



PSY 280H1 Fall 2021 – Sensation and Perception

Online, asynchronous

Contact Information	
Instructor: Dirk Bernhardt-Walther	Teaching Assistant(s): Gaeun Son Logan Doyle Johnny Dubois
Preferred communication: Message in Quercus Email: dirk.bernhardt.walther@utoronto.ca	Preferred communication: Message in Quercus
Office Hours: Mondays, 3 – 4 pm, via Zoom	

Course Description, Goals, and Prerequisites

The purpose of this course is to examine how we perceive our environment through our senses. As we will find out in this class, there are two parallel realities, the physical reality around us, and the psychological reality inside of our brain. In many cases, these two realities can be quite distinct. In the class we will explore how these two realities interact. We will discuss the physical, physiological and cognitive aspects of perception that are related to the senses of vision, hearing, touch, smell, and taste.

Goals:

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

- describe the sensory systems;
- distinguish between sensation and perception;
- explain how sensory and perceptual processes shape our experience of “reality”;
- explain the basic principles of classical psychophysics;
- explain how human sensory systems respond to energy in the physical environment (i.e. light waves, air pressure, chemical molecules, etc.), transforming it into a perceptual experience that the brain can understand (i.e. sight, sound, smell, etc.);
- compare and contrast the five sensory systems in terms of their sensory/anatomical setup and perceptual organization;
- explain the roles of prior knowledge, and inference in our perceptual judgments and our conscious experiences;

- identify and define the leading terms, concepts, theoretical perspectives, empirical findings, and historical trends in the study of sensation and perception;
- compare and contrast psychological principles, theories, and methods as they pertain to sensory and neurological systems;
- critically read, understand, and evaluate scientific literature, understand and use scientific and technical vocabulary, and synthesize information from multiple sources.

Writing Integrated Teaching: This course is partnered with the Writing Integrated Teaching Program (WIT). Writing is a critical skill in every discipline, but it is not often one that is directly taught outside of English courses. However, every discipline has a unique style of writing—psychology included! This course is specifically designed to integrate low-stakes opportunities to practice psychology-specific writing skills as you learn the content, in order to give you a chance to develop and receive feedback on this important set of practices.

Plagiarism Detection: Normally, students will be required to submit their course essays to the University’s plagiarism detection tool for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the tool’s reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University’s use of this tool are described on the Centre for Teaching Support & Innovation web site (<https://uoft.me/pdt-faq>). Please see here for more information – <https://teaching.utoronto.ca/ed-tech/teaching-technology/pdt/#pdt1>

Prerequisites: PSY100H1/COG250Y1 (formerly UNI250Y) or registered in the Cognitive Science program

Note about prerequisites: It is your responsibility to ensure that you have met **all** prerequisites listed in the Psychology section of the A&S Calendar for this course. If you lack any prerequisites you WILL BE REMOVED. No waivers will be granted.

Reading Material

Jeremy M. Wolfe, Keith R. Kluender and Dennis M. Levi, *Sensation & Perception*, 6th edition, 2021. (ISBN-13: 978-1605359724).

The textbook is essential for following the class. The book is available in hardbound, loose-leaf and ebook editions. All of these are acceptable. All three version are available at the U of T bookstore. The ebook can also be purchased directly at:

<https://www.vitalsource.com/products/sensation-and-perception-jeremy-wolfe-keith-kluender-v9780197542705>

Lecture materials:

Lecture slides, videos, assignments, and quizzes will all be posted on Quercus. Following the communications on Quercus closely is essential for this online course. Keeping up with readings and tasks is your responsibility.

Course Evaluation

The class consists of five main units, with two to three weeks of learning processes. Evaluations consist of the following components:

i) Participation (300 points)

Each unit will entail various individual and group activities. All students are expected to actively participate in these activities online, primarily through online discussions on Quercus and through the submission of materials related to the respective activities. Participation will be graded by Teaching Assistants at the end of each unit. Participation is evaluated with up to **60 points per unit**.

ii) Online quizzes (200 points)

Following each unit, students will be asked to demonstrate mastery of the material for the unit by taking an online quiz. Online quizzes will take place on the Wednesday immediately following the end of a unit. Each of the five quizzes is evaluated with **up to 50 points**. **The lowest score of the five quizzes will be dropped**. That is, you may even miss one quiz without penalty. Collectively, these online quizzes replace the midterm exam.

iii) Two writing assignments (200 points)

A writing assignment will be posted for each of the units 1-4. Students are asked to complete **two of the four writing assignments**. Each assignment is worth 100 points. Details of the assignments and deadlines will be announced on Quercus.

An **outline** of the paper with bullet points will be **due two weeks before** the paper. The outline will count for 20 points and the full paper for 80 points. All materials must be submitted online on Quercus in PDF format by the due date. Late submissions are accepted, but 10 points (not 10%) will be subtracted for each day or fraction of a day that the assignment is late.

iv) Final Assessment (300 points)

A final assessment covering the material from the entire class will be written during Final Assessment Period (between December 10th and 21st).

v) Extra credit (10 points)

You may receive extra credit of 10 points (1% of the grade) for participating in a 1-hour online psychology experiment. To participate in an online experiment with the BWlab for course credit, please send an email to: bwlab.experiments@gmail.com

The lab will contact you with further instructions. If you have any concerns or questions, please contact Gaeun Son: gaeun.son@mail.utoronto.ca

In total, students can earn up to 1000 points (not counting extra credit).

