

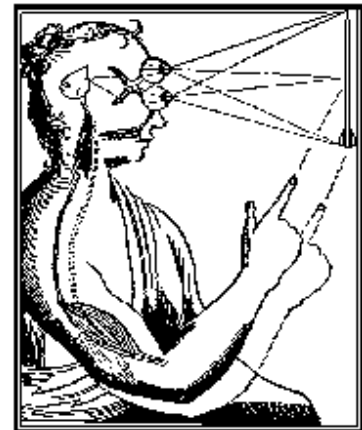
Sensation and Perception

PSYC 370

Spring 2011

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Course Description:

From the Catalog: Sensation and perception is the subfield of psychology which examines how elemental stimuli in the environment (e.g. light) are translated into a complex psychological phenomenon (e.g. perception of color). All five sensory modalities (vision, audition, olfaction, gustation, and tactile/body senses) will be addressed. Physiology of the sensory systems and theories of perception are the major thrust of this course. An attempt will be made to address applications of this field (e.g. acuity testing and therapy). Prerequisites: PSYC 251 and ENGL 102, 103, or 104. Completion of PSYC 461 is strongly recommended but not required.

This course is a survey of the major concepts in the psychology of sensation and perception, including theories and supporting data. Sensation and perception is the subfield of psychology which examines how stimuli in the environment are translated into complex psychological phenomena. My goal for the course is not only to introduce you to the field of sensation and perception, but also to show you how questions about human perceptual processing can be answered using the experimental method. At the end of the term, you should be able to identify the contribution of the key studies and understand how all of the studies together help to form a coherent view of human perceptual processing. Learning requires the active participation of the learner, so feel free to ask questions; we're all here to learn and explore. **Please note:** You must have completed PSYC 251 Research Methods, and ENGL 102, 103, or 104 (or have my permission) to take this course.



Required text and reserve articles:

Foley, H. J. & Matlin, M. W. (2010). *Sensation and Perception (5th edition)*. Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.

Reserve Materials:

Cooper, L. A. & Shepard, R. N. (1973). Chronometric studies of the rotation of mental images. In W. G. Chase (Ed.), *Visual Information Processing*. New York: Academic Press.

Künnapas, T. M. (1957). The vertical-horizontal illusion and the visual field. *Journal of Experimental Psychology*, 53, 405-407.

Reicher, G. M. (1969). Perceptual recognition as a function of meaningfulness of stimulus material. *Journal of Experimental Psychology*, 81, 275-280.



Tentative Schedule:

Week	Date	Topic	Readings	Assignments
1	01/10	Syllabus		
	01/12	Introduction	Chapter 1	
	01/14	Introduction	Chapter 1	
2	01/17	MLK Holiday		
	01/19	Introduction	Chapter 1	
	01/21	Guest lecture		
3	01/24	Research Methods	Chapter 2	
	01/26	Research Methods	Chapter 2	
	01/28	Research Methods	Chapter 2	VH data due
4	01/31	The Visual System	Chapter 3	
	02/02	APA format		
	02/04	APA format and VH results		
5	02/07	The Visual System	Chapter 3	APA quiz
	02/09	The Visual System	Chapter 3	
	02/11	Basic Visual Function	Chapter 4	VH paper due
6	02/14	Basic Visual Function	Chapter 4	
	02/16	Basic Visual Function	Chapter 4	
	02/18	Review		
7	02/21	Examination 1	Covers chapters 1-4	
	02/23	Visual Pattern Perception	Chapter 5	
	02/25	Visual Pattern Perception	Chapter 5	
8	02/28	Visual Pattern Perception	Chapter 5	
	03/02	The Auditory System	Chapter 9	Mental rotation data due
	03/04	Mental rotation results		
9	03/07	The Auditory System	Chapter 9	
	03/09	The Auditory System	Chapter 9	
	03/11	Basic Auditory Function	Chapter 10	Mental rotation paper due
Spring Break 03/13 to 03/20				
10	03/21	Basic Auditory Function	Chapter 10	
	03/23	Basic Auditory Function	Chapter 10	
	03/25	Auditory Pattern Perception	Chapter 11	
11	03/28	Auditory Pattern Perception	Chapter 11	
	03/30	Auditory Pattern Perception	Chapter 11	
	04/01	The Skin Senses	Chapter 12	Word superiority data due
12	04/04	Word superiority results		
	04/06	The Skin Senses	Chapter 12	
	04/08	The Skin Senses	Chapter 12	
13	04/11	The Chemical Senses	Chapter 13	
	04/13	Review		
	04/15	Examination 2	Covers chpts 5, 9-11	
14	04/18	The Chemical Senses	Chapter 13	Word superiority paper due
	04/20	The Chemical Senses	Chapter 13	
	04/22	Spring weekend recess		
15	04/25	Perceptual Development	Chapter 14	
	04/27	Perceptual Development	Chapter 14	
	04/29	Perceptual Development	Chapter 14	
Final Examination is Wednesday, May 4 from 3:00 to 5:00. Covers chapters 12-14.				



