

PERCEPTION (PSY 438/538)
Spring 2008 – SYLLABUS
University of Oregon

Instructor: *Dr. Jagdeep Kaur-Bala*
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Classroom: *142 Straub*
Time: *10:00am–11:20am MW*

Office Hours: 10:30am -11:30am Tuesday/Thursday
(& by appointment)

Course website: <http://blackboard.uoregon.edu> This site will provide supplemental information for the course (course outline, grades, copies of overheads, etc.).

General Course Description: In this course, we will examine the perceptual abilities of the human brain, including vision, hearing, touch, taste and smell. Toward this end, we will include discussions of the methods used by scientists to examine perceptual abilities, the capabilities and limitations of perception, the current knowledge of the underlying neural bases of perception, and the various types of brain damage that may affect perception. Each of the non-lecture parts of the course (discussions, texts, papers, presentations, movies) are designed to reinforce ideas and augment concepts presented in lectures. Questions are encouraged in all parts of the course and students are welcome to stop by my office for questions and/or discussions during my office hours or additional appointments. Questions/clarifications via emails are also encouraged at all times. It is my hope that by the end of this course you will have a new appreciation for how you experience the world on a daily basis.

Required Text: *Sensation and Perception, 7th Edition* by E.B. Goldstein is required. This is a comprehensive text for the course. Please notify me immediately if you have difficulty obtaining the text from the bookstore. A copy of the text is also on reserve at the Knight Library.

Course Format: The material in this course will be presented through a combination of assigned reading from the text, class lectures, in-class discussion, and demonstrations. Lecture material and readings will have overlap, but will not be replications of each other; some lecture material will not be covered in the readings and vice versa. You are expected to do the assigned reading **before** the class period in which it is due. Reading the material before the corresponding lectures will help your performance in two ways. First, discussions of the material during lecture will be more fruitful if you have at least a general understanding of the material beforehand, helping you to ultimately comprehend and retain the material. Second, questions drawn from the assigned readings will be included on the regularly scheduled quizzes, *even if they have not yet been discussed in lecture (see below).*

GRADING POLICY

Final grades are based on consistent performance through the term. As such, the final grade will include the weighted scores for the quizzes, the term papers, study group discussion responses and the exams. Graduate students (Psy538 class) will also undertake an additional self-study assignment and prepare a presentation for class that will also be graded. In addition, some opportunities for extra-credit will also be available to all. **Letter grades will be determined as follows: A (90-105% of total possible points), B (80-89%), C (70-79%), D (60-69%), F (0-60%).** However, the instructor reserves the right to relax (but not stiffen) this criterion, depending on the actual distribution of grades.

- **Midterm Exams** – 20% of final grade each
- **Final Exam** – 30% of final grade
- **Quizzes** – Off the 6 quizzes (5 MCQs each), scores from the your highest-scoring 4 quizzes form 15% of final grade (10% for graduate students)
- **Term Paper** – 10% of final grade
- **Class presentation** (graduate students only) – 6% of final grade
- **Study group discussion responses** - 5% of final grade (4% for graduate students)
- **Extra-credit (optional)** - up to 4 points added to final grade

TESTS

Quizzes: (15% or 10% for graduate students)

Short quizzes will be given in the first 10 minutes of class some days (see the course schedule). The quizzes are designed to serve as quick reviews of recently covered materials as well as help you keep up with the reading assignments. Quizzes will contain 5 multiple choice questions that pertain to the most recently presented lecture material. Questions will occasionally be drawn from readings that have been assigned but may not yet have been discussed in the lectures; however, these questions will be of a more general nature and should be easily answered. Of the 6 quizzes, the 2 with the lowest scores will be dropped, with the total score of the remaining four yielding 15% of the final grade. No make-up quizzes will be offered; if you miss a quiz, that grade will be one of the two that will be dropped.

