

Grand Valley State University
Syllabus
PSY 361, Perception - Fall, 2025

Instructor Information

Name: Mario Fifić, Ph.D., Professor
Office hours: By appointment at the office or via Zoom
Email: fificm@gvsu.edu. Reaching me by email is generally much easier than reaching me by phone.
Phone: (616) 331-5061

Office Hours:

M/W/F 12:00pm-1:00pm. Schedule via email. We could meet in my office Room 2217 at the Psychology Department in Au Sable, or in a virtual office over the Zoom application. You can schedule a meeting with me by using the available scheduling options during my office hours. Alternatively, you can contact me and suggest a specific time to arrange a meeting. Please do not hesitate to contact Prof. Fifić!

Class Time and Place

M/W/F	2:00pm - 2:50pm	PSY361	AuSable Hall 2302
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Prerequisites

PSY 101 -Introductory Psychology

Course Description (from GVSU)

Study of how humans organize and interpret stimulation arising from objects in the environment. Review of theory, methodology, and research findings will be emphasized.

Why Should You Take This Course?

How does the mind and brain take physical energy, such as light or sound, and convert it into our perception of the world? This course examines the behavioral and biological bases of human and animal perceptual systems. This includes vision, audition, smell, taste, and touch. Particular emphasis is placed on high-level perception and how it relates to other cognitive systems. So, this course is an opportunity to gain more knowledge about different approaches to understanding perceptual processes, and how this knowledge could be applied in real-life situations.

Course Goals

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

1. **Summarize** the important methods, research findings, and theories of perception.
2. **Evaluate** current issues in perception research.
3. **Compare** the strengths and weaknesses of various theories of perception.
4. **Explain** how perception is empirically studied.
5. Connect everyday life with Science: Learn to identify everyday life events that could be studied through Perception
6. Develop critical thinking skills - evaluative and synthetic skills

Required Text

Psy 361 Perception

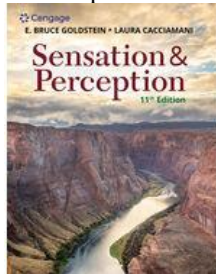
Section 1 of Psy 361 Perception

Primary Instructor: Mario Fific

Section Dates:

8/23/2025 - 12/20/2025

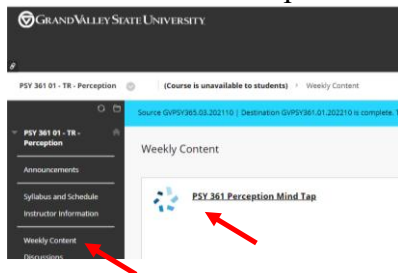
MindTap + eBook ISBN-13: 9780357446539



1. Purchase the access key in the GVSU bookstore.

NOTE: in case of some issues be sure to Allow pop-ups for Blackboard and Cengage

2. Go to BlackBoard/Weekly Content
3. Click “PSY361 Perception MindTap”



4. From here, your browser should open a new tab and you should be able to click continue and enter in your access code.

Course: Section 1 of Psy 361 Perception

Instructor: Mario Fific

This course requires an online learning platform called *MindTap*. Follow the instructions below to get started.

Register for your MindTap Course

1. Use the course registration link <https://student.cengage.com/course-link/MTPP22K5BC9Z>
2. Follow the instructions on screen to create your Cengage account and register for this MindTap course.
3. Begin your temporary access* period.

Need help? Visit the [Cengage Start Strong Website](https://startstrong.cengage.com) (<https://startstrong.cengage.com>) for step-by-step instructions.

***Temporary Access:** You can access your *MindTap* course until 4:00 AM (UTC) on 9/6/2025 for free. At the end of the temporary access period, you will be prompted to purchase access. Your work will be saved and will be available to you again once you’ve completed your purchase.

NOTE: If the cost of your course materials is included in your tuition, you will *not* need to purchase access.

