

THE SCHEDULE OF TOPICS AND ASSIGNMENTS (REV 3)

PSYC 13B

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PERCEPTION

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1 What's the course about?

It's easy to take perception for granted. After all, it does work fast, effectively, and with ever so little effort. But perception really shouldn't be taken for granted. It's what enables us to detect, recognize, identify, and manipulate the things in our environment. But the very speed, accuracy and ease of perception's achievements obscure the incredibly complex, awe-inspiring processes that are needed to make those achievements possible.

The course will introduce you to contemporary research on the neural machinery that makes vision, audition, and our other senses possible. In this course, you will learn how we acquire, process and use information about objects and events in our environment; and you'll learn how the properties of your sense organs and brain shape the world you live in. We will also discuss the influence of cognitive factors on perception: Our main focus will be on the perceptual achievements of normal, healthy, adult humans, but the course will also incorporate research with non-human animals, very young or very old humans, humans with damaged or abnormal sensory systems, and occasionally, non-biological perceptual systems.

2 How does the course work?

Meetings are in lecture format, with considerable emphasis on class participation. From our space on *Latté* you'll be able to download the images around which class meetings will be organized. These are useful for review and learning.

3 What are we going to read?

The textbook is Randolph Blake & Robert Sekuler, *Perception* Fifth edition (New York: McGraw-Hill). This edition is enough changed from its four predecessors, that it would not a good idea to do your work from an earlier edition. I suggest getting a pre-read copy

(sometimes called “used”). I have my co-author’s permission to say that we’d rather you spent the extra money on other things, maybe even other books.

Other readings and exercises: In addition to the textbook, assignments during this semester will include material posted on *Latté*, plus demonstrations and other material from the internets.¹

4 *Latté*

Some of the course’s activities will take place on the course’s *Latté* site. Please be mindful of privacy issues when you use access the *Latté* site (or, for that matter, use email, respond to strangers’ offers of \$20M in exchange for your social security number and bank account information, post embarrassing photos on MySpace, Facebook, etc). In particular, be aware that *Latté* tallies accesses from each user account, and that from time to time, I may review that information in order to assess student progress.

5 What do I have to do?

You should complete assigned readings before coming to class. That’s the way to get the most of the course –and it’s also the route to making the best contribution to class discussion. Periodically I may e-mail you with syllabus updates and reading assignments. Completion of these assignments comprise part of your commitment to the course. The textbook’s supplementary web site is at

http://highered.mcgraw-hill.com/sites/0072887605/student_view0/ Checkout the site’s drop-down menu “Choose One.” Under that menu item, for each chapter in the text you’ll find a synopsis of the chapter’s main points, a glossary, and a multiple choice quiz for self-test.

6 How will I be evaluated?

Sample exams will be posted on *Latté*. Exams will include multiple choice and short-answer questions. Eighty percent of the course grade will be set by performance on three exams. The first two exams will carry equal weight; the third exam’s weight is 1.5× that of either of the first two exams. The third examination will emphasize the final portion of the course but will draw on material from the entire course. The remaining 20 percent of the course grade will reflect contributions to class, and performance on two short assignments. Please note that assignments two days or more late cannot be accepted.

¹<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Internets>

7 Assignment Calendar (rev. 03 - December 1, 2008)

Meets Monday, Wednesday 2-3:30		
Date	Topic	Readings
Wednesday 9/3	Introduction	B&S 1, Helen Keller, Country of the Blind
Monday 9/8		B&S Appendix, Spider phobia, , Assignment #1, Due 9/17
Wednesday 9/10	The eye: function and malfunction	B&S 2,3
Monday 9/15		
Wednesday 9/17	Brain and seeing	B&S 4, To see and not to see, Sea gypsies
Monday 9/22		
Wednesday 9/24		
9/29, 10/1	No class	
Monday 10/6	Exam	
Wednesday 10/8	Pattern & object perception	B&S 5, Face blindness
Monday 10/13		
Wednesday 10/15		B&S 6
Monday 10/20		
Wednesday 10/22	Fechner Day	
Monday 10/27	Color vision	B&S 7, Case of the color blind painter
Wednesday 10/29		
Monday 11/3	Motion perception	B&S 9
Wednesday 11/5		
Monday 11/10	Exam	
		B&S 10-11, Sabine, iTunes, Eustachio's tube, Assignment #2, Due 11/24
Wednesday 11/12	Hearing	
Monday 11/17		
Wednesday 11/19	Complex auditory perception	
Monday 11/24	Music & Speech	B&S 12
Wednesday 11/26		
Monday 12/1	Smell and taste	B&S 14
Wednesday 12/3		B&S 15
Monday 12/8		
Monday 12/15	Exam	

7.1 Final Exams

The final exam will be given on Monday, December 15 at 1:30 p.m. It will cover material for Weeks 8-12, along with some questions focused on the general concepts that run throughout the course.

Note: As in all courses, students with disabilities should alert the instructor as soon as possible to any special needs that arise from the disabilities.