

**GRAND VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY**  
**PSY 361 PERCEPTION WINTER 2024**  
**SYLLABUS**

## What, When, and Where

**Course Number:** Psy361-01, Winter 2024

**When:** MWF 9:00-9:50

**Where:** Padnos Hall of Science 261

## Instructor Information

**Dr. Leon Lou**

**Email:** [loul@gvsu.edu](mailto:loul@gvsu.edu)

**Office Hours:**

In-Person: MWF 10-11; Office: ASH 2313

Online: Zoom or Blackboard Collaborate; Please email me for appointment.

## Course description

This course will provide you with an introduction to the study of perception, with a heavy emphasis on visual perception. In short, we will explore how we see, and to a lesser extent, how we hear, feel, smell and taste. It turns out that there's more to this than you might think. Many people tend to think that there can't be too much going on in perception, simply because it's so quick and effortless ("Isn't seeing like taking a picture with a camera?"). In reality, there's a tremendous amount of complicated (and interesting!) processing going on in your minds when you open your eyes and see. Our minds not only make perception possible, but make it seem like no big deal. Because of this, you will learn some surprising (even shocking) things in this course about how your mind works, and that some of the basic assumptions you've always had about how you perceive things are completely misguided. In the end, I hope you will gain a better understanding of how human experience is constructed in the mind and brain, and how a valid distinction between the realty and its illusion can be made.

## Objectives (as in GVSU course catalog)

Upon successful completion of this course students will be able to:

- 1) describe basic issues of perception, including the scope and limitation of perception, the philosophical issues underpinning modern scientific studies on perception, the psychological and biological facts crucial to understanding perception, and the different approaches to a scientific understanding of perception.
- 2) explain the problems about perception that are unresolved by research and are still being investigated by scientists.
- 3) inform their world views with what is scientifically known or knowable about perception.

## Course Material

### Required Text book

Yantis and Abrams (2017). Sensation and Perception, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, Worth.

You should have been contacted by GVSU bookstore about the availability of the e-textbook. Now you have access to it in the “GVSUT Save” on the Blackboard. You could choose to opt out of the e-book if you already have the textbook. The last day to do so is January 21st.

### GVSU Library Streaming Videos

1. Vision and Perception: <https://sk-sagepub-com.ezproxy.gvsu.edu/video/vision-and-perception-a-conversation-with-kalanit-grill-spector>
2. Visual Perception: [https://digital-films-com.ezproxy.gvsu.edu/p\\_ViewVideo.aspx?xtid=74612](https://digital-films-com.ezproxy.gvsu.edu/p_ViewVideo.aspx?xtid=74612)
3. Do you see what I see: [https://digital-films-com.ezproxy.gvsu.edu/p\\_ViewVideo.aspx?xtid=48257](https://digital-films-com.ezproxy.gvsu.edu/p_ViewVideo.aspx?xtid=48257)
4. Perception: the Theories: [https://digital-films-com.ezproxy.gvsu.edu/p\\_ViewVideo.aspx?xtid=8786](https://digital-films-com.ezproxy.gvsu.edu/p_ViewVideo.aspx?xtid=8786)
5. Limits of Perception: [https://digital-films-com.ezproxy.gvsu.edu/p\\_ViewVideo.aspx?xtid=55011](https://digital-films-com.ezproxy.gvsu.edu/p_ViewVideo.aspx?xtid=55011)
6. Everyday Illusion: [https://digital-films-com.ezproxy.gvsu.edu/p\\_ViewVideo.aspx?xtid=74616](https://digital-films-com.ezproxy.gvsu.edu/p_ViewVideo.aspx?xtid=74616)

### Illusion Websites

1. Illusion of the year: [Illusionoftheyear.com](http://Illusionoftheyear.com) (some of the most amazing visual illusions made by vision scientists in the past ten or so years)
2. Optical illusions : [psychology.wikia.org/wiki/Optical\\_illusions](http://psychology.wikia.org/wiki/Optical_illusions) (a list of classic optical illusions)
3. 141 Optical Illusions and Visual Phenomena: <https://michaelbach.de/ot/index.html> (a large number of most well researched illusions categorized with good, though not necessarily complete explanations)
4. Auditory illusions: <https://vitals.lifehacker.com/fair-fights-stacey-abrams-on-how-we-can-protect-our-rig-1844596436>
5. Five auditory illusions (BBC 4):  
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/articles/52JjKxXgs2nCk7jCc8YtbD9/can-you-believe-your-ears>

## Course Delivery and Assessment Details

We will meet three times a week in person. Typically, but not always, the first two classes of each week are mainly lectures and the last class is dedicated to answering questions rising from the lectures and homework assignments, and sometimes expanding into related phenomena or issues. To efficiently use the classroom time, students are expected to at least browse the chapter or chapters of the textbook assigned for the week (for example, Chapter one for week one). The classes also involve activities in the forms of pop quiz and hands-on drawing or construction of illusions etc., for which class attendance is a prerequisite. No make-ups for the in-class activities are possible.

