

<p style="text-align: center;">GRAND VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY PSY 361-2 PERCEPTION FALL 2018 MW 6:00-7:15 PM ASH 2310</p>

SYLLABUS

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Textbook

Steven Yantis & Richard Abram (2014). Sensation and Perception, 1st Edition, Worth

Course description

This course is an introduction to scientific studies on how perception connects to the physical world.

Experiences and knowledge come, at least partly, from perception. Yet perception is not always reliable. Illusions are ubiquitous. Could we then say that the world is just grand illusion of the mind? This is the kind of questions generations of thinkers across cultures have grappled with. From the classic scientific perspective, there is a clear divide between the physical world, studied by natural scientists such as physicists and biologists, and the mental world, arguably the main concern for psychologists. The question from the scientific perspective becomes: How does the mental world connect to the physical world? That was the question asked by pioneering psychologists of late 19th century and early 20th century, and remains central for anyone concerned with the foundation of modern scientific psychology.

Two approaches to scientific studies of the mind-world connection will be introduced in this course---the *biological/neuroscience* approach that aims at understanding the working of the sensory organs (eyes, ears, nose, tongue, skin) and the brain that receives and processes information from the physical world, and the psychophysical approach, which is about understanding how perception, illusory or not, changes as physical stimuli change. The psychophysical approach is indispensable because even a complete understanding of how sensory organs and the brain interact with the physical world does not in itself lead to an understanding of how experience relates to the physical world. Partly owing to the psychophysical approach, the scientific study of sensation and perception is considered an area of psychology rather than biology or physiology.

Why should a college student like you care about scientific understandings about how the mind connects to the physical world? Among many good reasons, the first and foremost reason is that an understanding of the connection offers food for self-reflection, a skill vital to educated men and women living in modern civilized societies.

Whereas the primary objective of the course is to offer a scientific foundation for understanding human being's shared perceptual competencies, students will also be provided with guidance to think scientifically where and how differences in perception across individuals and cultures come from. The course, however, barely touches on topics of social perception, such as how the same social event can be perceived in opposite ways by people of different persuasions and values ---topics of central interest

in social psychology and sociology, but only lurking in the fringe of perceptual and sensory psychology. Instead, we will be focusing on perceptions of things that most take for granted and consider to be simply “out there”. By the end of class, I hope you will truly understand that every aspect of your experience is constructed in the mind and in the brain, and there is no contradiction for believing its being real.

Objectives (as in GVSU official 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 for 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.

Prerequisite: Psychology 101

How to succeed in this course

It is important to attend the class and read the textbook. There will be considerable overlap between the textbook and the lectures, with many important concepts being described in both the textbook and my lectures. However, additional material will be presented in the lectures that are not found in the textbook. Conversely, many topics in the textbook will be omitted or presented very briefly in my lectures. To succeed in the course, I suggest that you at least skim the relevant chapter prior to a class (see Schedule), taking notes of the main ideas in a few sentences as well as the concepts that are unfamiliar or difficult. Doing so will give you a sense of what to expect in the next class and can help you get the most out of the lecture. After the class, please read the chapter, especially the sections covered in the lecture again. Please complete the homework assignment associated with the chapter. The quality of your answers to the homework questions will reveal how well you comprehend the key concepts/issues.

The lecture slides will be available on the Blackboard prior to each lecture. You will see that the slides are not a substitute for attending the lectures: many of the slides contain very little text, and you really need the explanation from lecture in order to make sense out of many of them. I provide the slides so that in class you can focus more on learning the concepts that are under consideration instead of expending effort scrambling to be sure that your notes are complete. Also, I have regular office hours and am also available by appointment to answer any questions that you might have.

Assessment

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

Exams:

There will be three examinations---two mid-term exams (50 points each) and one final exam (100 points). The two mid-term exams will be non-cumulative, covering the material since the beginning of the class and since the first mid-term exam, respectively.