Examinations:

One of my goals for this course is that you learn how and what experimentation has taught us about human perceptual processing. This will be assessed by three in-class examinations. The exams will consist of a mixture of matching, short answer, and essay questions. The essay questions will either focus on a single experiment or will be broad and integrative in nature. Study questions will be provided to assist in your preparation for the exams. The examinations will consist of a subset of the questions in the study guides. Please note that we may begin covering new material between the time we finish the topics scheduled for an exam and the exam date. This is a consequence of the course scheduling and cannot be avoided so please plan for it.



Lab Projects:

During this course you will conduct three empirical studies on perceptual phenomena and describe your results in APA-style research papers. Two of these research projects will be conducted using the software provided on the course Sakai site. The topic of the first report will be the vertical-horizontal illusion, in the second we will explore the rotation of mental images, and in the third we will investigate the word superiority effect.

You should log onto the course Sakai site at <http://courses.shepherd.edu/xsl-portal> as soon as possible. From there you should download the course software from the software page and install it on a Windows-based computer. The software will not work on a Mac. You should also begin reviewing the tutorial on APA format in preparation for the quiz described below.

To run one of the computer-based experiments¹, you should start the MCLab software and open the help file (select Help Topics from the Help menu of the program). In the Contents window of Help, open the Experiments topic and then choose the name of the experiment. Read the Introduction and the Instructions for the experiment and then follow the instructions to run the experiment. You should do this before the due date listed in the schedule above. On the due date you should bring your data to class.

Failure to bring your data to class on the assigned day will result in a half a letter grade reduction in your grade on the paper for that experiment.

After you have participated in an experiment you should go to the library and read the reserve article on that experiment. Then you can begin a literature search for additional references. You are required to have a minimum of 6 references for each paper. You should use the PsycInfo database to locate references in psychological journals for these projects. Web sites and articles from the popular media are not appropriate for these papers and will not be accepted. Your goal is to use primary sources which are defined as original reports of research in peer-reviewed psychology journals. Secondary sources, such as your textbook, may be used, but will not count toward your 6 required references.

Your papers should be written in APA format. As noted above, the specifics of APA format relevant to your papers are covered on the Sakai site. One of the main goals of this format, however, is the clear, concise communication of your ideas. As a result, not only will you need to focus on the specifics of the format (margins, headings, etc.), you will also need to pay attention to grammar, spelling, and style. Your papers should be the best writing you can produce. They should be thoroughly proof-read and spellchecked prior to submission. For these papers I will be using a “three strikes, you’re out” policy. I understand that mistakes happen, but the purpose of proof-reading is to catch and eliminate them.

¹ The first experiment will be handled somewhat differently as we won’t be using the MCLab software. Instructions will be distributed in class.

Therefore, I will not accept more than three spelling and/or grammar errors. If I find more than three errors I will stop reading your paper and assign it a grade of 30% of the total points for that paper. Please note that I am willing and happy to discuss ideas and drafts with you at any point before the due date, so feel free to stop by my office.

Your papers should be printed in black ink using Times New Roman (or an equivalent serif font) sized at 12 points. It should be printed on plain white paper with no printing on the reverse side. Use 1 inch margins on all sides as specified by APA format. Use a paper clip to hold together the pages of each report. Do not staple the copies or use folders or plastic report covers.



APA Format:

There is an APA format tutorial on the course Sakai site. You should review that information prior to February 2 when we will be reviewing APA format. There will be a short multiple choice quiz on APA format on February 7.



Course grade:

There are a total of 100 points that can be earned in this course. The first exam will count for 15 points, the second exam for 20 points, and the final exam for 30 points. The quiz on APA format will count for 5 points. Your first paper will be worth 5 points, the second worth 10 points, and the third 15 points. Your final grade for the course will be based on the total number of points you earn. Specifically, the values are 90-100 = A, 80-89 = B, 70-79 = C, 60-69 = D, below 60 = F.



Late Work Policy:

Please note: I expect, perhaps as a result of my management background, your best performance on exams and things turned in when they're due. I'll help you prepare for your assignments as much as possible before they're due, but when the time comes, I expect you to be prepared. All assignments have a due date and I **will not** accept late work without prior arrangements. If you know in advance about any situation that would interfere with your ability to meet a deadline (e.g., excused sporting or other campus events, scheduled business travel), see me as soon as possible **before** the deadline. If your conflict is with an exam date, you may take the test early, again only with prior approval. If something unforeseeable comes up on the day an assignment is due (e.g., a medical emergency, death in the family), please contact me as soon as possible after the incident to discuss possible rescheduling options. Be aware that I will require you to document the cause of any unforeseen rescheduling of exams or other assignments.