There are two kinds of assignments required in this class. The first kind is weekly journals in which students summarize the most important new information and principles learned in the week, reflecting on their significance for the larger issue of perception and its personal relevance, and raise your own related questions. The journals are due on at the end of the day each Sunday. Each journal must be at least 400 words long. The second kind of homework assignments (referred to in the Schedule as HW) consists of questions directly related to the content of book that are either composed by me or taken from the textbook. There will be ten such homework assignments, due on a Wednesday of certain weeks over the 15-week semester (See schedule).

There will be three exams---two midterm exams and one final exam. The two midterm exams are not cumulative in coverages and the final exam is cumulative. All the three exams will be in multiple-choice format.

## Keys to success in this class

1. It is extremely important that you have a sense of control over your learning and stay organized. Students are normally expected to spend two to three times more than the traditional class time studying outside of classroom, which means 6-9 hours per week. Well, it ultimately depends on your level of preparedness and motivation for the class, and what and how much else you have to do this semester. Please make a weekly schedule that works for you for reading the textbook and other course material and turn in the assignments on time (all on Wednesdays and Sundays).
2. Engage with the course material: You will understand a new idea/concept/phenomenon only if you are truly motivated and interested in it, which means you are able to raise meaningful questions. Being able to raise a meaningful question is a sign of seeing a gap between what you already know and what is unknown but interesting to you. Please take notes when you read and try to answer the “Test Yourself” questions in each chapter.
3. Regularly attending the class is expected of all students. Please take your own notes of my lectures and do not hesitate to ask questions on points you don’t understand or new questions that you consider to be related and not covered in my lectures.
4. Please check out many on-line resources of the Student Academic Success Center <https://www.gvsu.edu/sasc/academic-skills-resources-107.htm> for tips you find useful.

## Grading

Your final grade will be based on the total points that accrue in following categories:

1. **Homework assignment (10 entries of 15 points each with one lowest score dropped; total of 135 points)**
2. **Weekly journals (14 entries of 10 points each with the lowest score dropped; total of 130 points,)**
3. **Midterm One (75 points)**
4. **Midterm Two (75 points)**
5. **Final exam (120 points)**
6. **Class attendance and participation of in-class activities (4.5 points per week of 14 weeks; total of 63 points)**

**Total: 598 points**

## Assignment of letter grade on percent score:

93-100% = A; 89-92% = A- ; 86-88% = B+ ; 82-85% = B ; 79-81% = B- ; 76-78% = C+ ; 72-75% = C ; 69-71% = C- ; 65-68% = D+ ; 60-64% = D ; 0-59% = F

## Withdrawal

Drop with a “W” deadline: March 22<sup>nd</sup> by 5pm

## Available assistance

Students who need special disability-related accommodation should contact the Disability Support Resources ([dsrgvsu@gvsu.edu](mailto:dsrgvsu@gvsu.edu), 331-2490).

## Schedule

Week	Class Dates	Topic	Reading and homework due dates
Week 1	1/8, 1/10,1/12	Course Overview Introduction	Ch. 1 1/14: Journal 1 due
Week 2	1/15 1/17,19	<b>Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Day, no class</b> Introduction	Ch.1 1/17: HW1 due 1/21: Journal 2 due
Week 3	1/22, 1/24, 26	Physics and physiology of vision: light, eyes, and brain	Ch. 2 1/24: HW2 due 1/28: Journal 3 due
Week 4	1/29 1/31, 2/2	Physics and physiology of vision: light, eyes, and brain	Ch. 3 1/31: HW3 due 2/4: Journal 4 due
Week 5	2/5, 2/7, 2/9	Recognizing visual objects	Ch. 4 2/7: HW4 due 2/11: Journal 5 due
Week 6	<b>2/12</b> 2/14, 2/16	<b>Exam One</b> Perceiving Color	Ch. 5 2/18: Journal 6 due
Week 7	2/19 2/21, 2/23	Perceiving color Perceiving depth and size	Ch. 5 & 6 2/21: HW5 due 2/25: Journal 7 due
Week 8	2/26 2/24, 2/28	Perceiving depth and size Perceiving motion	Ch. 6 & 7 2/24: HW6 due 3/3: Journal 8 due
Week 9		<b>Spring Break, no class</b>	
Week 10	3/11, 3/13, 3/15	Perception for action	Ch. 8 3/17: Journal 9 due
Week 11	3/18, 3/20, 3/22	Visual Attention and awareness	Ch. 9 3/20: HW7 due 3/24: Journal 10 due
Week 12	3/25, 3/27, 3/29	Hearing	Ch. 10, 11, 12 3/27: HW8 due 3/31: Journal 11 due
Week 13	4/1, 4/3, 4/5	Touch	Ch. 13 4/3: HW9 due 4/7: Journal 12 due

Week 14	4/8, 4/10, 4/12	Smell and taste	Ch. 14 & 15 4/10: HW10 due 4/14: Journal 13 due
Week 15	4/15 4/17 & 4/19	<b>Exam 2</b> Special Topics: How artists see things differently; Dreaming; Hallucination; Synesthesia; Sensory Substitution; Robot sensors etc.	4/21: Journal 14 due
<b>4/24 Wednesday, 8:00-9:50 Same Classroom: Final Exam</b>			

This course is subject to the GVSU policies listed at <http://www.gvsu.edu/coursepolicies/>