%
Term Test 1	20%
Term Test 2	25%
Lead Discussant	5%
Participation	10%
Total	100%

You must complete all assignments in order to pass the course.

NB: All work submitted outside of class *must* be submitted in a format readable by Microsoft Word or Adobe Acrobat. Work not submitted in these formats will *not* be graded.

GRADING SCALE

96–100	A+	<i>Surpasses All Grading Criteria</i>
90–95	A	<i>Satisfies All Grading Criteria; No Errors</i>
87–89	A-	<i>Satisfies All Grading Criteria; At Least One Minor Error</i>

83–86	B+	<i>Satisfies Most Grading Criteria; Minor Errors</i>
80–82	B	<i>Satisfies Most Grading Criteria; Perhaps Some Major Errors</i>
77–79	B-	<i>Satisfies Most Grading Criteria; One or More Major Errors</i>
73–76	C+	<i>Satisfies Some Grading Criteria; Some Major Errors</i>
70–72	C	<i>Satisfies Some Grading Criteria; Several Major Errors</i>
67–69	C-	<i>Satisfies Some Grading Criteria; Many Major Errors</i>
64–66	D+	<i>Satisfies Almost No Grading Criteria; At Least One Fatal Error</i>
60–63	D	<i>Satisfies Almost No Grading Criteria; One or More Fatal Errors</i>
0–59	F	<i>Satisfies No Grading Criteria, Incomplete, or Plagiarized</i>

NB: Final grades are rounded up from the 2nd decimal place; no exceptions will be made.

IMPORTANT DATES

Term Test 1 will be administered in class; term papers are due by midnight (i.e. no later than 23:59) on the assigned due date. *Dates subject to change.*

DATE	ASSIGNMENT
11 October	Term Paper 1 Posted
30 October	Term Paper 1 Due
6 November	Term Test 1
29 November	Term Paper 2 Posted
18 December	Term Paper Draft 2 Due
TBA	Term Test 2

COURSE MATERIALS

There are no required texts for this course. All required readings will be posted to Blackboard.

Additional Materials. Students looking for additional study materials are encouraged to consult the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (plato.stanford.edu).

DISABILITIES AND DIFFERENT STYLES OF LEARNING

Education is a pluralistic enterprise: there are several and often incompatible styles of learning. If you believe there is an alternative approach to this material that would better suit your style of learning, do not hesitate to bring it up with me. If you have a disability for which you are or may be requesting accommodation, you are encouraged to contact both me and the Office of Disability Services at +90 (212) 338 1042

as early as possible in the term. ODS will verify your disability and determine reasonable accommodations for this course.

A NOTE ON ACADEMIC HONESTY

The goal of this course is to promote and assess *your* satisfaction of the above-stated course objectives. Cheating/plagiarism will not be tolerated. Students suspected of violating the University's policy on academic integrity, noted below, will be required to participate in the required procedural process as initiated by the instructor. A minimum sanction of a zero score for the quiz, exam, or paper will be imposed.

For KU's complete policy on academic dishonesty, consult the Student Code of Conduct here: <https://vpaa.ku.edu.tr/academic/student-code-of-conduct#09>.

OTHER IMPORTANT LINKS

Student Rights & Responsibilities

<https://vpaa.ku.edu.tr/academic/student-code-of-conduct#stdrights>

Academic Grievance Procedure

<https://vpaa.ku.edu.tr/academic/grievance-procedures>

Classroom Code of Conduct

<https://vpaa.ku.edu.tr/academic/student-code-of-conduct/>

EMAIL POLICY

Allow me two business days to respond to emails. Please do not email me with questions of philosophical substance—that is what lecture, discussion, and office hours are for—and please consult this syllabus before asking questions about course policy.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE OF TOPICS AND READINGS

Schedule, topics, and readings are subject to change.

18 September 0.1 Introduction & Course Basics

For More 📖 Oliver Sacks, "What Hallucination Reveals About Our Minds"

UNIT 1 *Illusion, Hallucination, & the Problem of Perception*

20–27 September 1.1 Appearance & Reality

Prep 📖 Wi-Phi, "The Argument from Illusion"

📖 Wi-Phi, "The Argument from Hallucination"

Discuss 📖 Arthur Eddington, Introduction to *The Nature of the Physical World*

📖 Bertrand Russell, "Appearance and Reality"

For More 🎬 BBC Horizons, “The McGurk Effect”

2–9 October 1.2 What Are We Aware of When We Perceive?

Prep 🎬 Jessica Yu, “James Turrell” (Art + Film Honorees)

Discuss 📖 A.J. Ayer, “Perception”, pp. 91–107

📖 Peter Strawson, “Perception and Its Objects”

For More 🎬 Director X, “Drake, ‘Hotline Bling’”

UNIT 2 *Conflicting Appearances & “Alternative Facts”*

11–18 October 2.1 Arguments from Conflicting Appearances

Prep 🔊 Hi-Phi Nation, “The Ashes of Truth”

Discuss 📖 Selections from Sextus Empiricus, *Outlines of Pyrrhonism*

📖 Selections from George Berkeley, *Three Dialogues*

For More TBA

23–30 October 2.2 “Alternative Facts” & Scientific Progress

Prep 🎬 “Priestly, Lavoisier, & the Discovery of Oxygen”

Discuss 📖 Selections from Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*

📖 Samir Okasha, “Scientific Change and Scientific Revolutions”

For More TBA

1, 6 November *Review, Term Test 1*

UNIT 3 *Learning By Perceiving?*

8–15 November 3.1 Do Our Beliefs & Emotions Shape What We Perceive?

Prep 🌐 Harvard Implicit Bias Study

Discuss 📖 Susanna Siegel, “The Problem of Highjacked Experience”

📖 Katherine Tullmann, “Experiencing Gendered Seeing”

For More TBA

20–27 November 3.2 Expertise and “Cognitive Penetration”

Prep 🎬 TBA

Discuss 📖 Nicolas Silins, “Cognitive Penetration and the Epistemology of Perception”

For More TBA

UNIT 4 *Appearance & Epistemic Authority, or: How to Spot Fake News*

29 November–6 December **4.1** Power, Authority, & “Epistemic Injustice”

Prep 📖 Selections from Aeschylus, *Agamemnon*

🎬 Harry Frankfurt, “Bullshit!”

Discuss 📖 Miranda Fricker, “Rational Authority and Social Power”

📖 Axel Gelfert, “Fake News: A Definition”

For More TBA

11–18 December **4.2** What Makes A Source Reliable? Theories of Testimony

Prep 📖 Selections from Augustine of Hippo, *On the Trinity*

📖 Selections from Dharmaraja Adhvarindra, *Vendata-Paribhasa*

Discuss 📖 Jennifer Nagel, “Testimony”

For More TBA

20 December *In-Class Review*

Date TBA *Term Test 2*