Attendance Policy:

This class meets Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from 1:10 - 2:00. Because material from my lectures and any in-class demonstrations will be included on the exams, regular attendance is extremely important for this class. While there are no specific penalties for not attending class, **you** are responsible for information missed during an absence from class and you are responsible for arranging to make up missed material (see page 51 of the University Catalog and the Late Work Policy above).



Mobile Phone Policy:

Cognitive psychology has taught us that learning requires the allocation of attention to the to-be-remembered material and that dividing attention among two or more attention-demanding tasks decreases performance on *all* of the tasks. Using a mobile phone to engage in any kind of communication is an attention-demanding task and disrupts the classroom learning environment. The Student Handbook prohibits activities that are disruptive in the classroom, therefore use of mobile phones in this class is prohibited. You must silence your phone when entering the classroom. If you engage in mobile phone use during a regular class you will lose points equal to 10% of your final course grade per occurrence. Use of a mobile phone during an examination will result in a failing grade for that examination.



Academic Integrity Policy:

From the APA Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct:

8.11 Plagiarism

Psychologists do not present portions of another's work or data as their own, even if the other work or data source is cited occasionally.

From the 2009-2011 University Catalog, page 56:

Cheating in all its forms, including plagiarism and cheating on visual work, is considered an academic matter to be controlled and acted upon by the individual faculty member.

Students guilty of academic dishonesty on examinations in any course shall receive, as minimum penalty, a grade of F in that course. Such action shall be taken by the instructor, with written notification to the appropriate University administrators. Repeated offenses shall subject the student to suspension or dismissal from the University. Students involved in facilitating the academic dishonesty among others, such as the unauthorized dissemination of examination materials, will be subject to disciplinary action beyond that called for by their own cheating in the course.

In this class, you must work as an individual on papers and examinations. You may (and actually are encouraged to) form study groups and share notes, books, etc. when preparing for an exam, but you must work alone and without any of these resources when taking an exam. When writing papers, avoid plagiarism. Plagiarism is defined as "the act of stealing and using, as one's own, the ideas, or the expression of the ideas of another." This includes not only direct copying of the exact words another author used, but paraphrases of the ideas of another author without properly crediting the original. If you plagiarize on any of the papers for this course, you will receive a grade of F for the course.

Accommodations for students with disabilities:

Please see me to discuss any appropriate academic accommodations that may be required for student with disabilities. Requests for academic accommodations are to be made during the first three weeks of the

semester, except for unusual circumstances, so that arrangements can be made. Students must register with Disability Support Services to verify their eligibility for appropriate accommodations.



Communication:

My intent is to be as accessible to you as possible. Please feel free to stop by my office any time. I'm available by phone whenever I'm in my office and you can leave voice mail if I'm not. If you need quicker response times (especially on weekends), use email. If you do send me course-related email you should include a subject in the subject line (SPAM filters often delete messages with no subject) and the subject should start with [PSYC 370]. I usually check my email many times every day, even on weekends. Keep in mind that e-mail is considered professional communication. Bad e-mail manners are inappropriate in this class. You would not send an e-mail to your boss that reads, "Plz explain taht thing u said in teh staff meeting beettr? It wasnt clear. thxbye." Finally, check the course Sakai page (available at <http://courses.shepherd.edu/xsl-portal>) – it is meant to be a resource to help you with the course. Useful information and some course materials (e.g., PDF versions of my PowerPoint presentations) will be made available there.

Please be aware that I will not discuss official business (e.g., coursework, course grades, academic advising, etc.) via email unless you use your Shepherd email address. This is mostly for the protection of your privacy. If, for instance, I get an email signed Mary Smith requesting sensitive information about her progress in my class, but it comes from hotgurl46@aol.com, I have no way of knowing whether it is really from Mary Smith or someone else.

A Final Note:

I do expect you to know the names and dates associated with the key studies we discuss. This is not just an exercise in cruelty on my part. Hirsch (1987) presented the notion of cultural literacy, the notion that it is possible to be fluent in a language and still not be able to read and understand a newspaper or magazine article in that language without knowing something of the culture. For instance, if I mention "Juliette on the balcony" to someone versed in Western culture, certain ideas are conveyed that someone not familiar with Shakespear would miss entirely. Similarly, if I say Sperling (1960) to an experimental psychologist, meaning is conveyed that would take me pages to spell out.