Exams: (Midterms - 20% each; Final 30%)

Exams primarily test conceptual understanding. The exams will be part multiple choice, part fill-in-the-blank/match the information and part short answer/short essay. The exams are comprehensive and cover all materials covered, albeit with a focus on material covered since the previous exam. Please bring a number two pencil with you on exam days. ***No make-up exams will be given without a valid, excused absence – if you know in advance that you cannot take all exams on the appointed dates (see the course outline), do not take this course!*** If unforeseen circumstances during the term prevent you from taking an exam, notify the instructor immediately. Allowable excused absences are executive orders/ court orders, medical emergencies and athletic events such as away games for student athletes. All such occasions must be accompanied by official documentation. Make-up exams may be essay-type.

Term Paper (10%): A prerequisite to gaining scientific knowledge of any sort is the ability to read and critically evaluate the primary scientific literature. The goal of this assignment is to help you develop these essential skills.

Students will be required to write a 4 – 6 page (double-spaced, 1 inch margins, 10-12 point font) term paper that describes compares and contrasts two journal articles that address a topic relevant to sensation and perception. I suggest that you use the textbook as a source for selecting a general topic, followed by library, PsychINFO, and Medline searches for the selection of the two articles (for online assistance in your search, see <http://libweb.uoregon.edu/guides/psychology/>). The referenced articles must be empirical in nature, with data collected to investigate a specific question related to the topic of interest (*i.e., no review or summary articles*). The due dates for this assignment have been designed to help you get an early start on your assignment and enable you to distribute the work on the paper throughout the term. You are required to turn in four different items pertaining to the paper during the term:

- 1) A topic name, references of the 2 articles chosen and a brief description of the topic (one paragraph describing why the topic is appropriate and interesting, and how the 2 research articles that you have chosen will help you investigate the topic; this will account for **10% of the term paper grade**). This is due by **Thursday, April 9th**.
- 2) The term paper topic and articles chosen should be finalized after feedback from the instructor/TA. Xeroxed copies of the articles chosen for your paper should be turned in by **Thursday, April 16th**. *After this date, you may not change your chosen topic and articles without my consent.*
- 3) **(optional)** A draft of the paper that will be given to other students in the class to review and be returned to you. If you chose to do the peer review, you must bring a draft of your paper to class on **Thursday, May 14th**. If you choose to do this, it will account for **20% of the term paper grade (10 for your editing ability of your peer's paper and 10 for the draft)**. *If you choose NOT to go through this process your final paper will be graded with this 20% included in the assessment.* Edited papers are due on **Tuesday, May 19th**.
- 4) The final version of the paper is due on **Tuesday, June 2nd**.

The paper should include:

- 1) An introduction to the general topic.
- 2) A summary of the articles in your own words, including the question under investigation, the hypothesis being tested, the methods used, the findings, and the conclusions drawn by the authors.
- 3) A comparison of the two articles, describing how the findings of one either support, conflict, or extend the findings of the other.
- 4) A discussion of the merits and deficits of the articles, including suggested ways that the deficits could have been avoided. For example, questions such as these should be addressed: Is the question an interesting one, and is it framed properly? Is the hypothesis valid and defensible? Are the methods appropriate to address the question? Are the findings clear and

interpreted appropriately? Are the authors' conclusions warranted, given the findings?

- 5) An overall assessment of the significance and quality of the contribution of the articles to the field of human performance and the specific topic addressed.
- 6) Xeroxed copies of the two articles.

The paper should be written in APA style (reference copies of the APA Publication Manual are available in many of the University Libraries).

In order to improve the quality of papers, and to provide you with experience editing, papers will be peer edited (optional). On the day that the paper is "due for edit", you will turn your paper in at the beginning of class. At the end of class, you will be given someone else's paper to edit. You will have 2 days to edit the other student's paper, and then you will bring the paper to the class and return it to the student. Your paper, meanwhile, will have been edited by someone else. You will then have a few more days to consider the corrections, incorporate those you think are good, revise the paper, and then turn in your "final version" of the paper AND the corrected original. Your grade on the paper will be based mainly on the final version, but your original will be considered too (10% points), in order to prevent sloppy first drafts. Your editing will also be evaluated (10% points), and you will receive points toward your final grade for it. Guidelines for editing will be available on Blackboard.