Grading Policy

I strictly follow the official U of T grading scheme:

<https://advice.writing.utoronto.ca/general/grading-policy/>

I do not round grades. That is, you actually have to achieve 80% to get an A-, for instance. 79.9% is not enough. There has to be a cut-off somewhere, and the U of T grading scheme provides cut-offs explicitly for the individual grades. If I were to round grades, then the cut-off for an A- would be at 79.5%, which is just as arbitrary as 80%.

Course Webpage

The website associated with this course is accessible via <https://q.utoronto.ca>

Course Policies

Missed Tests

I have built a lot of flexibility into the course. If you cannot take one of the online quizzes on the day they are scheduled, you may opt to do the writing assignment for that unit instead. If you are unable to follow the class online due to illness, then please contact your College Registrar so that they can discuss accommodations with me.

Penalties for Lateness

Online quizzes can only be taken on the day they are scheduled. Writing assignments submitted on time will receive feedback from the TAs as well as a grade. Writing assignments submitted up to 24 hours late will be graded, but no feedback will be provided. Writing assignments that are more than one day late will be penalized with 10 points deduction per day or fraction of a day.

Religious accommodation

As a student at the University of Toronto, you are part of a diverse community that welcomes and includes students and faculty from a wide range of backgrounds, cultural traditions, and spiritual beliefs. For my part, I will make every reasonable effort to avoid scheduling tests, examinations, or other compulsory activities on religious holy days not captured by statutory holidays. Further to University Policy, if you anticipate being unable to follow the class or missing a major course activity (like a test, or assignment) due to a religious observance, please let me know as early in the course as possible, and with sufficient notice (at least two to three weeks), so that we can work together to make alternate arrangements.

Specific Medical Circumstances

If you become ill and it affects your ability to do your academic work, consult me right away. Normally, I will ask you for medical documentation in support of your specific medical circumstances. The University's Verification of Student Illness or Injury (VOI) form is recommended because it indicates the impact and severity of the illness, while protecting your privacy about the details of the nature of the illness. You can submit a different form (like a letter from the doctor), as long as it is an original document, and it contains the same information as the VOI.

Accommodation for Personal Reasons

There may be times when you are unable to complete course work on time due to non-medical reasons. If you have concerns, speak to me. It is also a very good idea to speak with an advisor in your College Registrars office; they can support you in requesting extensions or accommodations, and importantly, connect you with other resources on campus for help with your situation.

Email Policy

Please check the syllabus and the class materials posted on Quercus before sending an email. You will find answers to most of your questions there. If you cannot find the answer there, then please post your question to the general class discussion on Quercus. It is likely that some of your classmates have the same question. By posting on the class discussion, they will be able to see your question as well as my answer.

I am available to answer questions about lecture material in the online forum as well as through Zoom during office hours.

Please address any questions about grading and assessment to your assigned TA. The preferred form of communication for the TAs and the instructor is direct messaging on Quercus.

Finally, please **consider all class communications as professional correspondence**. Proof read your message for spelling and grammar. Do not use short-hands and abbreviations – We are not your Facebook/Snapchat/WhatsApp buddies. Remember, **emails and posts on Quercus last forever and cannot be unsent**.

Academic Resources

Ongoing Learning Disability or Accommodation Requirement

Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. If you have an ongoing disability issue or accommodation need, you should register with Accessibility Services (AS) (accessibility.utoronto.ca) at the beginning of the academic year. Without registration, you will not be able to verify your situation with your instructors, and instructors will not be advised about your accommodation needs. AS will then assess your medical situation, develop an accommodation plan with you, and support you in requesting accommodation for your course work. Remember that the process of accommodation is private: AS will not share details of your condition with any instructor, and your instructors will not reveal that you are registered with AS.

Writing:

As a student here at the University of Toronto, you are expected to write well. The university provides its students with a number of resources to help them achieve this. For more information on campus writing centres and writing courses, please visit <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/>.

If English is not your first language, you may want to consider the English Language Learning program of the Faculty of Arts and Science:

<http://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/current/advising/ell>

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism:

Academic integrity is essential to the pursuit of learning and scholarship in a university, and to ensuring that a degree from the University of Toronto is a strong signal of each student's individual academic achievement. As a result, the University treats cases of cheating and plagiarism very seriously. The University of Toronto's Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters (www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm) outlines the behaviours that constitute academic dishonesty and the processes for addressing academic offences.

All suspected cases of academic dishonesty will be investigated following procedures outlined in the Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters. If you have questions or concerns about what

constitutes appropriate academic behaviour or appropriate research and citation methods, you are expected to seek out additional information on academic integrity from your instructor or from other institutional resources (see www.utoronto.ca/academicintegrity/resourcesforstudents.html).

Other Resources

Student Life Programs and Services (<http://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/>)

Academic Success Services (<http://www.asc.utoronto.ca/>)

Counselling and Psychological Services (<http://www.caps.utoronto.ca/main.htm>)

Course Outline

Dates	Topic	Reading Assignment
Sept 9 th – Sept 14 th	Unit 0 – Introduction	Chapter 1
Sept. 15 th – Sept. 28 th	Unit 1 – Vision I: Fundamentals	Chapters 2, 3, 4
Sept. 29 th – Oct. 12 th	Unit 2 – Vision II: Color and Depth	Chapters 5, 6
Oct. 13 th – Oct. 26 th	Unit 3 – Vision III: Attention and Motion	Chapters 7, 8
Oct. 27 th – Nov. 16 rd	Unit 4 – Hearing	Chapters 9, 10
Nov. 8 th – 12 th	<i>Reading Week</i>	
Nov. 17 th – Dec. 7 th	Unit 5 – Touch and the Chemical Senses	Chapters 13, 14, 15