MindTap Tips & Training Tools

[Learn more about navigating your MindTap course:](https://help.cengage.com/mindtap/mt-student/introduction.html) (<https://help.cengage.com/mindtap/mt-student/introduction.html>)

Technical Support & Troubleshooting

Our US-based support team delivers answers and advice via 24/7 [online chat](#), [Twitter](#), live phone support (1-800-354-9706) and through [support.cengage.com](#), which includes helpful articles, and tutorials.

If you are having trouble loading *MindTap*, run the [MindTapbrowser](#)

[check](#) (<https://ng.cengage.com/static/browsercheck/index.html>) to make sure your browser is compatible or refer to the [MindTapSystem Requirements](#) (<https://help.cengage.com/mindtap/MindTap-System-Requirements.pdf>).

If *MindTap* isn't loading, be sure to visit [Techcheck](#) (<https://techcheck.cengage.com>) to see if there is an outage.

Additional Readings

At various times during the semester, additional readings will be assigned. These readings will be required and will supplement the text and lecture. The instructor will announce and make the readings available on Blackboard, i.e., students will not be required to purchase them.

Required Equipment (owned or accessible)

- Computer with a sound card and speakers and operating system that meets current Blackboard browser requirements.
- You should bring laptops, or your computer devices that are able to access the MindTap in the class.
- A laptop can be rented from the GVSU Mary Idema Pew library IT department if needed.

Required software (available for free):

“Microsoft Word” (find the installation [link](#) through GVSU IT)

Alternatively, you could use compatible Google Docs for writing your assignments.

Course Webpage

The instructor will administer all elements of the course using GVSU's Blackboard system. The webpage will contain pertinent course information, grades, lecture materials, announcements, readings, assignments, and exams. Students are responsible for all information provided via Blackboard. The full, detailed description of all assignments, exams, and due dates will be found in Blackboard.

To access Blackboard, go to <https://lms.gvsu.edu/> and enter your log in and password.

Take a look at the GVSU Online Learning pages to find numerous materials about using Blackboard and online learning <http://www.gvsu.edu/online/>.

Use of Blackboard is integral to this course and students must log on a few times each week in order to complete course requirements, receive important announcements and/or updates, and communicate with instructors and other students about course content.

Check the current [technical requirements](#) to use Blackboard and [preferred browser information](#).

Technical difficulties with Blackboard

If you experience technical problems with Blackboard, contact the help desk by email or phone - helpdesk@gvsu.edu or 616-331-3513. The help website is <https://www.gvsu.edu/it/>.

Plagiarism

“Any ideas or material taken from another source for either written or oral presentation must be fully acknowledged. Offering the work of someone else as one's own is plagiarism. The language or ideas taken from another may range from isolated formulas, sentences, or paragraphs to entire articles copied from books, periodical, speeches, or the writing of other students. The offering of materials assembled or collected by others in form of projects or collections without acknowledgement also is considered plagiarism. Any student who fails to give credit in written

or oral work for the ideas or materials that have been taken from another is guilty of plagiarism.” (GVSU, Undergraduate & Graduate Catalog 2004-2005, p. 91). Plagiarism or cheating will result in an F for the course.

Course Organization and Your Participation

Class Participation

Active participation is expected and counts toward your success in this course. If you are unable to attend or participate, please inform me in advance.

Preparation Before Class

Each week, you will be assigned a specific book chapter to study. You are also expected to complete the accompanying online tests in MindTap before class to ensure you are ready to engage with the material.

In-Class Activities

During class, we will review the key concepts from the assigned chapter. You are encouraged to ask questions, contribute to discussions, and share relevant observations. At times, you may be asked to give a brief report on a class activity; these reports will contribute to your final grade. Please bring your personal computer to class, as some activities will require it.

Optimal course working strategy

- (a) PREPARE: During the weekend, try to prepare for the next chapter relying on the adaptive learning system - MindTap.
- (b) PARTICIPATE: Actively work with me and other students to clarify class material or to share new ideas.
- (c) CLOSE: Complete assignments by deadline for that week.