Important note: ALWAYS keep a copy of your paper and reference articles either on disk, or a hard copy! Your peer editors are no more reliable than you, perhaps less so, and they may misplace or forget your paper. If your peer editor does not return your edited paper to you, you will not be penalized (except that your paper will not have the benefit of having been edited – you may wish to ask a friend in the class to edit your paper for you), but you will still be responsible for turning in an original and final version of the paper when it is due. Also, please keep in mind that just as the quality of students in this course varies, so does the quality of editing. Taking bad advice from a peer editor is no excuse for errors in a paper.

Papers are due at the beginning of class on the day they are due. If you don't turn your paper in before the start of class, it will not be eligible for peer editing, and you will not be given a paper to edit (so you will lose your peer editing points). If you cannot be in class the day a paper is due for peer editing, you may turn in the paper early so that you will be eligible for the peer editing system, but it is your responsibility to arrange to pick up the paper you are to peer edit from me. If you cannot be in class the day peer edited papers are to be returned to their authors, you can also return the edited paper early.

The term paper grade will be determined by the quality of 1) the paragraph describing the term paper topic (10%), 2) the final paper (90%) [or paper(70%) and draft(10%)] with the peer edit that you provide another student (10%); in total, the paper grade is worth 10% of the final grade in the course.

Finally, plagiarism will not be tolerated, and will be dealt with according to official University policy (see section on Academic Honesty below).

Study group discussion responses: (5% or 4% for graduate students)

We will form 5-6 member study groups in order to have some contact time outside the class in which course work maybe discussed and small assignments

completed as a group. The study groups will be expected to meet once a week and 4 discussion reports will be due during the term. For each report, I will give you specific things to get done and will be looking for those things for the evaluation or grading. All members of the group will receive the same grade for the assignment.

Sometimes, group members feel that not everyone in the group is working to their best and so it is not fair for everyone in the group to receive the same grade for an assignment. If such is the case for your group, you can choose (as a group) to award individual grades for the report. *If the group decides that it is not fair that every person receives the same grade for a particular report, I will let the group decide on grades for each member.* For example, if the group grade on a particular assignment is 85 and there are 5 members in the group, the group will have a total of 425 points (85 times 5) to spread among its members. The group can then negotiate with all members and spread out the total points to all members in any way the group sees fits, as long as all members agree to the point spread. ***The only requirement is that the group negotiates who gets what grade and that all members of the group give me a written agreement to the point spread. It will be the responsibility of the group to notify me of the point spread if they wish to use this alternative.***

Class Presentation: (6% - graduate students only)

You will be required to give a **15 minute**, in-class presentation on a topic in cognitive science that interests you most. This should be accompanied by a short essay on your topic, as well as copies of any supporting slides/overhead transparencies that accompany your talk. The topics for your presentation are due ***beginning of the second class of week 3 (April 16th)***. Accompanying write-up and copies of slides, overheads, etc. are ***due on the day of your presentation.***

Of necessity, the class presentations will be spread out through the term; some presentation will have to take place earlier in the term than others. Dates of individual presentations will be decided by the instructor/TA. In addition, while assessing/grading the presentations, we will be sure to keep in mind the amount of time (into the term) each student got for preparation of this assignment.

What about extra credit?

You can earn **up to 4 points** in extra credit for **Class Participation**. These points will be **added to your final grade** at the end of the class. So, if you get an 80% with all of your work, and you earn 4 points of extra credit, your final score will be 84%.

Participation is based on **attendance and discussion**. Attendance will be taken during some class periods. All students who sign attendance during that class and ones with excused absences will be awarded EC points. In addition, the instructor will, at other times, award extra-credit for participation in class activities / discussions. It is important that you come to class. Many of the exam

questions come from lecture content that is not in the assigned readings. If you miss a class, please try to get a copy of the lecture notes from a classmate. Allowable excused absences are executive orders/ court orders, medical emergencies and athletic events such as away games for student athletes. All such occasions must be accompanied by official documentation.