The final exam will be partially cumulative, with about 80% old material and 20% new material. All three exams will consist of mostly multiple-choice questions that cover materials from **the lectures, the textbook, in-class and homework assignments, and the videos shown in class.**

Homework Assignments:

There will be 11 of them. Each assignment is worth 8 points and takes about 30 minutes to one hour to complete, assuming you have read the relevant sections of the textbook and understood most of what is covered in my lectures. Many, though not all of the homework questions are those in the boxes titled “Check Your Understanding” in the textbook.

All homework assignment must be typed and turned in electronically through Blackboard Assignment, which has a built-in plagiarizing detector. **E-mail attachments will NOT be accepted.** Late work will be marked down 20% per delayed day and will not be accepted one week after its due date. No excuses whatsoever will be accepted.

In-class assignment:

These will be given during the regular class time throughout the semester. They are worth 3-5 points each and add up to 40 points. The in-class assignments are designed to assist your understanding of the material recently covered or to be covered in class. The assignments include definition questions, problem-solving questions, as well as drawing and graphing and in-class activities. In most cases, you can't make up for an in-class assignment if you miss the class in which it is given.

Make-up Exams

No make-up exams will be given except in extreme circumstances (for example, personal illness and death of an immediate family member). You have to present valid documentation to support your request for a make-up exam, which should be made before the exam, if possible. The make-up exam may consist mostly of essay questions. Make-ups will not be scheduled after one week in any cases.

Grading Scale

Exam 1	50
Exam 2	50
Final Exam	80
Homework assignments	88
In-class assignment	40
Total	308

Your score out of the 308 maximal points will be converted to percentage score, and your final letter grade will be determined according to the following scale:

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

Withdrawal

The deadline for withdrawal from this class with a “W” grade is October 26th, 5pm.

Available assistance

All students are encouraged to make use of my office hours. Stop by my office or talk to me after class if you have any questions or concerns about this course. If your schedule conflicts with my office hours, let me know and we can schedule an alternative time to meet. Students who have difficulty with the course should contact me as soon as possible. If you need special disability-related accommodation, please inform me and contact the Disability Support Resources (dsrqvsu@qvsu.edu, 331-2490).

Schedule

Week	Date	Topic	Reading
Week 1	8/27 8/29	Overview Overview and Introduction	Ch. 1
Week 2	9/3 9/5	Labor-day recess, no class Introduction	Ch.1
Week 3	9/10 9/12	Introduction Light and the eyes	Ch. 1 Ch. 2
Week 4	9/17 9/19	Light and the eyes The visual brain	Ch. 2 Ch. 3
Week 5	9/24 9/26	The visual brain Perceiving objects	Ch. 3 Ch. 4
Week 6	10/1 10/3	Perceiving objects Perceiving shapes, words, and pictures, Review 1	Ch. 4 SP 1
Week 7	10/8 10/10	Exam One Perceiving color	Ch. 5
Week 8	10/15 10/17	Perceiving color Perceiving depth	Ch. 5 Ch. 6
Week 9	10/22 10/24	Perceiving depth and size Perceiving motion	Ch. 6 Ch. 7
Week 10	10/29 10/31	Perception for action Attention and awareness	Ch. 7 Ch. 8.
Week 11	11/5 11/7	Attention and awareness Mental imagery, hallucination and dreams, Review 2	Ch. 8 SP 2
Week 12	11/12 11/14	Exam Two Sound and the ears	Ch. 9
Week 13	11/19 11/21	Auditory brain Thanksgiving Recess	Ch. 10
Week 14	11/26 11/28	Perceiving speech and music The body senses	Ch. 11 Ch. 12
Week 15	12/3 12/5	Olfaction: Perceiving odors Gustation: Perceiving tastes and flavors	Ch. 13 Ch. 13
12/12 Monday, 6:00-7:50pm Same Classroom: Final Exam			

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