Course Requirements

Your final grade will be determined by your performance in three areas:

- 1. MindTap tasks (quizzes, training, and activities)
- 2. In-class activities
- 3. Essays

1. MindTap Tasks [33%]

Each chapter will be covered on the MindTap website, which is designed to help improve your learning through interactive activities. There are two main types of tasks:

- **Mastery Training**
- **End-of-Chapter Quizzes**

Your primary responsibility is to complete the **Mastery Training** for each chapter before the week in which that chapter will be covered (see deadlines). Be aware that Mastery Training cannot be completed in a single sitting—it uses an adaptive learning method that may require you to take breaks before continuing.

Advice: Start working on Mastery Training early, ideally on the Monday before the chapter is scheduled to be covered. Completing these tasks contributes nearly 30% of your final grade.

The **Quizzes** will cover material discussed in class. They consist of multiple-choice questions and may be attempted as many times as you wish before the weekly deadline. These quizzes are designed for practice and reinforcement of learning.

2. In-Class Activities [33%]

During class sessions, you will participate in research-related activities connected to the week's topic. The goals are to deepen your understanding of important concepts and to explore how they can be applied to solving real-world problems.

These activities will take different forms: sometimes you will work individually, while other times you will collaborate in groups. Because they occupy most of the class time and may require a personal computer, participation in these activities **cannot be made up outside of class**.

3. Essays [33%]

You are required to write **three essay papers** (7–9 pages each) during the semester. Each essay should focus on a question about perception that interests you.

Your tasks in each paper are to:

- Review and summarize empirical findings from several peer-reviewed journal articles
- Critically evaluate how well the studies address your chosen question, using concepts learned in class
- Propose a new study that could further investigate the initial question

Detailed instructions for the essays will be posted on Blackboard.

Exam Excuses and Late Assignment Submissions

Late submissions of assignments and exams will incur a penalty of **10% of the total points per day**.

(Note: “late” is defined as submitting work **even 1 second past the deadline**.)

You are allowed to miss **one in-class activity (one week)** without providing an excuse. In this case, you will be required to complete an alternative assignment: a **chapter summary of at least 1,200 words**.

If you need to miss a **second in-class activity**—or if you are unable to participate due to significant personal circumstances—an alternative assignment will be offered **only if you provide written documentation**. Acceptable documentation includes a note from the department chair or a physician.

Weekly deadlines

There will only be two important deadlines within a week. The first is associated with chapter learning, the deadline is set before our class on Sunday at 11:59pm. By that time, you are expected to complete your MindTap Mastery Training and the quizzes. The next deadline is set for Friday at 11:59pm. By that time, you are expected to complete the assignment activity that could be shared during that week’s class.

DAYS OF THE WEEK 7 days			
WEEKDAYS 5 days	Monday	Mon.	<div style="border: 1px solid blue; padding: 5px;"> Sunday 11:59pm. Finish taking MindTap Learning and MindTap quizzes For this week </div>
	Tuesday	Tue.	
	Wednesday	Wed.	
	Thursday	Thu.	
	Friday	Fri.	
WEEKEND 2 days	Saturday	Sat.	<div style="border: 1px solid orange; padding: 5px;"> Friday 11:59pm. Submit all assignments or reports if required </div>
	Sunday	Sun.	

Grading

The MindTap activities, assignments and exams will collectively be worth approximately 400 points. Based on your cumulative point score the following grades will be assigned:

Grade Distribution

A	94 - 100%
A-	90 - 93%
B+	88 - 89%
B	84 - 87%

B-	80 - 83%
C+	78 - 79%
C	74 - 77%
C-	70 - 73%
D+	67 - 69%

D 60 - 66%

F 59% and lower

THE GRADING SCALE AS PRINTED ABOVE IS FINAL! Any changes in grading policy will be announced on the course website.

Netiquette [but also Etiquette]

This course will involve frequent opportunities to interact with your peers via the Blackboard Discussion Board. Although many of us have experience with e-mail, online discussion is different because we're communicating "one to many" rather than "one to one." Therefore, it's important that we maintain a sense of freedom to express our thoughts while at the same time providing a safe atmosphere for that expression. Please keep this mind as you are communicating with others.