In addition, you may earn extra-credit by preparing a **2-4 page report on a recent news item** (i.e., one reported during the term) related to the topics discussed in the course. For optimal success in this type of report, you must do more than simply relate the information that was presented in the newspaper article or news program – this may involve a web search to find other data to accompany your report, a dig in the scientific literature to find relevant details and hard data, etc. These reports must also discuss the news article's relation to the information presented in the lecture and reading materials [**2-4 points**].

Due Dates: Due dates for the term paper are contained in the course outline. **Assignments are due by the start of lecture on the appropriate date**, and can be turned in to me during class or during office hours *the day before it is due*. An assignment turned in after its deadline will be marked down 10% for each day late.

Students with Disabilities: If you have a documented disability and anticipate needing accommodations in this course, please make arrangements to meet with the instructor as soon as possible. Also, please request that the Counselor for Students with Disabilities (Hillary Gerdes, hgerdes@oregon.uoregon.edu, tel. 346-3211, TTY 346-1083) send a letter verifying your disability.

Students for whom English is a Second Language: If you are a non-native English speaker and think you may have trouble in this course due of language difficulties, please see the instructor as soon as possible to make special arrangements.

Academic Honesty: All work submitted in this course must be your own. You may be required to submit writing assignments to SafeAssign. SafeAssign is a software tool designed to help students avoid plagiarism and improper citation. The software encourages original writing and proper citation by cross-referencing submitted materials with an archived database of websites, essays, journal articles, and other published work. In some cases also submit your work to SafeAssign or some other plagiarism analysis and detection program. By enrolling in this course you grant the instructor permission to do so

Violations will be taken seriously and are noted on student disciplinary records. If you are in doubt regarding any aspect of these issues as they pertain to this course, please consult with the instructor before you complete any relevant requirements of the course. For the consequences of academic dishonesty, refer to the Schedule of Classes published quarterly. (For more information, see the UO web site regarding academic honesty at: <http://darkwing.uoregon.edu/~conduct/>).

Course Outline: This is only a working draft of the course outline; it will be revised as the term progresses. **Dates on which particular topics are to be presented in lecture are subject to change, as are reading assignment due dates; however, I will not change the dates of quizzes, exams or term paper deadlines unless absolutely necessary.** The official updated version of the outline will reside on the Blackboard web site. Updated print versions can also be obtained from the instructor during normal office hours.

Version Updated: 3/18/2008 11:52 AM

Date	Topic	Readings	Assignments/Due dates/Quizzes
31-Mar	Introduction	Ch. 1	
2-Apr	Physiology of Perception	Ch. 2, Appendices	
7-Apr	Neurons and Perception	Ch. 3	Quiz 1, SGR 1 due
9-Apr	Low-level vision	Ch. 3	Term Paper topic due
14-Apr	High-level vision; Perceptual Organization	Ch. 4	Quiz 2,
16-Apr	Visual Attention	Ch. 6	SGR 2 due; Presentation topics due
21-Apr	Midterm Exam		Term paper topic finalized
23-Apr	Perceiving Objects	Ch. 5	
28-Apr	Perceiving Color	Ch. 7	
30-Apr	Perceiving Depth and Size	Ch. 8	Quiz 3,
5-May	Perceiving Motion	Ch. 9	SGR 3 due
7-May	Perception and Action	Ch. 10	Quiz 4,
12-May	Midterm Exam		
14-May	Auditory system & Perceiving sound	Ch. 11	
19-May	Sound localization	Ch. 12	Term paper draft due
21-May	Speech perception	Ch. 13	Quiz 5, Peer edits for papers due
26-May	No class		Memorial Day!
28-May	Somatosensory system	Ch. 14	SGR 4 due; Class Presentations
2-Jun	Smell and taste	Ch. 15	Quiz 6, Final term paper due
4-Jun	Perceptual Development & Perceptual Disorders	Ch. 16	Extra credit report due SGR 5 due
TBA	Final exam review		Time & place - TBA
10 - Jun	FINAL EXAM : TUESDAY, 10:15am – 12:15pm		