All participants should maintain a professional attitude and manner of discussion. While spirited debate is encouraged, unprofessional behavior is not tolerated. Words often come across "more directly and harshly" in this written form of communication, since there are no facial gestures, expression or tone of voice to help convey your message fully. Your contributions should not be overly negative or personal in nature.

Emergencies and Schedule Conflicts

Exams will be administered online during limited time windows on specific days throughout the semester (see tentative schedule below). Absences from these exams related to participation in a university-sanctioned event, a personal illness, a family emergency, or a major religious holiday will be excused provided that you a) give the instructor at least one week advance notice (when the conflict is foreseeable) or a timely explanation upon your return (when the conflict is unforeseeable) and b) give the instructor written documentation from an appropriate faculty member, university administrator, physician, or clergy member. Make-up exams will be administered only if an absence from the exam is excused for one of the above reasons. Note that vacation is not considered a valid excuse. You may take a make-up exam either at another time on the normal exam day, or on the soonest possible date thereafter. An unexcused absence from an exam will constitute a score of 0.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

If there is any student in this class who has special needs because of learning, physical or other disability, please contact Disability Support Resources (DSR) at (616) 331-2490 to develop a plan of assistance that you can provide to me.

Tentative Course Schedule

Learning Modules (one-chapter modules): The learning modules in Blackboard will be a foundational part of the course. Modules are where you will find instructions for each one-week segment of the course including reading assignments, video lectures, practice activities, and assignments. Modules will open up one week at a time and various assignments will be due during those windows. All previous modules will be open throughout the course.

MODULE	DATE	TOPIC(S)	READING
1&2	Aug 25-29	Course overview; Introduction to perception	Ch. 01
	Sep 1-5	Sep 1: Labor Day recess Basic Principles of Sensory Physiology	Ch. 02
3&4	Sep 8-12	The Eye and Retina	Ch. 03
	Sep 15-19	The visual Cortex and Beyond & Perceiving Objects and Scenes	Ch. 04 Ch. 05
		Paper 1: Modules 1-4	

5&6	Sep 22-26	Visual attention & Taking Action	Ch. 06 Ch. 07
	Sep 29-Oct3	Perceiving Motion	Ch. 08
7&8	Oct 6-10	Perceiving Color	Ch. 09
	Oct 13-17	Perceiving Depth & Size	Ch. 10
9&10	Oct 20-24	Oct 19-21: Fall break	
		Hearing	Ch. 11
	Oct 27- 31	Hearing & Environment	Ch. 12
		Paper 2: Modules 5-10	
11&12	Nov 3- 7	Perceiving Music	Ch. 13
	Nov 10-14	Perceiving Speech	Ch. 14
13&14	Nov 17 -21	The Cutaneous Senses	Ch. 15
		Nov 19-23 Prof. Fific is away	
	Nov 24-28	Nov 26- 30: Thanksgiving Day recess	
15	Dec 1-5	The Cutaneous Senses	Ch. 15
		The Chemical senses	Ch. 16
	TBD	Paper 3: Modules 11-15	

The above schedule is tentative. Any changes in the schedule will be announced in class and posted on Blackboard.

Disclaimer:

All of the information included in this syllabus, including the course schedule, assignments, and grading procedure, is subject to change. Any consequential changes to this syllabus will be announced on Blackboard.

How Much Time Do I Need To Spend On This Course?

Because PSY361 is a 3-credit course, you are expected to spend a total of 108 hours on the course (3 course credits x 36 work hours per credit = 108 total work hours for the entire course, excluding attending the video lectures).

If you are taking this course during the SPRING term: You are expected to work on this course 3 HOURS per DAY, six days a week.

Tips for a Successful Learning Experience

**Although these might seem obvious and simple, they will make a difference*

- ☐ Read the syllabus and view all preparatory information on Blackboard
- ☐ Stay organized and track due dates
- ☐ Plan weekly study times
- ☐ KEEP UP ON THE READING AND LECTURES
- ☐ Take your own notes on each lecture, or write your own notes into the provided slides
- ☐ Log onto Blackboard at least 3 times per week to check announcements, discussion board, and interact with course material. Online courses require perseverance, self-discipline, self-motivation, and the ability to work independently – more so than face-to-face on-campus classes.
- ☐ Post questions, comments, and ideas on discussion board (if included)
- ☐ Ask questions of the instructor. Not just clarification questions about logistics, but content questions.

Academic Integrity

This course is subject to GVSU's general requirements for courses. A full list with pointers to resources may be found at www.gvsu.edu/coursepolicies.

Section STU 4.0 of GVSU's Student Code contains very specific information about maintaining academic integrity. It states: "The principles of academic honesty and integrity are fundamental to a community of scholars. The University expects that students will not engage in acts of academic dishonesty in curricular and non-curricular academic activities. Engaging in academic dishonesty compromises the integrity of university grades, and scholarship and research."

Academic dishonesty is defined as actions or behaviors that misrepresent one's contributions to or the results of any scholarly product submitted for credit, evaluation, or dissemination. This definition includes, but is not limited to, fabrication, falsification, cheating, and plagiarism. Terms are defined as the following:

- Cheating is defined as attempting to use materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise that have not been allowed by the instructor.
- Plagiarism is defined as offering the work of someone else as one's own. The language or ideas taken from another may range from isolated formulas, sentences, or paragraphs to entire articles copied from books, periodicals, speeches or the writings of other students. Academic dishonesty compromises the integrity of grades, meaning that all academic work should be done by the student to whom it is assigned without unauthorized aid.

PROCEDURES

When the instructor feels that action beyond a failing course grade is warranted, the instructor will report the incident at www.gvsu.edu/conduct and request additional action via the University Conduct Process. When the alleged violation is related to the Academic Honesty - Integrity of Scholarships and Grades, the Hearing Body shall be composed of faculty members.

It is the instructor's responsibility to establish a classroom atmosphere that fosters academic honesty on the part of the students. If any instance of academic dishonesty is discovered by an instructor, they will notify the student and discuss the incident. After discussing the instance with the student, the instructor will make a decision. Depending on the instructor's judgment of the particular case, they may do nothing, impose additional course requirements, ask the student to repeat the work in question, or give a failing grade for the assignment, examination or the entire course. Any time an instructor addresses a violation of Academic Honesty with a failing grade on an assignment or in a course, they must report the incident at www.gvsu.edu/conduct. Other incidents may be reported for tracking purposes. Reporting the incident will notify the Department Chair, the Dean of Students, and the Dean(s) of the Instructional

Colleges. Reporting the incident does not automatically initiate additional action, but keeps record of the incident. Students may utilize the Academic Grievance Process to appeal a faculty initiated decision.”

Students will comply with the following rules, when engaging in coursework:

1. No student shall knowingly, without authorization, procure, provide or accept any materials which contain questions or answers to any examination or assignment.
2. No student shall, without authorization, complete, in part or in total, any examination or assignment for another person.
3. No student shall, without authorization, allow any examination or assignment to be completed, in part or in total, by another person.
4. No student shall knowingly plagiarize, copy the work of another person, or submit work generated by artificial intelligence tools as their own without proper attribution or authorization.
5. No student shall submit work that has been previously graded, or is being submitted concurrently to more than one course, without authorization from the instructor(s) of the class(es) to which the student wishes to submit it.
6. The course materials are intended for curriculum and course-related purposes and are copyrighted by the University. Appropriate access to this content is given for personal academic study and review purposes only. Unless otherwise stated in writing, this content may not be shared, distributed, modified, transmitted, reused, sold, or otherwise disseminated. These materials may also be protected by additional copyright; any further use of this material may be in violation of federal copyright law. Violators of this policy will be referred to the Committee on Professionalism, Performance, and Promotion for disciplinary purposes.
7. The student signed below understands and accepts all the terms of the above syllabus.

If you agree with 1-7 please post the signed document on BB.

Student's full name printed and signed _____

G# _____